

## Unit 2 Project: Race and Creativity Essay

### Project description

In this unit's readings, Marvin Freedman and Irving Kolodin describe issues of race and racism during the early swing era. Other readings up to this point in the semester examine similar issues regarding differing eras of the early music industry, from minstrelsy through the rock and roll era.

For this project, you will write an essay summarizing the respective arguments of three artists, authors, or critics encountered thus far in the listening and reading regarding the confluence of race, creativity, and opportunity within the music industry.

### Objectives

Through this project, you will:

- Compare, interpret, and analyze a variety of works;
- Analyze the conflicts, opportunities, and differences between groups of people during this era of American history;
- Investigate and explore the differences in these populations' experiences; and
- Formulate your own ideas based on the synthesis of information from a variety of sources, especially the diverse primary documents included in the readings.

### Directions

Like all of our projects, this is a multi-step process. Each stage has its own deadlines, listed in the calendar.

**FIRST SUBMISSION:** First, you will need to prepare and do some research by watching the lectures, completing the reading, and doing the listening. Check the course calendar and note the project deadlines.

You will draft an essay that summarizes the position of three authors, artists, populations, or critics that we have come across thus far in the course in terms of their racial standing within the early music industry. For example, these can be the arguments made by critics or commentators from the reading regarding the relationships between musical ability or style and race in individual artists or populations. Or you can describe opportunities and hindrances experienced by artists due to their race. For each figure:

1. Describe how they address the relationships between minority (African-American or Jewish, for example) and white performers in the music industry,
2. Compare how the situation you describe fits into the intellectual perspectives of the contemporaneous cultural milieu,
3. Analyze one artistic (musical) example that reflects the intellectual perspective or contemporaneous context of your example. (This example does not have to come from that individual. As a contemporary example, if our book had an article from a major politician criticizing twerking, the musical example could be Miley Cyrus's 2013 VMA performance or the video from "Anaconda" by Nicki Minaj.)
4. Reference specific textual, musical, or contextual elements of the musical example and provide a link as a footnote or endnote in your essay if you use an example that is not part of the listening list.
5. In the conclusion of your essay (after you have gone through these steps for three examples), investigate and describe ways in which the human experience as outlined by these early 20<sup>th</sup> century artists and intellectuals remains consistent with and differs from our contemporary context, with special emphasis on the opportunities and hindrances experienced by diverse populations of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This essay should follow these guidelines for full credit:

- It is not necessary to supplement the class materials, but if you need to do further research to make your point clearly and persuasively, use a standard and consistent method of citation and include a bibliography.
- Include links to any musical examples that are not on the course's listening playlists, especially for your discussion of the current industry climate.
- Check and recheck your spelling and grammar.
- Be sure that your essay makes an overall argument regarding the intellectual cultural milieu of the time in regard to racial opportunity and creative freedom. Introduce your argument and return to it in your conclusion.
- Cite specifics in your analyses and examples, both when you discuss materials from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and when you discuss the current climate.

If you are struggling to orient your ideas, take the Marvin Freedman and Irving Kolodin articles as a starting point. Do you agree with one or the other? Why? Support your opinion with facts and analysis. Once your draft is complete:

1. Copy your essay into the group discussion board for peer review. For ease of reading, copy and paste your essay into the body of a new thread instead of attaching a document file. Provide links to Spotify or YouTube for any songs that are not required listening for the course. Make sure to submit your essay to your group's discussion board by the first submission deadline in the calendar.

**PEER REVIEW:** The second stage of the project is for peer review and revision.

1. Soon after the final submission deadline, return to your group's submission forum and comment on AT LEAST two of your group members' essays. For each comment, provide at least one positive critique and AT LEAST one suggestion for improvement. Feedback should address the formal structure of the essay; the effectiveness of examples; and the clarity, quality, and defense of the argument. Be sure to complete these comments by the peer review deadline posted in the calendar.

**FINAL SUBMISSION:** The third stage involves your preparation for final submission.

1. Review your peers' work and comments, thinking critically about which ones you would like to incorporate into your work.
2. Make any revisions to your essay.
3. Submit your revised essay, with links to your examples, using the Final Submission tool.

60% (20% x 3)	Each of the three content areas (including analysis of songs)
10%	Reflection on contemporary industry (Including analysis of effective and specific examples)
10%	Met first submission deadline (including essay, links to examples, and necessary documentation)
20%	Made quality comments on peers' first submissions