

## **Religion and Music in Cuba**

Religion 52, Fall 2012, MWF 1:45 p.m.-2:50 p.m.

Professor: Elizabeth Pérez

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Office Hours: Wednesday afternoons or by appointment

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### **Course description**

This course tells the story of Cuba's religious formations through their musical genres, and examines the role music has played in celebrating deities, ancestors, and community. We explore the relationship between dance, spirit possession, and mythology, as well as the construction of nation, race, and gender through music. Among the music to be considered is that of the all-male secret society Abakuá; initiatory traditions of Lucumí and Palo Monte; Haitian Tumba Francesa; and Havana-based hip-hop.

### **Requirements**

1. You are expected to finish the **assigned readings** on time and participate fully in class discussions. Come prepared to be called on at random and to share your impressions of the material.
2. You will be asked to write a short (2-3 page) **reaction paper** to one of the readings before the midterm.
3. There will be a take-home **midterm exam** and your choice of a 8-10 page **final exam or research paper** due at the end of the quarter. The exams will be essay-question format. Topics for research papers must be submitted to me for approval via email or during office hours.
4. In addition, you are responsible for **presenting** one of the musical styles/traditions listed below. This will entail bringing in video clips and/or music samples to play in class, and discussing the relation of the sounds heard to one or more of the readings assigned for that day.
5. You will need to attend and participate in the **dance workshop** planned for the course.
6. **Class attendance** is of the utmost importance. You are required to inform me *before class* of any absences. Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Midterm exam/Final paper: 40%

Classroom participation: 30%

Discussion question and short reaction paper: 20%

Presentation: 10%

7. Please observe the following standards for **courtesy**:

\*No audible yawning, flamboyant stretching, or obvious eating

\*No whispering and passing notes

**The professor reserves the right to fail/withhold credit for the course unless all of the assignments have been turned in on time.**

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Use your own words, and credit the origins of the facts and ideas used in your writing. This applies to any text found on the internet. Do not cut and paste sentences from elsewhere and insert them into your own papers. You must acknowledge all borrowings using a standard citation format, properly followed. I reserve the right to use the anti-plagiarism software [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) to ensure that the writings you submit are yours alone, but passages from your work can also be easily “Googled” to confirm the same.

WARNING: Websites are notoriously poor sources of information about African religions of the Americas. They tend to be outdated, stereotyped, or simply incorrect; therefore, plagiarizing—that is, stealing—from the web exposes you not only to failure of the class but also innumerable and profound factual errors!

### **Mon. 9/10: Welcome**

*Excerpt from “When the Spirits Dance Mambo”*

### **Wed. 9/12: Rhythm and Race**

Kofi Agawu, “The Invention of ‘African Rhythm,’” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (1995): 380-95.

John Blacking, *How Musical Is Man?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), 3-12.

John M. Chernoff, “The Rhythmic Medium in African Music,” *New Literary History* 22, no. 4 (1991): 1093-1102.

### **Fri. 9/14: Introducing the Study of Afro-Cuban Music**

Isabelle Leymarie, *Cuban Fire: The Story of Salsa and Latin Jazz* (London: Continuum, 1997), 8-12; 37-42.

Ned Sublette, “Principles of Postmamboism,”  
<http://boingboing.net/2009/12/15/principles-of-postma.html>

Robert Farris Thompson, "An Aesthetic of the Cool," *African Arts* 7, no. 1 (1973): 40-43+64-67+89-91.

**Mon. 9/17: Early Cuban History**

Ned Sublette, "We Have Always Had the Drum," "Zarabanda's Mambo," "By Post from the Indies," and "The Shipyard," in *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2004), 38-47; 48-58; 73-83; 84-97.

selections from *Roots of Rhythm*

**Wed. 9/19: Kongo/Bantu Beginnings**

Ned Sublette, "The Western and Central Sudanic Blues," "The Congo That Was Cuba," and "Tres and Bongó," in *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2004), 159-74; 175-89; 333-46.

**Fri. 9/21: Palo Monte**

Todd Ramón Ochoa, "Palo Society," in *Society of the Dead: Quita Maniquita and Palo Praise in Cuba* (Berkeley: University of California, 2012), 71-80.

**Mon. 9/24: Carnival: Religious License and Revelry**

Fernando Ortiz, "The Afro-Cuban Festival 'Day of the Kings'" in Judith Bettelheim, ed., *Cuban Festivals: A Century of Afro-Cuban Culture* (Kingston & Princeton: Ian Randle & Markus Wiener, 2001), 1-40, 54-55 (Glossary; consult entire Glossary as necessary).

**Wed. 9/26: Haiti, 'Dahomey,' and Vodou**

Yvonne Daniel, "Arará Nación," in *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomblé* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 132-35.

Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, "Vodou: Haitian Religion," in *Afro-Caribbean Religions: An Introduction to their Historical, Cultural and Sacred Traditions* (Temple University Press, 2010), 57-94 [excerpts].

**Fri. 9/28: Tumba Francesa and Changüí**

Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier, "The Tumbas Francesas Societies in Cuba," <http://www.carleton.ca/califa/tumbas.htm>

Benjamin Lapidus, "The Afro-Haitian Presence in Eastern Cuba and its Significance in the Development of the Cuban *Son*," in *Origins of Cuban Music and Dance: Changüí* (Lanham, M.D.: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 123-47.

*footage of one Tumba Francesa in Guantánamo, 1999*

**Mon. 10/1: The Leopard Society and Ñañigos of Cuba**

*Readings TBA*

**Wed. 10/3: Beats of the Brotherhood: Abakuá**

Ivor Miller, "Havana Is the Key: Abakuá in Cuban Music" in *Voice of the Leopard: African Secret Societies and Cuba* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 160-74.

Ivor Miller, "A Secret Society Goes Public: The Relationship between Abakuá and Cuban Popular Culture," *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (2000): 161-88,  
<http://www.afrocubaweb.com/ivormiller/secretsgoespublic.pdf>

**Fri. 10/5: The Drummer Speaks**

Katherine J. Hagedorn, "Drum Talk: Sweet and Tasty Rhythms for the Orichas," *Emergences* 13, no. 1-2 (2003): 95-104.

*Film*: "Sworn To the Drum: A Tribute to Francisco Aguabella"

**Mon. 10/8: Los Chinos No Son Bobos: The Chinese-Cuban Contribution**

Mauro García Triana and Pedro Eng Herrera, "Chinese in Cuban Cultural Life," in *The Chinese in Cuba, 1847-Now*, ed. and trans. Gregor Benton (Lanham, M.D.: Lexington Books, 2009), 75-96; 102-14; 120-33 (notes to 134-41).

Alicia Castro, Ingrid Kummels, and Manfred Schäfer, "Our Family—an *Ajiaco* with Many Ingredients," in *Queens of Havana: The Amazing Adventures of Anacaona, Cuba's Legendary All-Girl Dance Band* (New York: Grove Press, 2002), 21-35.

**Wed. 10/10: Espiritismo: Creole Music for Cosmopolitan Souls**

Alicia Castro, Ingrid Kummels, and Manfred Schäfer, *Queens of Havana: The Amazing Adventures of Anacaona, Cuba's Legendary All-Girl Dance Band* (New York: Grove Press, 2002), 136-40.

Nolan Warden “Cajón pa’ los Muertos: Transculturation and Emergent Tradition in Afro-Cuban Ritual Drumming and Song” (M.A., Masters Thesis, Tufts University), [excerpts].

**Fri. 10/12: The Rule of the Orichas: Lucumí**

Miguel “Willie” Ramos, “Afro-Cuban Orisha Worship,” in Arturo Lindsay, ed., *Santería Aesthetics in Contemporary Latin American Art* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 56-74.

Robert Farris Thompson, “Orchestrating Water and the Wind: Oshun’s Art in Atlantic Context” in Joseph M. Murphy and Mei-Mei Sanford, eds., *Òsun across the Waters: A Yoruba Goddess in Africa and the Americas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 251-62.

**Mon. 10/15: Feasts for the (Gods’) Ears**

Yvonne Daniel, “The Dancing Body and Embodied Wisdom,” in *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomblé* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 246-71 (to section heading).

Yvonne Daniel, “A Cuban Wemilere,” in *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomblé* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 154-56, and “Embodied ‘Mathematics’ of Drum Performance,” 86-93.

*excerpt from “When the Spirits Dance Mambo”*

**Wed. 10/17: Theorizing Sacred Dance**

Yvonne Daniel, “A Cuban Yoruba Ritual,” “Body Knowledge at the Crossroads,” and “Yoruba Nación,” in *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomblé* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 14-28; 51-81 (until last paragraph); 137-42.

**Fri. 10/19: Problematizing Possession**

Katherine J. Hagedorn, “To Have and to Hold: Possession Performance in Afro-Cuban Regla de Ocha,” in Lillian Ashcraft-Eason, Darnise Martin, and Oyeronke Olademo, eds., *Women and New and Africana Religions* (Santa Barbara: Praeger/ABC-CLIO Press, 2009), 145-66.

**Mon. 10/22: From “Black Barbarism” to Patrimony**

Robin D. Moore, “Nationalizing Blackness: The Vogue of *Afrocubanismo*” in *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University

of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 114-65.

selections from *Roots of Rhythm*

**Wed. 10/24: Black Identity Formation, Music, and Religion**

David García, “‘I Was Born of Africa’: Black Consciousness and *Cubanidad*,” in *Arsenio Rodríguez and the Transnational Flows of Latin Popular Music* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 12-31.

**Fri. 10/26: Ancestors, Guides, and Other Spirits of the Deceased**

Nolan Warden “Cajón pa’ los Muertos: Transculturation and Emergent Tradition in Afro-Cuban Ritual Drumming and Song” (M.A., Masters Thesis, Tufts University), [excerpts].

**Mon. 10/29: The Sacred Musician’s Craft**

María Teresa Vélez, *Drumming for the Gods: The Life and Times of Felipe García Villamil, Santero, Palero, and Abakuá* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 3-58.

**Wed. 10/31: Gender and the Bata Drums**

Katherine J. Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 89-97.

Amanda Vincent and Joy Woolfe, “Amelia Pedroso: Rebel Priestess, Sacred Drums,” *Glendora Review* 3, nos. 3 and 4 (2004): 57-62.

Andrea Pryor, “The House of Añá: Women and Batá,” *CBMR (Center for Black Music Research) Digest* 12, no. 2 (1999): 6-8.

Elizabeth Sayre, “Cuban Bata Drumming and Women Musicians: An Open Question,” *CBMR (Center for Black Music Research) Digest* 13, no. 1 (2000): 12-15,  
<http://musicandculture.blogspot.com/2008/03/women-and-bat-drums.html>

Kenneth George Schweitzer, “Afro-Cuban Batá Drum Aesthetics: Developing Individual and Group Technique, Sound and Identity” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, 2003), 72-84 (in the text).

**Fri. 11/2: Afro-Cuban Musicians in the “La Yuma”**

Delia Poey, “‘La Lupe!': Performing Race, Gender, Nation, and Excess,” *Women & Performance* 15, no. 2 (2005): 79-98.

Marta Moreno Vega, “The Yoruba Orisha Tradition Comes to New York City,” *African American Review* 29, no. 2 (1995): 201-206.

**Mon. 11/5: The Rise of the ‘Folkloric’**

María Teresa Vélez, *Drumming for the Gods: The Life and Times of Felipe García Villamil, Santero, Palero, and Abakuá* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 69-104.

**Wed. 11/7: The Sounds of Socialism**

Robin D. Moore, “Ay, Dios Ampárame: Sacred Music and Revolution,” in *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 197-224.

**Fri. 11/9: Rhyme, Religion, and Revolution: Cuban Hip-Hop**

Juan Carlos L. Albarrán, “Dissonance in the Revolution” in Mauricio A. Font, ed., *Cuba in Transition? Pathways to Renewal, Long-Term Development and Global Reintegration* (New York: Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies, City University of New York, 2006), 315-24, <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/bildn/publications/documents/Albarran22.pdf>

Mimi Valdés, “Dreaming in Cuban,” *Vibe* (May 2001): 109-14.

*Film*: “Guerrilla Radio: The Hip-Hop Struggle under Castro”

**Mon. 11/12: Religion and *Timba***

Vincenzo Perna, “‘Oh God, Protect Me!': Race, Religion and the Revolution,” in *Timba: The Sound of the Cuban Crisis* (London and Burlington, V.T.: Ashgate, 2005), 161-91.

**Final discussion**

**Wed. 11/21: Final Paper Due, 5:00p.m.;** please slip paper under door of my office *and* attach in an email to me.