From the gleefully virtuosic improvisations of Ella Fitzgerald to the screaming protest music of Abbey Lincoln, the cannon of vocal jazz music represents a rich diversity of emotions, politics, and performance practices. Through the selected listening, reading, and writing assignments, we will learn about the history of jazz and the voice’s place in it from the early 20th century up until the present day. Our work will involve close reading and close listening as a tool to re-trace the intricate webs of music and meaning which jazz singers weave with their sonic and textual choices. In so doing, we will engage with questions of activism, race, gender, aesthetics, power, and sexuality.

Course Materials

Recordings and readings will all be made available through Latte.

Course Requirements

Unit 1: “Our Love is Here to Stay”
The close reading essay. In this assignment you will formulate an argument based on a close reading of a love song or a “torch” song.

Essay 2: “Freedom Now”
The lens essay. For this assignment, you will analyze Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln’s 1960 album *We Insist! (Max Roach’s Freedom Now Suite)* and put it into discourse with essays by Wynton Marsalis and Fred Ho on politics and aesthetics in jazz.

Essay 3: “Notes from the Scene Today”
The researched argument. You will conduct research on a living vocalist and use a particular critical lens to form an argument about a selected portion of their output.

Portfolio: At the end of the semester you will assemble all of your work (including pre-draft assignments, rough drafts, final drafts, and peer review sheets) in an electronic folder and email it to me, together with a letter describing how your understanding of yourself as a writer has changed over the course of the semester. This means that you need to save electronically all your writing from the semester.

Drafting:

Four steps lead up to the final draft of each essay. In addition to the final paper, your completion of these assignments will be considered in your grade.

- **Pre-draft assignments.** Each essay will be preceded by two or three pre-draft assignments—short pieces of writing designed to help you develop ideas. These assignments will receive either a check or a note telling you to redo the work and will count as part of your overall grade. You can re-submit any work until the end of the unit.
● **First drafts.** You are required to turn in a first draft of each paper. These drafts are important opportunities for you to receive feedback from me and your classmates in peer review. I do not expect these drafts to be polished, but I do expect them to be complete—otherwise we cannot give you useful advice.

● **Peer Review.** After the first draft of each paper is due you will form a group with two of your classmates and read each other’s drafts. In class you will give your partners feedback. I will collect your peer review letters and they will count as part of your grade. These activities increase your sense of audience awareness and give you an opportunity to reflect on the concepts we have discussed in class.

● **Conferences.** Each student will have three twenty-minute conferences with me over the course of the semester, one to discuss each first draft. Attendance is required; missing a conference is the equivalent of missing a class (i.e., you’ll lose one of your three absences). Sign-up sheets will be distributed in class.

**Class participation:** Your consistent participation in class sessions constitutes a significant portion of your grade and is the most critical component of a successful course. Class participation includes:

- Your prompt, prepared, alert, consistent attendance
- The completion of reading assignments by the dates listed in the syllabus
- Your thoughtful contributions to class discussions
- Your success as a class note-taker when assigned (see below)

Class note-taker: As this course is a seminar, many of our class meetings will involve a heavy dose of discussion. In addition to requiring your preparation before and engaged participation during these discussions, I will also ask each of you throughout the semester to serve as a “class note-taker.” This will involve keeping an accurate record of the important points and contours of our discussion (including who said what) on a shared, public google doc.

**Writing Center:** The University Writing Center, located on Goldfarb 232 on the Goldfarb mezzanine of the library, provides free one-on-one help with your essays. You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this service. Writing Center tutors are well trained and will work with you in 45 minute sessions that you can schedule online: [http://www.brandeis.edu/programs/writing/writingcenter/index.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/programs/writing/writingcenter/index.html). **Students who take advantage of this service will receive a form during their tutorial that will entitle them to a 24-hour extension on their essay.** Essays will be due electronically by 10:00 PM on the following day. Only one extension is allowed per essay.

**Grading:**

Close reading essay: 20%
Lens essay: 25%
Research essay and presentation: 35%
Class participation (includes class note-taking): 10%
Portfolio (includes Latte posts, pre-drafts, and peer reviews): 10%
Formatting: All essays will be submitted to me and your peers electronically. Essays must use 1-inch margins and 12 point Times New Roman font. Do not enlarge your punctuation—I can tell. Essays must have a title and be double-spaced. Pre-drafts will be submitted in hard copy in class and must be typed and stapled.

Late Work, Extensions and Minimum Page Requirements: I am willing to offer extensions, given legitimate reasons. Legitimate reasons include things such as serious illness and unavoidable family/personal obligations. Barring emergencies, you must contact me at least 3 days in advance of the deadline in order to receive an extension.

Otherwise, late work, including first drafts, will be penalized by a third of a grade per day (B+, B, B- and so on) on the final paper. If a paper is due electronically at 10:00 PM and you submit it at 10:01 PM, it is late. Please make sure you have no technological issues before the deadline so that they do not impede your successful completion of assignments.

Attendance: Missing classes is strongly discouraged. You are allowed three absences. For each additional absence your final grade will be penalized by a third of a grade. Seven or more absences will result in a failing grade. Please contact me in the event of an emergency.

You are responsible for catching up on the material or information you may have missed in class. If you know in advance that you will absent for a given class, please ask a classmate to give you notes on any content or class business that you missed.

Laptops/Tablets/Phones: You may use laptops or tablets in the class to take notes and work on in-class projects/activities. Don’t use your laptops or tablets for any other purpose. You may not use your phone for any purpose during class.

Please also bring earbuds or headphones to class. There will be several workshops and group activities in which it will be helpful for groups to listen to different songs at the same time in the same room. If you do not have access to headphones or earbuds, please notify me and I will lend you a pair for the semester.

Academic Honesty: You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually in section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask.

Accommodations: If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation in class, please notify me immediately.

UWS Outcomes
Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing
- Use writing and discussion to work through and interpret complex ideas from readings and other texts (e.g., visual, musical, verbal)
• Critically analyze your own and others’ choices regarding language and form (e.g., in student texts or formally published texts)
• Engage in multiple modes of inquiry using text (e.g., field research, library-based inquiry, web searching)
• Incorporate significant research (as above) into writing that engages a question and/or topic and uses it as a central theme for a substantive, research-based essay
• Use writing to support interpretations of text, and understand that there are multiple interpretations of text
• Consider and express the relationship of your own ideas to the ideas of others

Processes
• Use written, visual, and/or experience-based texts as tools to develop ideas for writing
• Understand that writing takes place through recurring processes of invention, revision, and editing
• Develop successful, flexible strategies for your own writing through the processes of invention, revision, and editing
• Experience and understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
• Learn to critique your own and others’ work
• Be reflective about your writing processes

Knowledge of Conventions
• Understand the conventions of particular genres of writing
• Use conventions associated with a range of dialects, particularly standardized written English (but not necessarily limited to it)
• Recognize and address patterns in your writing that unintentionally diverge from patterns expected by their audience/s
• Practice using academic citational systems (MLA) for documenting work

Four-Credit Course
Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

NB: Assigned reading, writing, and listening must be completed before the class it is listed under so that we may discuss the material in class. Note that how well you prepare for class will influence your overall class participation grade.

Due dates for written assignments are listed in bold. Each assignment is due by 10PM on the day listed.

Unit 1 (Close Reading): “Our Love is Here to Stay”

Friday, August 31
In-class: introductions, syllabus

Tuesday, September 4
Read: How to Write about Music; “Analysis: What It Is and What It Does”; Close Reading Assignment Sequence; Group Agreements
Listen: Smith, “Back-Water Blues”
In-class: The close reading method; close-reading music

Thursday, September 6 - Assignment 1.1A or 1.1B (choose either the text option or the music option) due by 10PM on Latte (also bring hard copy to class)

Friday, September 7
Read: Harvey, “Elements of the Academic Essay”; What to Listen For in Music
Listen: Anderson/Ellington, “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing)”; Armstrong, “Heebie Jeebies”
In-class: What makes a good thesis?; Close reading workshop

Monday, September 10 - Assignment 1.1A or 1.1B (work on the option that you didn’t already submit) due by 10PM

Tuesday, September 11
NO CLASS (Rosh Hashanah)

Friday, September 14
Read: Lomanno, “Enunciating Power and Explosive Time”
Listen: McLorin Salvant, “You Bring Out the Savage in Me”; “John Henry”; “I Wish That I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate”
In-class: Motivating an argument; Intro paragraph workshop

Saturday, September 15 - Assignment 1.2 (motivated thesis)
Monday, September 17 - Feedback on Assignment 1.2 due to myself and the other members of your peer group

Tuesday, September 18
Read: Feldstein, “I Don't Trust You Anymore’: Nina Simone, Culture, and Black Activism in the 1960s”
Listen: Simone, “Go Limp”; “Mississippi Goddam”; “Pirate Jenny”
In-class: Structure and outlining; close reading example

Thursday, September 20 - Assignment 1.3 (outline)

Friday, September 21
In-class: Giving helpful feedback; Workshop on Essay 1 (bring hard copies of your outlines)

Sunday, September 23 - Draft of Essay 1 due to me and your peer group

Tuesday, September 25
NO CLASS (Brandeis Monday)

Tuesday, September 25 - Peer review letters due to me and your peer group

Close Reading Conferences, Tuesday, September 25 - Thursday, September 27

Unit 2 (Lens): “We Insist!”

Friday, September 28
Read: “When Malindy Sings”
Listen: “Strange Fruit”
In-class: Intro to the Lens

Tuesday, October 2
Listen: We Insist! (tracks 1-3); “Alabama”; “Truth is Marching In”; “Lonely Woman”
In-class: Conclusions; Jazz in the 1960s

Wednesday, October 3 - Revision of Essay #1 with cover letter

Friday, October 5
Read: “Revisited! The Freedom Now Suite”; “What Jazz is -- and Isn’t”
Listen: We Insist! (tracks 4 and 5, re-listen to tracks 1-3)
In-class: We Insist! Critical summaries

Monday, October 8 - Assignment 2.1 (critical lens summary)
Tuesday, October 9
Read: “What Makes ‘Jazz’ the Revolutionary Music of the Twentieth Century”
In-class: Using a lens

Thursday, October 11 - Assignment 2.2 (imaginary discourse)

Friday, October 12
Read: Re-read the Ho and Marsalis essays
Listen: Re-listen to your chosen track(s) from We Insist!
In-class: Using a lens, part II; Creating a discourse

Monday, October 15 - Assignment 2.3 (intro paragraph)

Tuesday, October 16
Read: Lens essays (you will need to re-read in order to craft your thesis and motive).
In-class: Paragraphs and transitions; troubleshooting the lens

Friday, October 19
Listen: “Fables of Faubus”; “Original Faubus Fables”; “Oh Lord Don’t Let Them Drop That Atomic Bomb on Me”
In-class: Citations, Charles Mingus

Saturday, October 20 - First draft of lens essay due to myself and your peer group

Monday, October 22 - Peer Review letters due to myself and your peer group

Tuesday, October 23
Read: Your peers’ essays
In-class: Paper 2 workshop

***Lens Conferences, Tuesday, October 23 - Thursday, October 26***

Unit 3 (Research): “The Scene Today”

Friday, October 26
Read: How to Write About Music (pp. 61-72)
In-class: Introduction to research and sources; Research in the arts

Tuesday, October 30 - Revision of paper 2 with cover letter

Tuesday, October 30
Read: Complete library tutorial on Latte before class
In-class: Library session
Friday, November 2
Read: Ethan Iverson interview with Cecile McLorin-Salvant; Being Here
Listen: Sarah Vaughan (TBD); Cecile McLorin-Salvant (TBD); Andy Bey (TBD)
In-class: The jazz voice today; Researching living subjects

Sunday, November 4 - Assignment 3.1 (research plan)

Tuesday, November 6
NO CLASS - conferences

Research Conferences: Tuesday, November 6 - Thursday, November 8

Friday, November 9
Read: Style guide excerpts
In-class: Style, voice, and positioning; How to present research

Tuesday, November 13
In-class: Library session

Thursday, November 15 - Assignment 3.2 (annotated bibliography)

Friday, November 16 (NB: We will meet at 9:30AM this class)
In-class: Student research presentations

Tuesday, November 20 (NB: We will meet at 9:30AM this class)
In-class: Student research presentations

Tuesday, November 20 - Assignment 3.3 (outline)

Friday, November 23
NO CLASS - Thanksgiving

Tuesday, November 27 (NB: We will meet at 9:30AM this class)
In-class: Student research presentations

Thursday, November 29 - First Draft Paper 3 due to myself and your Peer group

Friday, November 30 (NB: We will meet at 9:30AM this class)
In-class: Student research presentations
Monday, December 3 - Peer Review letters due to myself and your peer group

Tuesday, December 4
   Read: Your peers’ papers
   In-class: Paper 3 workshop

Friday, December 7
   In-class: Timed essay

Tuesday, December 11
   In-class: Portfolio instructions

Wednesday, December 12- Portfolios (must be in one document). Including: portfolio cover letter, final research cover letter and final research essay. See portfolio handout for order of assignments.