

Writing Through Media: Women's Music Criticism

ENG1131

Section 1786 / Class #11817

Spring 2025

Instructor contact

Daun Fields (B.A. & M.A, English)

UF Department of English

Canvas inbox or email dj.fields@ufl.edu

I respond to inquiries within 24 working hours, M-F 9am-5pm.

Class meeting time + Location

100% online & asynchronous

Coaching hours

Tuesdays 12-2pm, Zoom or Turlington 4349

Reserve your coaching time: Use Canvas → Calendar → Find Appointment

If you need a meetup outside my office hours, please email me.

Course description

Welcome to *Writing Through Media*! This course is meant to equip you with the tools necessary to read, analyze, and write about criticism in thoughtful and productive ways. This media studies equivalent of ENC 1102 explores the practices of literacy in the context of popular culture, including cinema, television, advertising, popular fiction, and journalism. We will be focusing on popular music and its accompanying critical and creative media. The course has two primary objectives: 1) to acquaint you with the

conventions of Western music criticism (as well as the conventions of musical analysis), and 2) to hone your critical writing skills. This means that this online course will be both reading and writing intensive.

Do critics help or hinder the arts? In this course we will examine women's musical artifacts such as albums, music videos, and fashion alongside the written work of their contemporary critics. We will ask the questions, "what does a critic do, and how do they do it?" and "what is the critic's role in popular culture?" We will analyze both the productive and problematic ways in which critics engage cultural identities such as race, gender, and sexuality in critical reviews of women's (inclusive of LGBTQ+/FLINTA*) musical works.

Reading assignments will include a variety of music criticism spanning from the nineteenth century (*The English Woman's Journal*, 1858) to the twenty-first century (Jessica Hopper's *The First Collection of Criticism by a Living Female Rock Critic*, 2015-2021) as well as artists' historical responses to criticism through media such as podcasts and social media posts.

Assignments will include discussion boards analyzing music media (songs, album art, music videos), a mini podcast, an annotated mixtape, a digital and/or physical zine, and analyses of music criticism as a literary genre. Our writing will center on building the persuasive arguments that are foundational for vibrant criticism in the Humanities.

Our diverse primary texts—women's works in hip-hop, punk, experimental, and pop music—invite you to engage visual rhetoric, cultural studies, and gender studies in your writing. Required weekly viewings/listening sessions on your own include music videos and albums. You will have one experiential component that builds the foundation for the final project: a local or regional musical performance for which you'll write and record a review of the performance. Our culminating project will be a digital and/or physical zine in which students will compile their own critical work alongside visual materials.

Required texts

Purchase the **specific ISBNs listed below**; they include required supplementary readings. All other readings and required materials will be free in Canvas→Files or via YouTube.

**Atoe, Osa. *Shotgun Seamstress: Anthology*. Soft Skull Press, 2022.
(ISBN 9781593767396)**

**Gentry, Amy. *33 1/3: Tori Amos' Boys for Pele*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.
(ISBN 9781501321313)**

**Hopper, Jessica. *The First Collection of Criticism by a Living Female Rock Critic, Revised and Expanded*, Foreward by Samantha Irby, 2021.
(ISBN 9780374538996)**

**Reed, Alexander S. *Laurie Anderson's Big Science*. Oxford Keynotes Series, Oxford UP, 2021.
(ISBN 9780190926014)**

Where To Get Textbooks

UF Bookstore in the Reitz Student Union

LOCAL BOOKSHOPS: The Lynx; Book Gallery West

Used & new online: Thriftbooks, AbeBooks, PangoBooks, Amazon

Libby App Free E-books & Audiobooks (via an Alachua County Public Library card)

General education objectives

- ***This course confers General Education credit for Humanities (H).***
- ***UF General education objectives for the Humanities [can be found here](#)***
- To receive General Education (Gen Ed) credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.

General education learning outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will

participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.

- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Writing Requirement (WR)

- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- The course meets the writing requirement to evaluate 6,000 written words in assignments during the semester.
- Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on all the student's written assignments with respect to grammar and punctuation (if requested by the student), clarity, coherence, and organization.
- University Writing Studio: www.writing.ufl.edu
- Recommended writing or style manual: Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) online, MLA style

Assignments

25 points

Introduction Coaching Session Appointment (25 points)

Make a coaching session appointment through Canvas Calendar to be completed by 2/5/25. In this session, I will address any questions or concerns about the course; I will also ask what your interest in the course is, what kinds of music or media you enjoy, and have an informal chat in order to gauge how I can support your learning in our course.

If you are unable to make my Tuesday coaching hours, email me by 1/23 to schedule a session to be completed by the due date.

Music Discussion Board Posts (4 total)

(250 words each, 1,000 words total)

(25 points each, 100 points total)

Throughout the semester, you will write and submit four responses to songs, albums, or music videos. You will then respond to one other classmate's post.

In responses on our Canvas discussion board, use close reading strategies and raise critical issues or observations focused on an aspect of the text, such as a word, theme, motif, or symbol.

Critical Review Discussion Board Posts (4 total)

(250 words each, 1,000 words total)

(25 points each, 100 points total)

Throughout the semester, you will write and submit four responses to assigned works of music criticism that responded to our assigned songs, albums, or music videos. You will then respond to one other classmate's post.

In responses on our Canvas discussion board, pay attention to writers' rhetorical moves and ways they persuade (or fail to persuade) audiences. Raise critical issues or observations concerned with textual meaning, such as certain themes, motifs, or symbols within the text.

Music Podcast Script (150 points, 500 words)

Create a podcast script focusing on one song we have listened to thus far and its corresponding historical era to contextualize the song for your audience. Include an MLA-style Works Cited page to cite the song and any secondary sources you incorporate. Use the Purdue OWL MLA guide online for MLA citation style.

Annotated Mixtape for Genre (100 points, 500 words)

Students will choose a genre from one of our musical genre areas and curate an eight-song mixtape, or playlist, of songs that they feel represents the genre. Annotations for each song will be 3-5 sentences long and describe why the song evokes the genre and/or the theoretical practices behind the musicians' artistic choices.

Live Music Review: Analysis with Research (200 points, 1,000 words)

This experiential analysis combines a music review of a live musical performance with scholarly research on the genre. Taking into consideration the music critics we have read and/or listened to thus far, practice developing a style of criticism that aligns with your

own voice. Focus on performance, aesthetic choices, musicality, lyrics, and context of venue. Choose 2 scholarly sources to bring into your critical review, whether they relate to the musical genre, theoretical practices, or something else you see/hear that is connected to the choices of the artist(s).

Final Project: (300 points, 2,000 words)

The final project will be a multimodal project that incorporates a written paper and a digital or physical interpretation. This project is designed to continue to build critical thinking, research skills, and develop digital literacy skills. This is a two-part project.

(Part 1, 150 points, 1,000 words)- Album Review

This album review will be an analysis in which you will make an original, critical argument about an album's songs and the album-as-text through a theoretical, historical, or critical lens. This essay will contain two critical scholarly sources that engage your argument and two contemporary reviews of the album. Students will choose from a list of albums adjacent to our areas of study or propose one to the instructor.

(Part 2, 150 points, 1,000 words)-Digital or Physical Zine of Your Music Criticism & Explanation of Creation Process

Artifact component of Part 2: You will create a digital or physical zine that accompanies and expands your album review with images. Your zine will also be a compilation of your written work this semester, in the style of Atoe's *Shotgun Seamstress* (one of our required texts) or another visual media text that engages the genre or theoretical practices of the musical artist whose album you chose for Part 1 of the Final Project. Please take creative liberty with this project. Optional: visit the Civic Media Center in Gainesville for research in their zine archive.

Written component of Part 2: Materials & tools list; detailed description of your creation process of the zine artifact; explanation of artistic and aesthetic visual choices for the zine as it relates to the genre or theoretical practices of the artist.

≡1,000 points, 6,000 words

Course policies

Completion Policy: Students must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.

Online classroom conduct: All interactions in this class, between students or with the instructor, are expected to be courteous and professional with respect to the cultural diversity of our human UF community.

Late Papers/Assignments: Late assignments submitted *without an approved extension* will be penalized by **20% for each day past the submission deadline**. However, you may have **one 48-hour extension** on any assignment this semester *except the Final Project*. Please email me at least 24 hours in advance of the due date to request an extension.

Attendance/Make-up work

In this online-only course, students are responsible for keeping on schedule with coursework. Make-up work will only be accepted with an official doctor's note. If you need support with time management and creating weekly work schedules for this course, please reach out to me.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Academic honesty & UF Policies

Academic Honesty Policy and Definition of Plagiarism: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge. The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

Plagiarism is defined by the UF Student Honor Code: A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- a. Using AI for any component of assignments.
- b. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
- c. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
- d. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution (not citing sources).
- e. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.

Evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>

UF's policy on Sexual Harassment: The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community:

<https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>

Policy on environmental sustainability. When possible, I will use electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available or used copies of print texts.

Disability & Accommodations

Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the **Disability Resource Center** (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester.

I understand that disabilities can be visible or invisible, documented or undocumented. If you need learning accommodations, regardless of UF documentation, please communicate your needs to me via email at the beginning of the course so I may support your learning experience in this course.

Wellness

Students who are in distress or who need counseling or urgent help: please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you.

UF's Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

Food Resources

UF Field & Fork: free basic staples, bread, and frozen meats, as well as fresh seasonal produce from the Field & Fork Farm and Gardens. Bring your Gator 1 Card when you visit. <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>

Krishna Lunch: Affordable vegetarian and vegan lunches in the Plaza 11am-1:00pm M-F and at Krishna House 11am-2pm <https://krishnalunch.com/>

Illness

Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161.

Grading scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

A- to A: You did what the assignment asked for at a high-quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range demonstrates all the qualities listed below for a B; but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a verbal style or visual design, without error and/or infelicities.

B- to B+: You did what the assignment asked of you at a high-quality level. Work in this range needs little revision, is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style and visual design. May contain a few errors and/or infelicities.

C- to C+: You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range tends to need some revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style and visual design are straightforward but unremarkable.

D- to D+: You did what the assignment asked for at a low-quality level. Work in this range tends to need significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern.

E: The assignment requirements were not met. If you gave an assignment an honest try and still received an 'E,' you may not be ready to succeed in this course.

For information on UF Grading policies, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Grade Communications. Any question regarding grades must be discussed either in person or via Zoom with the instructor. Per UF policy to protect your privacy, the instructor cannot discuss grades with a student via email.

Grade Appeals. In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Please contact Ms. Blount at cblount@ufl.edu Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

Course Schedule

WORK FLOW:

Since this is a 100% online course, our course schedule is meant to be a guide for you to accomplish the work that is required each week. Assign three days of your work week (M/W/F, M/T/W, T/W/Th, etc.) to do the required listening and reading for this course in order to prepare for Thursday and Friday assignment due dates.

Assignments are generally due on Thursdays or Fridays by 11:59pm. See each assignment for its due date. Assignments reflect the required reading and listening that you did for that week.

Allow about *6 hours per week for reading and writing for this course*. Allow about 1 hour of reading time per 30 pages of reading. Take into consideration listening times for required music and podcasts when creating your weekly workflow.

VPN LOGIN:

If you are off campus, install and log into the Cisco Client VPN to access all links to online resources, such as *Oxford Companion to Music Online*. If you have questions regarding installing the VPN, contact UFIT services.

A NOTE ON TITLES OF MEDIA:

Titles in *italics* refer to albums, books, podcasts, and journals.

Titles in “quotation marks” refer to songs, articles, and chapters.

WEEK	MON	WED	FRI
<p>1</p> <p>1/13-1/17</p> <p>INTRO MODULE</p> <p>Welcome</p> <p>What is music criticism?</p>	<p>Install VPN (use live chat in website if you need assistance)</p> <p>Turn on Canvas notifications for course</p> <p>Announcements</p> <p>READ:</p> <p>Syllabus</p>	<p>READ:</p> <p>“Criticism of Music” by Bojan Bujić, <i>Oxford Companion to Music Online</i></p> <p>“Aesthetics of Music” by Bojan Bujić, <i>Oxford Companion to Music Online</i></p>	<p>READ:</p> <p>“Introduction” by Naomi Cumming, from <i>The Sonic Self</i>, p. 1-19</p>
<p>2</p> <p>1/20-1/24</p> <p>Music Criticism as Literature</p>	<p>READ:</p> <p>“Signs of Subjectivity” in <i>The Sonic Self</i>, p. 20-42</p>	<p>READ:</p> <p>“Listening Subject and Sonic Worlds” in <i>The Sonic Self</i>, p. 43-71</p> <p>DUE:</p> <p>Discussion Board #1 by Thursday 11:59pm</p>	<p>LISTEN:</p> <p><i>Fossora</i> by Bjork (2022, 55 min)</p> <p>READ:</p> <p>Review of <i>Fossora</i> by Jill Mapes, Pitchfork.com, Sept 20, 2022</p>
<p>3</p> <p>1/27-1/31</p> <p>LIVING, DYING, & CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CRITICISM</p>	<p>READ in HOPPER:</p> <p>“Foreward” by Irby</p> <p>“Introduction: I Have a Strange Relationship with Music” p. xi-xvi</p>	<p>LISTEN:</p> <p>“Juicy” from <i>Ready to Die</i> by The Notorious B.I.G.</p> <p>READ in HOPPER:</p>	<p>LISTEN:</p> <p>Album: <i>Live Through This</i> by Hole (38 min)</p>

	<p>LISTEN:</p> <p><i>Born to Die</i> by Lana Del Rey (55 min)</p>	<p>“Deconstructing Lana Del Rey” p. 56-65</p> <p>DUE Thursday by 11:59pm: Discussion Board #2</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>2/3-2/7</p> <p>The Voice: Oral Histories and Podcasting in Music Criticism</p>	<p>READ in HOPPER:</p> <p>“You Will Ache Like I Ache: The Oral History of Hole’s <i>Live Through This</i>” p. 315-337</p>	<p>READ:</p> <p>Mini Podcast & Script Assignment Guidelines</p> <p>LISTEN:</p> <p>Podcast: “‘Doll Parts’—Hole” <i>60 Songs That Explain the 90s</i> (1 hr, 22min)</p> <p>DUE Thursday by 11:59pm:</p> <p>Discussion Board #3</p>	<p>LISTEN:</p> <p><i>Pink Friday: Roman Reloaded</i>, by Nicki Minaj (69 min)</p> <p>READ in HOPPER:</p> <p>“Nicki Minaj, <i>Pink Friday</i>” p. 251-253</p>
<p>5</p> <p>2/10-2/14</p> <p>DESIRE, POWER, & PLEASURE MODULE</p>	<p>LISTEN:</p> <p><i>Exile in Guyville</i> by Liz Phair (56 min)</p> <p>READ in HOPPER:</p> <p>“Liz Phair, <i>Exile in Guyville</i>, <i>Expanded</i>”</p>	<p>WORKFLOW:</p> <p>Compose podcast script</p> <p>Record podcast</p> <p>DUE Thursday by 11:59pm:</p>	<p>LISTEN:</p> <p><i>Boys for Pele</i> by Tori Amos (70 min)</p>

	<i>Reissue</i> ” p. 221-228	Mini Podcast & Script Assignment	
6 2/17-2/21 33 1/3 Book Series: Music Criticism as Creative+Scholarly Writing	READ: <i>33 1/3: Boys for Pele</i> , Gentry p. 1-59	READ: <i>33 1/3: Boys for Pele</i> , Gentry p. 61-118	READ: <i>33 1/3: Boys for Pele</i> , Gentry p. 119-end DUE Friday by 11:59pm: Discussion Board #4
7 2/24-2/28 MIXTAPE MODULE	READ: Annotated Mixtape Assignment Guidelines	WORKFLOW: Annotated Mixtape	DUE: Annotated Mixtape Assignment by Friday, 11:59pm REMINDER: Live Music Review due 3/14
8 3/3-3/7 THE SYNTH MODULE Synthesizing the Musician and their Music	LISTEN: “Tron Suite” by Wendy Carlos on YouTube (22 min) WATCH: “Bob Moog and Wendy Carlos Interview” <i>YouTube</i>	READ: “Sonic Seasonings: The Genius of Wendy Carlos” p. 157-171 (in FILES)	READ: “Wendy Carlos: Switched-on Film Scoring” Deaville (in FILES) DUE: Discussion Board #5 by Friday, 11:59pm

9	LISTEN:	READ:	READ:
3/10-3/14	<i>Big Science</i> by Laurie Anderson (39 min)	<i>Laurie Anderson's Big Science</i> by S. Alexander Reed	<i>Laurie Anderson's Big Science</i> by S. Alexander Reed
Synthesizing the Musician and their Music			DUE: Live Music Review Assignment by Friday, 11:59pm
10	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break
Spring Break			
11	LISTEN:	LISTEN:	READ:
3/24-3/26	"Oh Bondage, Up Yours!" and "Identity" by X-Ray Spex	<i>Penis Envy</i> by Crass (35 min)	"The Political Pioneers of Punk: (Just Don't Mention the F-Word!)" by Helen Reddington
PUNK MODULE		VIEW:	
British Women's Punk & Visual Rhetoric	<i>Germfree Adolescents</i> by X-Ray Spex	Album art for <i>Penis Envy</i> by Crass (in FILES)	VIEW:
	VIEW:		Vivienne Westwood punk clothing (FILES)
	<i>Germfree Adolescents</i> album art and collage art by Poly Styrene (FILES)		DUE:
	READ:		Discussion Board #6 by Friday, 11:59pm
	"Review of X-Ray Spex at the Roxy" by Greil Marcus (1978)		

12 3/31-4/1 U.S. Black Punk & Zines	<p>READ:</p> <p><i>Shotgun Seamstress</i>, Atoe p. 1-71</p> <p>LISTEN:</p> <p><i>The Secret Life</i> by New Bloods (26 min)</p>	<p>READ:</p> <p><i>Shotgun Seamstress</i></p> <p>DUE:</p> <p>Discussion Board #7 due by Thursday, 11:59pm</p>	<p>READ:</p> <p><i>Shotgun Seamstress</i></p>
13 4/7-4/11 U.S. Black Punk & Zines	<p>READ:</p> <p><i>Shotgun Seamstress</i></p>	<p>READ:</p> <p><i>Shotgun Seamstress</i></p>	<p>READ:</p> <p><i>Shotgun Seamstress</i></p> <p>DUE:</p> <p>Discussion Board #8 by Friday, 11:59pm</p>
14 4/14-4/18 FINAL PROJECT MODULE	<p>WORKFLOW:</p> <p>Compose Part 1</p>	<p>WORKFLOW:</p> <p>Compose Part 1</p>	<p>WORKFLOW:</p> <p>Compose Part 1</p>
15 4/21-4/25 Last Week of Classes	<p>WORKFLOW:</p> <p>Compose Part 1</p>	<p>WORKFLOW:</p> <p>Begin Final Project Part 2</p> <p>DUE:</p> <p>Final Project Part 1 by Thursday, 11:59pm</p>	<p>(UF Reading Days)</p> <p>WORKFLOW:</p> <p>Final Project Part 2: Zine</p>

16 4/28-5/2 Final Project Due: Exams Week (no final exam for this course; final project takes the place of a final exam)	WORKFLOW: Create Zine	WORKFLOW: Create Zine	DUE: Final Project Part 2 by 11:59pm (no late submissions can be accepted)