

Course Number: SCA-UA 9120

Course Title: African Popular Music

Instructor Information

- Professor E. John Collins
- Office telephone: 02443239488
- Office hours: Thursdays 10:00am – 1:00pm
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Course Information

- Course number and section: SCA-UA 9120
- Title: African Popular Music
- Description: The course covers various types of African popular music with the emphasis on Ghana and West Africa. Explores links between this African music and the popular music of the Americas such as jazz, calypso, Latin music, reggae, rock, soul hiphop and 'world music'. Also covers how African traditional music making relates to African popular music, as well as the role of African popular music in urbanization, globalisation, social protest, Pan-Africanism, generational and gender identity.
- Co-requisite or prerequisite, if any: Although this is a musical course and includes some basic practical drumming, the student does not need to be a proficient in any musical instrument or the reading of music scores
- Face-to-face class meeting days and times: Thursdays 10.05 am – 1.05pm

Course Overview and Goals

The course (illustrated with numerous slides and musical examples) covers the growth of West African and Ghanaian popular music over the last 100 years or so, and examines parallels and actual links between the music of Africa and that of the Americas such as jazz, the blues, calypsos, Latin music, reggae, rock, soul, salsa and right up to today's hiphop, ragga and 'world music'. The course also covers how African popular music uses traditional performance resources, how it played an active role in the African independence struggle and how music relates to urbanization, pan-Africanism, globalization, social protest, generational identity and changing gender roles.

After these lectures the remaining half of each class will involve video/DVD films, presentations, tests and also practical classes on local traditional and highlife drumming as well as visits by guest lecturers. As Professor Collins runs the BAPMAF Music archives in Accra and is a patron of the Ghana Musicians Union (MUSIGA) and other local cultural bodies he will also suggest music programs that might be of interest to the students. The students will be asked to attend two such musical events and write up reports on them that will be graded.

TWO CLASS VISITS There will two visits during the semester in lieu of lectures at the NYU in Ghana centre. One will be to Professor Collins BAPMAF Music Institute in Ofankor , Accra on the 7 march - and the other will be to a recording studio at Legon on the 18 April.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- A knowledge of the popular music of Africa (including traditional music making) with particular reference to Ghana, and the long-term trans-Atlantic connections between the music of Africa and the Americas.
- The course will help students to be able to make comparisons (similarities, differences, etc) between the music and 'musiking' they are already familiar with – and the various types of music they meet in Ghana.
- With Ghana as a focus, the course will provide an understanding of the relationship between music and the overall society it is embedded in
- Students will learn to conceive, investigate, plan and write up/document a specific proposal
- All the students – even the non-musical – will obtain the basics of playing local drums and syncopated and polyrhythmic music. This practical experience will be linked to a more theoretical approach to African music discussed in the class.
- As this course involves references to Ghanaian history, geography, social life and belief systems, it will also complement other NYU in Ghana courses that introduce students to Ghana. For this music course has an inter-disciplinary aspect that touches on sociology, politics, literature, psychology, African arts, Pan-Africanism, transculturation and youth and gender studies.

Course Requirements

Class Participation

Class attendance. Attention and interaction in class

Assignment 1

Report on outside visit or other research (4-5 pages), number one, by 7 march

Assignment 2

Report on outside visit or other research (4-5 pages) , number two by 4 april

Assignment 3

End of semester paper 12-15 pages by 9 May

Tests & Quizzes short answers.

Mid-semester test 14 march

End of semester test 16 may

Assigned Readings

Students to read assigned works prior to the class lecture on the topic

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

	% of Final Grade
Class participation	[10%]
Midterm test	[20%]
End of semester test	[20%]
Report on first outside event 4-5 pages	[10%]
Report on second outside event 4-5 pages	[10%]
End-of-semester paper [12-15 pages] that can include photos and videos and that students will present in class. Will be encouraged to work with Ghanaian artists and bands, local music associations, bodies, unions, copyright organisations performance bodies venues or local music archives. In some circumstances Prof. Collins will allow a joint 2 person end of semester paper	[30]

Letter Grades

A	94- 100	Excellent
A-	90-93	Very Good
B+	87-89	Good
B	84-86	Above Average
B-	80-83	Average
C+	77-79	Pass
C	74-76	Pass
C-	70-73	Pass
D	65-69	Concessionary Pass

F. Below 65 Fail

View Grades

Contact Prof Collins at 0243239488 or newbapmaf@yahoo.com

Course Schedule Topics and Assignments

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Week 1, 7 Feb	OVERVIEW OF GHANAIAN POPULAR MUSIC	Highlife Time 3 2018, Collins p. 12-77	WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS
Week 2, 14 feb	GHANAIAN HIPLIFE	Highlife Time 3, Collins, 2018 ch 38 & Coda: Living The Hiplife, Shipley 2013: Hip Hop Africa, Charry, 2012 ch34	
Week 3, 21 feb	ROCK, SOUL & AFRO-FUSION MUSIC IN GHANA & NIGERIA	Highlife Time, Collins, 1996, ch 29-30, 14 & 38: Fela: Kalakuta Notes, Collins, 2009 or 2015:	
Week 4, 28 feb	REGGAE MUSIC AND ITS IMPACT ON GHANA & PRACTICAL DRUM CLASS: CALYPSO-HIGHLIFE-KPANLOGO RHYTHM	Highlife Time 3, Collins, 2018, ch36 & p40-5: HipHop Africa, Charry 2012 ch 34	
Week 5, 7 march	VISIT TO THE PROF. COLLINS BAPMAF HIGHLIFE INSTITUTE & AFRICAN MUSIC ARCHIVES, OFANKOR ACCRA	Collins chapter in the book on preserving the popular music heritage, 2015	ASSIGNMENT DUE OF 1 ST STUDENT OUTSIDE VISIT/RESEARCH PAPER
Week 6, 14 march	TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS & PRACTICAL DRUM CLASS/GUEST LECTURER	African Music A Peoples Art, Bebey, 1974	
Week 7	MIDTERM BREAK		
Week 8 28 march	TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MUSIC-FUNCTIONS & PRACTICAL DRUM	African Musical Symbolism, Collins, 2004, ch 1-2: African Music & Sensibility, Chernoff, 1979, ch 2-3	

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
	CLASS : THE EWE AGBADZA		
Week 9, 4 april	TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MUSIC – FEATURES & PRACTICAL DRUM CLASS/GUEST LECTURER	Highlife Time, Collins, 1996, ch 22 or Highlife Time 3 ch 27	ASSIGNMENT DUE OF 2 ND STUDENT OUTSIDE VISIT/RESEARCH PAPER
Week 10, 11 april	GHANAIAAN DISCO 'BURGER' HIGHLIFE. GOSPEL MUSIC AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR FEMALE ARTISTS,	HipHop Africa, Charry, 2012 ch 34: Ghana Women Enter Popular Entertainment, Collins, 2003: Highlife Time 3 Collins, 2018 chs 37,43, 44	
Week 11, 18 april	VISIT A RECORDING STUDIO		
Week 12 25 april	JAZZ IN AFRICA: BALLROOM, HIGHLIFE DANCE BANDS & AFRO-JAZZ	Highlife Time, Collins, 1996, ch 9-11 & 24 or Highlife Time 3 ch 12, 13 & 29: Highlife & Nkrumah, Collins, 2009, p93-104.	
Week 13, 2 may	WEST AFRICAN MARCHING BANDS, SAILORS & 'PALMWINE' HIGHLIFE GUITAR MUSIC	Highlife Time, Collins, 1996, ch 1-3,19,23 or HighlifeTime 3 ch 1-3,24,28: Highlife Giants, Collins 2016 p7-18	
Week 14, 9 may	PRESENTATION OF MAIN STUDENT PROJECTS		ASSIGNMENT DUE. MAIN SEMESTER PROJECT PAPER
Week 15, 16 may	EXAM AND PRESENTATION OF REMAINING STUDENT PROJECTS		

Tests & Quizzes One at mid term (14 March) Second at the end of the semester (16 May)

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

- African Music A Peoples Art. Francis Bebey. (Lawrence Hill, N. York, 1974) [1-55652-128-6] PHOTOSTAT
- African Music & African Sensibility, J. Chernoff (Chicago Univ. Press 1979) [0-226-10344-7] PHOTOSTAT

- Fela: Kalakuta Notes. John Collins (Royal Tropical Institute Amsterdam, 2009). [978-9068327489]. Expanded version (Wesleyan Univ Press, 2015) [ISBN 978-8195-75339-5]
- Highlife Time by John Collins (Anansesem Press, Accra, 1996). [9988-522-03-3]
- Highlife Time 3 by John Collins (Dakpabli Publisher Accra 2018) [978-9988-2-7619-5]
- Highlife and Nkrumah's Independence Ethos by John Collins. Univ. of Ghana Journal of Performing Arts, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 93-104, 2009/2010. [0855-2606]
- Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Contemporary World, ed. Eric Charry. (Indiana Univ. Press, 2012) [978-0253-00575-5]
- Living the Hiplife, by Jesse Shipley (Duke University Press, USA, 2013)
- African Musical Symbolism in Contemporary Perspective, by John Collins. (Pro Business Germany 2004) [3-938262-15-X]
- West African Popular Theatre by K. Barber, J. Collins & A. Ricard (Indiana Univ Press/James Currey, 1997). [0-85255-244-0]
- Highlife Giants: West African Dance Band Pioneers. By John Collins. (Cassava Republic Press, Abuja, Nigeria. 2016) [978-1-911115-29-8]
- 'Bokoor African Popular Music Archives Foundation: Ghana's Highlife Music Institute and the Need for Popular Music Archiving' by John Collins. In: *Preserving Popular Music Heritage* (ed Sarah Baker), Routledge, New York, 2015, pp. 185-192. [ISBN 978-1-138-78143-6 hbk & 978-1-315-76988 ebk]
- 'The Entrance of Women into Ghanaian Popular Entertainment' by John Collins. Chapter in the festschrift book *The Legacy of Efu Sutherland: Pan African Cultural Activism*, edited by Anne V. Adams and Efu Sutherland-Addy, published Ayebia Clark Publishing Ltd, UK, 2007 pp. 47-54 (ISBN NO. 978-0-9547023-1-1)

Optional Textbooks & Materials

- E. T. Mensah the King of Highlife by John Collins (Anansesem Press, Accra, 1996) [9988-552-17-3]
- Fela: An African Musical Icon by Michael Veal (Temple Univ. Press, 2000). [1-56639-764-2]
- Sweet Mother by Wolfgang Bender (Trickster Verlag, 1985). [3-923804-10-5]
- In Griot Time, Banning Eyre (Temple University Press, US, 2000). [1-56639-758-8]
- Hiplife in Ghana by Halifu Osumare (Palgrave Macmillan 2012). [978-1-137-02164-9]
- Highlife Saturday Night by Nate Plageman (Indiana University Press, USA, 2013)
- World Music: A Stimulus to Ghanaian Tourism. Education and 'Cross-Over' Musical Collaborations, by John Collins. Journal of Performing Arts, Univ. of Ghana Vol. 4, No. 2, 2011 pp. 71-80. [0855-260]
- Fela: From West Africa to West Broadway ed. Trevor Schoonmaker (Palgrave/MacMillan 2003). [1-4039-6209-3]
- Music Makers of West Africa by John Collins (3 Continents Press/Passeggiata Press, Colorado, USA, 1985) [0-89410-076-9].
- Africa Oh Ye: A Celebration of African Music BY G. Ewens (Guinness Books, UK, 1991) [ISBN 0-88112-977-3] PHOTOSTAT COPY IN NYU LIBRARY
- West African Pop Roots John Collins (Temple University Press, US, 1992). [0-87722-916-3]

Resources

- 70 books and article by Prof Collins at gh.academia.edu/EJohnCollins or ug-gh.academia.edu/EjohnCollins Some also available at www.bapmaf.com
- Prof, Collins will make available to the student on a CD/pendrive many of his writing on African popular music: including books, articles, discographies and 150 music samples
- Films for classes will include DVD's on the hiplife star Reggie Rockstone, the Afro-jazz pioneer Kofi Ghanaba, the Nigerian Afrobeat exponent Fela Kuti, and some of the film productions on Ghanaian traditional and popular music that John Collins has been

involved with since the 1980s. Some snippets of film on traditional Ghanaian drum-dances from the BAPMAF music archives may also be included.

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

Punctuality and politeness . No eating during lectures, Smart/cell phones and other electronic devices should be off during class lectures

Late Assignment

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalized by a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade

Incomplete Grade Policy Will effect overall grade

Academic Honesty /Plagiarism Plagiarism not tolerated

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Your Instructor

John Collins is a naturalized Ghanaian of British descent who has been active in the Ghanaian/West African music scene since 1969 as a guitarist, band leader, music union activist, journalist, writer, recording engineer and archivist. He obtained his B.A. degree in sociology/archaeology from the University of Ghana in 1972 and his Ph.D in Ethnomusicology from SUNY Buffalo in 1994. Collins has given many radio and television broadcasts (including over 40 for the BBC) and has been a consultant for numerous films on African music. During the 1990's Collins was Technical Director of the University of Ghana/Mainz Music Re-documentation Project, and for seven years was with the Ghana National Folklore Board of Trustees/Copyright Administration. Collins began teaching at the Music Department of the University of Ghana in 1995, obtained a Full Professorship there in 2002 and between 2003-5 was Head of Department.. Collins is currently on post-retirement contract with the university, is manager of Bokoor Music Studio, Chairman of the BAPMAF Highlife-Music Institute and is a patron of the Ghana Musicians Union MUSIGA. He has published around 70 books and articles on African music and his most recent books are 'Fela: Kalakuta Notes' (on the Nigerian Afrobeat star) published by Wesleyan University Press in 2015, 'Highlife Giants' published by Cassava Republic Press in Nigeria. In 2016 and 'Highlife Time 3' published by Dakabli Press in Accra in 2018