

“Technologies of Pop Listening: Hybrid Ethnographic Research and the Music Industry”

**Guest Seminar by Prof. Liz Przybylski (University of California,
Riverside) Thursday January 29, 10:15-11:15, via [Zoom](#)**
Everyone welcome

This talk explores contemporary hybrid ethnographic methods, by way of new research in gender and technology in the popular music industry. Using new interviews and digital tools, I analyze the promise versus reality of streaming audio for the democratization of music distribution, with a unique focus on how technological solutions have been posed for industry problems. At the same time, this work explores relationships between cultural trends—here changing appetites for equitable representation—and music companies’ efforts to harness them. Streaming platforms have launched streaming audio playlists featuring female, non-binary, trans*, and gender-expansive artists, such as Spotify’s “EQUAL” and



“Transcend” and Tidal’s “Amplify Her Voice,” as part of a broader corporate response to critiques of gender and racial inequity in the industry. Many music professionals have been asking to what degree these initiatives redress these issues for performers and other professionals. Drawing on recent research with listeners using hybrid ethnographic methods, I propose a category of ethical media consumption where listeners consciously select music based on their values, including a desire to correct for biases they observe in the music industry. The talk examines how audience members navigate these curated experiences—sometimes with enthusiasm, other times expressing discomfort, particularly with AI-generated suggestions that feel unsettling. Together we will ask questions about ethnographic methodology as well as music industry studies: what particular insights about technologies of music distribution and consumption can be gleaned from using a hybrid online offline research strategy? Beyond technologically-based strategies, what other interventions might industry professionals engage with that have the potential to impact how gendered working conditions are experienced, and even reshaped?



Dr. Liz Przybylski is a scholar of hip hop and the popular music industry. Liz wrote *Sonic Sovereignty: Hip Hop, Indigeneity and Shifting Popular Music Mainstreams* (NYU Press, winner of the 2025 Greg Tate Award and of the 2024 IASPM Canada Book Prize) and *Hybrid Ethnography* (SAGE, 2020, Honorable Mention for the Bruno Nettl Prize). An awardee of the National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Fellowship, Liz’s recent publications address on- and off-line hybrid ethnographic research, the role of technology in pop music distribution, Indigenous hip hop, and popular music pedagogy. Liz’s ongoing work interrogates music as labor within international popular music industries. A Full Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of California, Riverside, Dr. Przybylski teaches courses on ethnographic methods, popular music, Indigenous music, and gender and sexuality. On radio, Liz hosted “Continental Drift” on WNUR and content for “At The Edge of Canada: Indigenous Research” on CJUM. www.dr-lp.org