

Music: A Cultural Experience (GEN_MUS_170: Introduction to Music)

Mixtape Project Proposal

Due: Friday, 5/7



Please create a proposal for your final mixtape project. In 250-300 words, describe your mixtape theme and how it will unite your selected recordings. Include the names of 2-3 recordings that you would include in your mixtape and explain how they fit into your theme. I will offer individual feedback on your proposals, and then after a week for revision, you will share your proposals with your peers to give and receive further feedback. Here is the project timeline:

- **5/7** Proposal due; receive feedback from me
- **5/14** Revised proposals due; give peer feedback
- **6/12** Final project due

For your final project, you will curate a mixtape of 9-12 recordings organized around a theme. Along with this playlist, you will write an essay of 1500-1750 words. This document should function like “liner notes” for your mixtape, explaining your theme, describing the significance of each chosen recording, and demonstrating an understanding of course concepts through relevant description and analysis.

Things to do

- **Theme:** Select a theme for your mixtape
- **Recordings:** Choose 2-3 recordings that fit into your theme
- **Description:** Describe your theme of your mixtape and your reasons for selecting these recordings

Theme: Select a theme

- Your theme could have to do with a social or cultural feature of music, like genre, style, a specific time and place, a social movement, a group of people, a record label, and/or something else. The more specific, the better. For example:
 - Chicago house music, Northern Soul in England in the 1970s, Odyssey Records releases, early successes on Stones Throw Records, use of the theremin in Hollywood films, footwork music, Tik Tok pop hits, piano music of early 20th century Vienna, songs of the Civil Rights Movement, etc.
- Alternatively, you might choose to theme your mixtape around something broader or conceptual. For example:
 - Songs about heartbreak, music that you associate with important events in your life, music that addresses ecology or climate change, etc.
- You are welcome to mix and match with thematic organization principles and tailor your mixtape to your interests. Combining social/cultural and conceptual themes might be a good approach. For example:
 - Songs about alienation by Odd Future music collective members, music used to represent monstrosity in film from the 1970s, music created to facilitate brain development in babies in the 1950s, protest music created and performed in 2019-2020 Hong Kong protests, etc.
- The key to selecting a compelling theme for your project will be whether it will allow you to write thoughtful, compelling, and informative liner notes in an essay of 1500-1750 words that describes how you curated your mixtape.
- Think broadly about the principles you might use to curate this mixtape. What do you find interesting and/or enjoyable in music?
- You will need to do some research about your theme and selected pieces of music, so pick a theme that will permit you to research music you want to learn more about.

Recordings: Choose 2-3 pieces of music

- As you develop your theme, identify specific pieces of music and recordings that you might want to include in your mixtape.
- Think of curating a mixtape as storytelling. Each recording should fit your theme and tell a part of the story. How do you want to introduce and conclude your story?
- How might you write about each recording? Consider kinds of research and information you might choose to provide for each recording.

Description: Describe your mixtape theme and the recordings you selected

- Describe your mixtape theme.
 - How will you focus your mixtape to address a specific topic, concept, or theme?

- How will you curate a handful of recordings from the vast sea of music that exists?
 - Why is this an interesting or worthwhile theme to you? What might you learn through doing this project?
- Describe how each of your selected recordings fit into your mixtape theme.
 - How will each of the 2-3 recordings you've selected fit into your mixtape?
 - How does each recording epitomize, embody, or characterize your theme?
 - How might each recording tell a different part of the story of your mixtape?

Tips and Suggestions

- If you're not sure how to develop a theme, perhaps start by thinking of two pieces of music that you group together in your mind. What do they have in common? Why might this commonality be interesting to think about write about?
- If you're not totally decided on a theme for your final project, that's fine—but the more you can share now, the better I can advise you.
- It will benefit you in the long run to devote time to finding a theme that will hold your interest, given the length of time you'll be stuck with it.
- Some themes will not lend themselves to thoughtful, compelling, and informative liner notes. For example, "Songs by [band]," "Music of [genre]," or "Music of [nation]" are not specific enough.
- Your final project can be submitted as a written document or delivered orally in a podcast-like or video essay format. Using an audio or video format would give you the opportunity to include musical excerpts, slides, images, or clips. If working in an audio/video format is appealing, but you have questions about how to do this, let me know.

I will read and reply to each of your proposals with comments, suggestions, and questions to help direct your paper-writing process. I'm looking forward to reading your ideas!

Rubric

This project is worth 2.5% of your grade, organized into 10 points. In total, your proposal should be 250-300 words in length. It should answer most of the questions posed in the Description section above.

- **Theme description** (5 points): A student will receive full credit for description of a mixtape theme with thoughtful structure and correct grammar.
- **Recordings & Liner Notes** (5 points): A student will receive full credit for listing the names of 2-3 recordings, crediting the creators and performers, and describing how each recording fits into the theme with thoughtful structure and correct grammar.