MUSIC 1620 / SPRING 2008
SEMINAR IN AMERICAN MUSIC:
THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK (PART II: PERFORMERS)
(Rose Rosengard Subotnik)

Course Description:
Emphasizes the musical and cultural effects of various styles of vocal performance on American standards written between 1914 and 1960. Possible singers include Louis Armstrong, Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire, Ethel Waters, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, and Tony Bennett. More recent jazz and cabaret singers also receive consideration. Course ends by considering changes represented by Elvis Presley and Bob Dylan. This course complements another that emphasizes the songs of this period in themselves. Students from all backgrounds are welcome. Prerequisite: MUSC0550 or written permission.

Website / Library Resource Guide
Rosemary Cullen, Head of Special Collections at the Hay, Ned Quist, the Music Librarian, are updating the Website / Library Resource Guide, through which you will be able to link to numerous resources on the internet relevant to the material of this course. Ned will demonstrate some of features at our first class (assuming we have a laptop available).

Attendance:
Pre-registration suggests that this class will be very small. Perhaps the reality will be a pleasant surprise. Either way, but particularly if the class is small, attendance at every session is mandatory. Only in cases of illness or emergency will your absence be excused. In such cases, you must give me either forewarning, or, if that is impossible, an explanation of the circumstances as soon as possible after the class in question.

Attendance at the 3-part lecture series (see below) is mandatory.

Possible Extra Sessions:
Please note: This class assumes that you will be able to attend a final session during the final exam slot, Wed. May 14, 2-5. Only if it becomes clear that we do not need that slot will I release you from that obligation.

It may also become advisable to arrange a make-up class on a Tuesday at the 4-6:20 hour, for reasons discussed below.

Possibly we will need the Exam Slot, the Tuesday make-up class, both, or neither. We will work this out among us in the first sessions.

Grade Requirements:
I have set up the course to give you maximum time to focus on the assigned reading and on exploring performers who will be covered either fleetingly or not at all.

Students are expected to make two oral presentations.

Oral Presentations:
Oral Presentation #1: Student Choice.
Each of you is to choose a performer on whom we do not focus (i.e. not Jolson, Armstrong, Crosby, Waters, Sinatra, or Cole), play some recordings, and discuss the performance style of that performer in terms of the issues we discuss in class. The performer could be anyone who performs standards, whether from the heyday of the American Popular Standard (first half of the 20th century) or at any time since (jazz or cabaret singers).

The library has a superb collection of CDs, and I will be happy to make my own collection available for this purpose.

Assuming the class is small, each of you must pick a different singer and a different date on which to give your presentations. The earlier in the term you give me your preferences, the more likely you are to get them. The date is the first thing you should try to reserve. The performer need not be locked in quite so early, but you will have to coordinate with your classmates to make sure you are not duplicating each
other’s choice. In the unlikely event that the class turned out to be very large, we will modify the format, allowing students to present in pairs, or, if absolutely necessary, to substitute a short paper in some cases.

The report should take a maximum of 30 minutes including playing the music, your commentary responses and questions at the end. You must, at the time of your handout, have some sort of typed notes, outline, or other handout, that you give me at its conclusion.

**ORAL PRESENTATION #2: Elvis Presley or Bob Dylan (possibly + others)**.

The last class, or possibly the last two classes (including exam slot) will be devoted to examining the new directions taken and defined by Presley and Dylan. I have included the beginnings of some common readings for those classes in the syllabus; I am considering others to be identified and given out subsequently. Students are to be in charge of this material. You may need or wish to work in pairs for this project; much depends on the size of the class. Whatever its size, at least two of you need to prepare a presentation on Elvis, two on Dylan. Others will coordinate with you to work on various aspects of the two performers. Since each reinvented himself several times, it should not be difficult to find such aspects. If the class is large enough, I will entertain the possibility of working on additional performers who represent new directions for the popular song.

Assignments after the Spring Break are relatively short, and there is likely to be no assignment for the class of April 24. This should give you ample time to read and prepare for this presentation.

All presentations should be ready to give on **Thursday, May 1**. You must request your preference (for Elvis or Dylan) by Thursday, March 13. I will do my best to accommodate your preference and to help you coordinate the actual area each of you covers. At present I envision a presentation of 30 minutes (including responses) and some sort of documentation that you hand in. If the class is unexpectedly large, we may adjust the timing.

**FINAL PAPER**

Final papers are **theoretically due by 5 p.m. Wed. May 14**.

If we do **not** use the final exam slot, that date will remain in force, at least for graduating seniors.

If we do use the exam slot, the due date will be extended to **Fri. May 16 at noon** for graduating seniors, **May 16 at 5 p.m.** for all others.

Extensions are possible for non-graduating-seniors, but you need to work out the dates with me. I may allow papers to be emailed as attachments to my g-mail account. Check with me.

The final paper can be on any performer or issue of performance tied to American popular song, that interests you. The repertory need not be the Great American Songbook repertory. Your discussion, however, should show call attention to issues that have been raised in class or the assigned reading in relation to that repertory; that is to say, if you write about a different repertory, you must frame your discussion within an explicit relationship to issues or material covered in the course. The length is flexible. A good length would be 6-8 pp. The paper can be as short as 4 pp. if intensively argued, or as long as 10 (maximum 12) pp. if you need the space. Please do not skimp on margins, spacing, or font size in order to meet requirements of length. I prefer greater length to skimpier printing.

**Format requirements for final paper: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:**

1) Name and page number at the top right of every page.
2) 12-point font; double-spacing; default margins on all four sides (NO margins smaller than 1 inch).
3) Single-sided printing. If necessary, Xerox double-sided printing if necessary
4) paper-clip the pages together; do not staple them.
LECTURE SERIES:

“RETHINKING THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK: BLACK/WHITE/BLUE? COOL/HOT/SQUARE?” (Three Lectures; Attendance required at all three.) Lectures will take place at Grant Recital Hall.

We are extremely lucky to have won a lecture series connected with this course, funded by Brown’s C.V Starr Foundation Lectureships Fund. Two of the three scheduled lectures are authors of books and articles that constitute a great deal of the reading for this class. The third is an African-American specialist on this repertory who will bring a fresh perspective on this material. This is a great opportunity for us. All three are well-known, highly regarded speakers who are coming to Brown for a fraction of their usual fee. Attendance at all three lectures is mandatory. Please do your best to publicize them to your friends, at Brown and at other universities in the area.

SPEAKERS

1) WILL FRIEDWALD. Author of many books and articles on jazz, music critic for the New York Sun. Scheduled to speak on Thursday in February 21, at 4 p.m.
   (Readings assigned for that Thursday will be discussed either at the following class, in which case, discussion of assignments for all classes until the spring break will be pushed together, or at a make-up session to be determined.)
2) GARY GIDDINS. Author of many books and articles on jazz, maker of noted films on same. He is scheduled to speak Friday April 4 at 4; Giddins will also host the presentation of one of his films, as arranged by Matt McGarrell, Friday evening (I believe the time is 7:30; I will verify). Latter is not required but strongly recommended.
3) JOHN McWHORTER. McWhorter first spoke at Brown as part of the series on reparation. Here he will wear a totally different hat. He is scheduled to speak on Thursday, April 24, at 4 p.m., i.e., again, during class hour.
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Dates of assigned topics are subject to adjustment, depending on the availability of resource people, size of class, and time used in actual discussions. List of sources, including complete citations, appears at the end of the syllabus.

CP = Course Packet.

**Items preceded by a * are required reading.**

**You are expected to read more than the starred items.**

Choose what interests you.

We will not discuss everything we read, but everything we read will make a valuable contribution to our discussion.

Some assignments are longer than others. Look ahead and plan ahead to the extent possible. Always put in a reasonable amount of time on the week’s assignment, remembering that we meet only once, so each assignment is in effect a double-assignment. I do not expect you to do more than is reasonable. If I have assigned too much, be intelligently selective, and let me know.

A note on CDS:

No CDs have been put on reserve or assigned. We will listen to a great deal of music in class. You are encouraged to explore the bibliography below and recordings, old and new, of this repertory, and to bring in music that seems relevant or interesting.

LONG-TERM ASSIGNMENT:

READ BY APRIL 24:

  Chapter 9: “Singing and social processes,” pp. 158-89. [CP]
  Chapter 10: “Towards a theory of vocal style,” pp. 190-199 [CP]


WEEK 2 / Thurs. Jan 31,

(Jolson), Louis Armstrong, Transition to Crooning, Early Bing.

ASSIGNMENT DUE:

**JOLSON & OTHER PRE-HISTORY**


Friedwald, “Preface,” *Jazz Singing* pp. ix-xvi. [CP]


Pleasants, 1. “Al Jolson,” pp. 49-62. [CP]


**ARMSTRONG**


Giddins, *Visions of Jazz*:

*3. “Louis Armstrong / Mills Brothers (Signifying),” pp. 23-27. [CP]*

[77. “Louis Armstrong / Nicholas Payton (Interpreted),” pp. 634-40.] [CP]

ETHYL WATERS / TRANSITION TO 1930s
Pleasants, 3. “Ethel Waters,” pp. 80-96. [CP]
Giddins, Visions of Jazz, 7. “Ethel Waters (The Mother of Us All),” pp. 51-59. [CP]
*Greenberg, “Ethel Waters and the Politics of Pronunciation,” 22 pp. [CP]
Friedwald, Jazz Singing, “The First Generation: The Late Twenties and Early Thirties,”
pp. 50-67. [CP]

CROONING / TRANSITION TO BING
*McCracken, “God’s Gift...Crooning,” pp. 365-95. [CP]
*Banfield, “Stage and Screen,” in Potter, Cambridge Companion, [“Crooning “]pp. 72-74
[CP]
*Giddins, Pocketful of Dreams, on Crosby and Jolson: pp. 78-86.
Friedwald, Jazz Singing, “Mr. Satch and Mr. Cros,” pp. 23-49.]CP]

EARLY BING

Bing, ctd.
ASSIGNMENT DUE:
*Giddins, Chap. 7 (“Musicaladers”) - Chap. 17 (“Under Western Skies”),
pp. 92-340.
Pleasants, 6. “Bing Crosby,” pp. 126-42. [CP]

Going My Way: Bing Crosby and American Culture
*Prigozy, Ruth, and Walter Raubicheck, “Preface,” pp. xv-xxi
Mazur, Erich Michael, “Going My Way?: Crosby and Catholicism on the Road to
America, pp. 17-33.
Phillips, Elaine Anderson, “Saint Bing: Apatheia, Masculine Desire, and the Films of
Bing Crosby,” pp. 36-46.
*Fuchs, Jeanne, “A Couple of Song and Dance Men: Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire,”
107-14.
pp. 47-64.

Bing, ctd.
ASSIGNMENT DUE:
*Brackett, “Family Values in Music?” Billie Holiday’s and Bing Crosby’s ‘I’ll Be
Seeing You,” in Interpreting Popular Music, pp. 34-74. [CP]
Going My Way: Bing Crosby and American Culture
**Schafer, Stephen C.,** “From Crooner to American Icon: Caricatures of Bing Crosby in American Cartoons from the 1930s to the 1950s,” pp. 123-32.


**Macfarlane, Malcolm,** “Bing’s Entertainment and War Bond Sales Activities During World War II,” pp. 141-49.


**Barnes, Ken,** “The Real Bing Crosby,” pp. 173-76.

**WEEK 5 / Thurs. Feb. 21.**

**LECTURE BY WILL FRIEDWALD DURING CLASS HOUR. ATTENDANCE REQUIRED.**

CLASS MATERIAL AND ASSIGNMENTS WILL EITHER BE DISCUSSED NEXT WEEK (necessitating squeezing of all discussions up to Spring Break) OR at a MAKE-UP SESSION TO BE DETERMINED.

Be sure to have read the chapters assigned in Friedwald’s *Sinatra!* before his talk.

**Transition to Sinatra; Sinatra.**

**ASSIGNMENT DUE:**

**TRANSITION TO SINATRA**

*Going My Way: Bing Crosby and American Culture*


**Potter, John,** *Vocal Authority*, Chapter 6: “Armstrong to Sinatra: Swing and Sub-Text”, pp. 87-112. [CP]

**SINATRA**

**Friedwald, *Sinatra!***


Chaps. 2-3 (Hoboken. Dorsey), pp. 61-119.

**WEEK 6 / Thurs. Feb. 28.**

**Sinatra, ctd.**

**ASSIGNMENT DUE:**

**Friedwald, *Sinatra!* Chaps. 4 (Axel Stordahl), pp. 121-61; 5 (In-Between Years), pp. 163-200; Chaps. 6 (Nelson Riddle), pp. 203-top 262 only; 7 (Billy May), pp. 275-279 only; 8 (Gordon Jenkins), pp. 317-350 top paragraph only.**


**FS: The Man, The Music, The Legend**


Sinatra, ctd.

FS: The Man, The Music, The Legend

*Granata, Charles L., “Frank Sinatra and the Art of Recording,” in Mustazza, FS and Popular Culture, pp. 116-61. [CP]
*Lees, Gene, Singers and the Song II, “The Paradox—Frank Sinatra,” pp. 91-103.[CP]

Friedwald, Jazz Singing,
“Conquest of the Crooners: Pop Singing in the Postwar Era,” pp. 185-222. [CP]
“Modernism 2: Ballads, Baritones, and B,” pp. 251-78. [about black singers] [CP]
“Sinatra! And Other Swingin’ Lovers,” p. 312-341. [CP]

Nat King Cole
*Epstein, Nat King Cole, Part One (“Chicago”), pp. 3-61, and Part Two (“Los Angeles”), pp. 65-159.

Pleasants, 12. “Nat King Cole,” pp. 213-26. [CP]
*Giddins, Gary, Visions of Jazz, 43: “Nat King Cole (The Comeback King),” pp. 402-407
*Lees, You Can’t Steal a Gift, “King Cole,” pp. 203-52. [CP]
Schuller, Gunther, “King Cole,” Swing Era [q.v.], pp. 816-25. [CP]

WEEK 9.
Thurs. Mar. 20
*Epstein, Nat King Cole
Part Three ("America"), pp. 163-266, and 
Part Four ("This World and the Next"), pp. 269-366.
(possible: reports; spillover)

[WEEK 10. Thurs. Mar. 27: SPRING BREAK]

WEEK 11 / Thurs. Apr. 3.
(Ed Hayslip?)

**Longitudinal View**

**ASSIGNMENT DUE:**
*Friedwald, *Stardust Melodies*,

**FRIDAY APRIL 4: GARY GIDDINS LECTURE, 4 P.M. ATTENDANCE REQUIRED.**

WEEK 12 / Thurs. Apr. 10.

**Longitudinal View, ctd.**

**ASSIGNMENT DUE:**
*Friedwald, *Stardust Melodies*,
  “Star Dust,” pp. 2-36
  “Night and Day,” pp. 242-75.

WEEK 13 / Thurs. Apr. 17.

**Longitudinal View, ctd.; Jazz Singing after Advent of Rock ‘n Roll; Transition to Rock ‘n Roll & Beyond.**

**ASSIGNMENT DUE:**
**LONGITUDINAL VIEW, CTD.**
*Friedwald, *Stardust Melodies*,
  “Body and Soul,” pp. 142-79.
  “My Funny Valentine,” pp. 349-73

**JAZZ SINGING AFTER ADVENT OF ROCK ‘N ROLL**
Friedwald, *Jazz Singing*,
  “Revolt of the Philistines: Problems and Answers in the Sixties,” pp. 371-98.[CP]

**TRANSITION TO ROCK ‘N ROLL AND BEYOND**
*FS*
*Smith, James F., “Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley: The Taming of Teen Idols and The*
Banfield, “Stage and Screen Entertainers in the twentieth century,” in Potter, Cambridge Companion,
“Classical Singing,” p. 74-75. [CP]
* “Amplification and Accommodation” through “The Second Shift,” pp. 76-81. [CP]

WEEK 14 / Thurs. April 24
LECTURE BY JOHN MCWHORTER DURING CLASS HOUR. ATTENDANCE REQUIRED.

Long-Term Assignment Due:
*Potter, John. Vocal Authority,
Chapter 10: “Towards a theory of vocal style,” pp. 190-199

READING PERIOD begins Fri. Apr. 25.

WEEK 15 / Thurs. May 1.
Elvis: Dylan
ASSIGNMENT DUE:
Pleasants, 15. “Elvis Presley,” pp. 262-78. [CP]
Potter, John, Vocal Authority:
*“Elvis Presley to rap: moments of change since the forties,” pp. 133-57. [CP]
Moore, Tracey, “Teaching the Broadway Singing Style in the Era of American Idol,”
Studies in Musical Theatre 1 no. 1 (2007), 85-95. [CP]
http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/articles/17503159/1/1/smt.1.1.85.pdf
[Other assigned readings are possible, to be identified and given out during the semester.]

REPORTS

EXAM SLOT: WED. MAY 14 2-5.
KEEP OPEN FOR REPORTS unless or until date is released.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS ORDERED FOR PURCHASE AT BROWN BOOKSTORE
(all are also on Reserve at Orwig Music Library)
[See also below: Two Course Packets]

(Books for purchase in the order in which they will be used):

BOOKS REQUESTED FOR ORWIG RESERVE:


SINGLE CHAPTERS AND ARTICLES ASSIGNED (available either through OCRA, via internet link, or in Course Packet) COURSE PACKET AVAILABLE AT ALLEGRA

[This list does not include the following six books. All chapters assigned in them are listed in the Assignments, in the Schedule of Classes, above. Chapters assigned in Friedwald, Giddins, Potter, and Pleasants are also itemized in the Course Packet Contents, below.

Prigozy & Raubicheck: Going My Way
Fuchs & Prigozy: Frank Sinatra
Friedwald, Jazz Singing
Giddins, Visions of Jazz
Pleasants, The Great American Popular Sings
Potter, Vocal Authority.]

Single Chapters & Articles:
Listed Alphabetically by Author; Listed more or less in Order Assigned in the Course Packet Contents, below:


http://mq.oxfordjournals.org/content/vol87/issue2/index.dtl


http://www.jstor.org/view/07344392/sp020067/02x1217u/0?frame=noframe&userID=8094d6be@brown.edu/01c0a8486700509f147&dpi=3&config=jstor


http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/articles/17503159/1/smt.1.1.85.pdf


1) MULTI-CHAPTERS (in this order):

Pleasants, Henry. The Great American Popular Singers: Their Lives, Careers, and Art”

6. “Nat King Cole (The Comeback King),” pp. 402-407

“Mr. Satch and Mr. Cros: Louis Armstrong and Bing Crosby,” pp. 23-49.
“Sinatra! And Other Swingin’ Lovers,” p. 312-341.
“Modernism 2: Ballads, Baritones, and B,” [about black singers], pp. 251-78.
“Present Tense: The Past Predicted, The Future Re-created,” pp. 399-432 (?)

Chapter 8: “Elvis Presley to rap: moments of change since the forties,” pp. 133-57.
Chapter 10: “Towards a theory of vocal style,” pp. 190-199
2) SINGLE CHAPTERS OR ARTICLES (in this order = more or less order of use):


http://mq.oxfordjournals.org/content/vol87/issue2/index.dtl


http://www.jstor.org/view/07344392/sp020067/02x1217u/0?frame=noframe&userId=8094d6be@brown.edu/01c0a8486700509f147&dpi=3&config=jstor


http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/articles/17503159/1/1/smt.1.1.85.pdf