IFS2072: AMERICA'S POPULAR MUSIC

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Mode of Instruction: Online

Course Description

This course surveys the development of popular music from the early 20th century to the present, examining the music and the cultural, social, economic, technological, and political conditions surrounding that music. This course will widen your comprehension of the times, places, cultural contexts, intellectual debates, and economic conditions that foster (or hinder) artistic innovation. Throughout, you are asked to investigate the ways in which music and society interact: how are people engaging musical production? What are the ways in which listeners or artists are able to change the course of the music industry as an institution? When and how can we see points of shifting power between the industry's focus on economics booms and busts, the vast creative output of diverse musicians or power brokers, and the always changing tastes of listening audiences? In short, what can we learn about America's societies and social movements through the examination of ostensibly popular music?

Course Objectives

The course is open to all students regardless of major and there are no prerequisites. It is designed to achieve five objectives. By the end, students will:

1. develop listening skills and vocabulary to describe and appraise musical sounds, both familiar and otherwise;

2. identify the major eras of American popular music's development in both artistic and contextual terms;

3. associate musical products with both musical and extramusical contexts;

4. relate contemporary popular music to previous influences; and

5. assess the goals, successes, and failures of musicians and their music in terms of their historical, social, economic, and political contexts.

This course has been approved as meeting the Liberal Studies requirements for **Cultural Practice and Humanities** and thus is designed to help you become a thoughtful patron of and participant in cultural practice. As such, you will demonstrate the ability to:

1. compare and interpret intellectual and artistic expressions of a variety of cultures; and

2. compare, interpret and create or model cultural artifacts that function as widely varied reflections of human perspectives and/or practices.

In addition, this course has been approved as meeting the requirements for the **Diversity in Western Eperience (Y)** requirements and thus is designed to help you become a culturally conscious participant in global community. You will demonstrate the ability to:

1. recognize and analyze differences between individuals and groups of people; identify and explain the potential benefits and/or conflicts arising from human differences within the current national and/or international landscape.

2. investigate the diversity of human experience within Western culture, considering, for example, age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and social class, and appreciate the contributions of different social groups.

Finally, this course has also been approved as meeting the requirements for the **E-series** and thus is designed to help you become an inter-disciplinary and flexible thinker; a lifelong learner; and a team builder. You will demonstrate the ability to:

1. analyze and synthesize information from within and across disciplines to: examine existing questions and problems from a variety of perspectives, formulate novel questions and ideas, and explain these questions and ideas in written and oral formats.

2. think creatively and flexibly by envisaging new approaches to real-world scenarios or questions.

3. learn, think, and solve problems independently and in teams, as is required to engage in the life-long consideration of, and the fostering of cooperative solutions to, complex problems.

Course Materials

There is one required textbook for this course. The first deadlines are set so that you have ample time to get the book, even if you add the course late. I suggest purchasing it new in order to avoid shipping delays. Not having the required textbook in hand will not be an acceptable reason for a deadline extension.

1. David Brackett. The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates. (3rd edition).

2. Access to Spotify available through www.spotify.com. Note: As of this writing, you can listen to playlists with the free Spotify service. This may suffice for many, but there is also a discounted subscription rate for the premium service available at

www.spotify.com/us/student/. The differences are always changing, but for our purposes you will need to be able to listen to playlists and specific albums.

3. Webcam or some other mechanism for sharing short video responses. If your computer does not have one built in, there are recommendations for $10-20 USB webcams on Blackboard. A smartphone with video capabilities can also suffice.

4. Recommended: A good pair of headphones. Laptop speakers cannot fully reproduce the sound of most music, so quality external speakers or headphones will change the way you hear music on an everyday basis. I provide more details and inexpensive recommendations on Blackboard.

Course Structure

The course is organized around a series of units that explore the place of music in relation to social, political, and economic forces in American history and popular culture. There is no expectation of previous musical or music theory study for this course. There is no expectation of technical knowledge for the class other than accessing Blackboard. Any further requirements will be explained and demonstrated where needed.

Each week will have a set of modules, accessible through Blackboard, that

1. provides an outline for the unit,

2. lists required and recommended readings,

3. links to listening examples both within Spotify playlists or other web resources,

4. contains the embedded lectures, and

5. links to required quizzes, assignments, and their directions.

Readings

Readings from the text are listed in the schedule as "PRS" (for "Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader") followed by a chapter number. They should be prepared prior to the watching the lecture video. Other readings will be posted as PDF files or external website links. These additional readings will include scholarly writings on issues related to popular music and society, interviews with artists, journalistic essays, music criticism, art history, etc., drawn from a variety of sources and perspectives.

Listening Examples

As this is a music course, music will make up an integral part of our class. It is important to listen attentively, or "actively." This means that you should not do your only listening while talking on the phone, doing math homework, or using Facebook. To best understand the

course material, I recommend listening to each example and playlist three times: before you start the unit's module, after reading the materials, and after watching the lecture. You should feel comfortable discussing what you hear with specificity and clarity, which requires your attention when listening. The same applies to the YouTube video examples throughout the course.

Lecture Videos

For each unit, I will embed a series of short lecture videos into the Blackboard modules which give me the opportunity to discuss the readings and listening examples and develop larger themes. Watch these lectures in their listed order, after completing the reading and listening for the module. (If a link or embedded file does not work, please let me know immediately so that I can fix it. I check these throughout the semester, but occasionally technologies change.)

Contact Hours

There will be weekly assignments that require interaction between your peers, the mentors, and with the instructor. These assignments will take the form of discussion board posts or blog commentaries with comments and communication from the instructional team. During major projects, such as the Race and Creativity essay described below, there will be small group face-to-face video- conferencing with the instructor as you move through the planning, drafting, and revision stages. Virtual office hours are also open, by appointment.

Assignment Descriptions

Detailed instructions, grading criteria, and rubrics for each assignment will be provided within Blackboard. The following provides a brief description of the assignments.

Blues and Tin Pan Alley Compositions

Students will write two sets of lyrics to model the blues and verse/refrain forms that were common throughout the early music industry. Each student will have the opportunity to record him- or herself singing with or without accompaniment for extra credit. Examples from the course provide models for content and rhyme patterns. Each student will share his or her lyrics with the group, accompanied by a short (500 word) that:

- analyses two songs that he or she used as a model for these lyrics that describes the tone and the effectiveness of metaphor or innuendo,

- interprets the emotional content conveyed in the composed lyrics,

- describes how metaphor or other lyrical techniques furthered the compositional experience.

Each member of a small group of students will be responsible for reading and responding to both their peers' essays and lyrics. Feedback will address the formal structure of the texts, the efficacy of achieving the lyrical goals as outlined by the student's essay, and any suggestions for improving the submitted lyrics. Students will have the opportunity to incorporate their peers' suggestions before submitting a final version of the lyrics and essays for grading. Grades will be based on adherence to the formal structures described in the course lectures and as modeled in listening examples as well as on the thoughtful responses of the essays according to the given competencies rubric.

Race and Creativity Essay

Marvin Freedman and Irving Kolodin describe issues of race and racism in the early swing era. Other readings point to similar issues regarding differing eras of the early music industry. Students will summarize the respective arguments of four artists, authors, or critics encountered thus far in the listening and reading. In an essay of 1,500 words, each student will:

- describe how each figure addresses the relationships between African-American and white performers in the music industry,

- compare how these intellectual works operate within the contemporaneous cultural milieu,

- analyze differences between how each artistic or intellectual work identifies unique approaches of diverse populations,

- investigate ways in which the human experience as outlined by these early 20th 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 21st century.

This essay will go through a multiple-submission process of revision with feedback from peer reviews and a graduate student mentor. The final product will be submitted for grading as part of your Liberal Studies Diversity in Western Culture objectives.

Music and Social Change Project

Within small groups, students will analyze attempts made by musicians, audiences, and other music industry figures to enact change in the society around them. Each group member will choose a social movement for individual analysis. These can be broadly defined and can range from, for example, Motown's successes in getting black artists heard by white audiences or Elvis's stylistic fusion of country and R&B styles. They can also be more overt, like Bob Dylan's outspoken songwriting to support the Civil Rights Movement. In a short essay (500 words) he or she will:

- compare the approaches and works of three different musical artists or other figures within the music industry as they promoted social changes, and

- analyze the specific benefits and conflicts involved in their creative activities, their opportunities for inciting change and the difficulties that they experienced or were fighting against.

Each student will share this short essay with the group, at which time the members will, together:

- compare the efficacies of these different artists and movements, giving special attention to the contexts and strategies that fostered success, and

- contribute new social movements and artists from the most recent course materials as the class moves forward.

The group will then assemble a strategy for enacting contemporary social change through music by analyzing their surroundings, choosing an issue to speak out for or against, and utilizing the lessons of past successes and failures. Each group will develop and share a cohesive approach to the issue in the form of an essay (1,000 words) written and revised by the group as a whole, which will:

- outline the issue and its component parts,

- describe a creative approach to building support for the issue through music, (This does not have to be explicitly musical. It might delineate the imagery, target audience, and lyrical content of an imaginary ensemble, as well as strategies for getting the attention of either a wide audience or a specific group of people able to best enact change.)

- discern methods for using music or an imagined set of artists to engage diverse actors toward this change.

For example: to address climate change, one could use Kickstarter to fund the tour of an activist urban folk-style group that travels to the sites of major international political gatherings like the G20 conferences. What audiences might such a group attempt to grasp? What would the benefits of attempting to sing directly to the politicians be? Would questions of access make it more useful to use YouTube and Facebook to reach wide audiences and promote change in voting patterns? If group members disagree on the issue itself, it might be easier to attempt to convince people through messaging in lyrics to recycle more consistently. These are the types of issues that groups will grapple with in developing their plan.

Grades will be a combination of the individual portion of the assignment, the final group portion, and grades given by other group members for effective participation.

Hip Hop Culture Composition

Upon completion of the hip hop unit, each group will work together to create a holistic demonstration of hip hop culture. Drawing from the elements of hip hop (rapping, DJing, graffiti, and breakdance), group members will divide their efforts and talents by choosing specific pieces to work on. Individuals can assist with multiple elements. The final product will be a video with an audio track that includes elements of dance, rapping, a beat, and visuals (graffiti, though you do not need to go paint walls, digital work can suffice, or group members can collect images from where they live or visit). Group members with specific skill sets may want to take on the beat (using Garageband or other software suggestions from Blackboard), the compilation of the video (using iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, YouTube's interface, etc.), or the creative work (videotaping themselves or others breakdancing, writing and performing raps etc.). The final product should be thematically linked, but the themes can be loose. Each member will additionally submit an essay (500 words) describing his or her take on the content of the final project, outlining his or her contribution to the process, and analyzing how the experience influences his or her individual thoughts on whether hip hop is or is not an art form.

Grades will be based on a combination of the final video product as outlined in Blackboard, the individual essay, and participation grades given by fellow group members.

Course Assessment and Evaluation

Quizzes

Quizzes will be drawn from the reading material, lectures, and listening. They may include material that was not discussed in the lecture, but will never include content from outside the course. While they are open book, they are timed. It is very difficult to score well if you have not already prepared the reading and kept your own notes before starting.

You cannot pause a quiz, which means that they must be completed in one sitting. You can take three attempts on each quiz to accommodate any technical issues that might arise, but be aware that the questions are randomized from a large pool. You will not have the same questions each time. Your last attempt's grade will count. No further attempts will be granted for technical issues, so I recommend that you use a hard-wired and trusted internet connection instead of wifi.

Assignments

Over the course of the semester, you will have four assignments as described above. These vary and include essay responses to a prompt, participation in small group project, or a similar activity. Many of these will make use of the webcam or smartphone video required for the course. Pay close attention to the grading rubrics and deadlines for each individual assignment and be sure to mark due dates for each stage of participation and submission on your calendar.

Grading Scale

Grades will be figured on the point system below. Scores will be available on Blackboard over the course of the semester. There will be no rounding and no curve in this class. There will be extra credit offered during the semester in conjunction with some assignment projects.

A 93-100
A- 90-92.99
B+ 87-89.9
B 83-86.9
B- 80-82.9
C+ 77-79.9
C 73-76.9
C- 70-72.9
D+ 67-69.9
D 63-66.9
D- 60-62.9
F .... Below 60

Quizzes 15%
Blues/TPA Composition 10%
Race and Creativity Essay 25%
Social Change Project 25%
Hip Hop Culture Composition................. 25%
<u>Two extra credit assignments .... 2%</u>
Potential points with extra credit........... 102%

Expectations for an Online Course

Because this is a fully online course, you are expected to keep up with readings and other assignments. Deadlines will be strict, and materials for a given week will only be open on Blackboard for that week. Late work will not be accepted except where excused as outlined above. Deadlines will be posted clearly on Blackboard, allowing you to work around any other engagements that you may have. Start early, stay ahead, and do not trust that everything with the online interface will be working minutes before the deadline.

Office Hours

Because this is an online class, there is no expectation that participants will be in Tallahassee at any point. Therefore, I can conduct any meetings with students virtually using a program like Facetime, Skype, Google Hangout, or the system built into Blackboard. To request a virtual meeting, send an email with a block of free time(s) and your contact information for your preferred service. We will then work out a specific time and method. I will also be available during posted office hours in Kellogg 314.

Technology

It is your responsibility to be sure that your computer and browser are compatible with the Blackboard interface. If you need assistance accessing the course website on Blackboard, contact Blackboard user support at (850) 644-8004 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday. Technical specifications for the Blackboard system are available in the course website.

Technology issues are not a valid excuse for missing deadlines. You can always complete your assignments on the computers in labs across campus, libraries, friends' and family's computers, and the list goes on. The course is self-paced, so get ahead and give yourself time if you are worried about these types of problems. Remember, you have three attempts for each assessment in order to allow for these types of issues.

Netiquette

It is important to maintain proper online etiquette within interactions with students and instructors. Use language that is appropriate for our educational setting. Use complete and correct sentences, spelling, and grammar. Avoid the abbreviations we see in texts and personal emails, no matter how common they might be. Reread and revise your submissions at all times. Under no circumstances should you use offensive, obscene, or threatening language in any form. These guidelines apply to both written and video submissions.

Classroom Policies

Liberal Studies

To demonstrate college-level writing competency as required by the State of Florida, the student must earn a "C" (2.0) or higher in the course, and earn at least a C average on the required writing assignments. If the student does not earn a C average or better on the required writing assignments, the student will not earn an overall grade of C or better in the course, no matter how well the student performs in the remaining portion of the course.

The Liberal Studies for the 21st Century Program at Florida State University builds an educational foundation that will enable FSU graduates to thrive both intellectually and materially and to support themselves, their families, and their communities through a broad and critical engagement with the world in which they live and work. Liberal Studies thus offers a transformative experience. This course has been approved as meeting the requirements for the E-Series and thus is designed to help you become an interdisciplinary and flexible thinker; a lifelong learner; and a team builder. In addition, this course has been approved for the Liberal Studies disciplinary requirement of Cultural Practice and thus is designed to help you become a thoughtful patron of and participant in cultural practices. This course has been approved as meeting the Diversity in Western Experience requirements and thus is designed to help you become a culturally conscious participant in a global community.

University Attendance Policy

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not

arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Academic Honor Policy

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to ". . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy.)

Americans With Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

1. register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and

2. bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.

This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

> Student Disability Resource Center
> 874 Traditions Way
> 108 Student Services Building
> Florida State University
> Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
> (850) 644-9566 (voice)
> (850) 644-8504 (TDD)
> sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
> http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/

Free Tutoring from FSU

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options (see http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring or contact tutor@fsu.edu). High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to

encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Sexual Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the University that its employees and students neither commit nor condone sexual harassment in any form.
http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/info/university_notices.htm

Student Eligibility for an Incomplete Grade

Incomplete ("I") grades will not be assigned, except in the case of exceptional unforeseen circumstances that occur within the last three weeks of the semester and your work has otherwise been satisfactory (C average).

Liberal Studies for the 21st Century

The Liberal Studies for the 21st Century Program at Florida State University builds an educational foundation that will enable FSU graduates to thrive both intellectually and materially and to support themselves, their families, and their communities through a broad and critical engagement with the world in which they live and work. Liberal Studies thus offers a transformative experience. This course has been approved as meeting the requirements for the E-Series and thus is designed to help you become an interdisciplinary and flexible thinker; a lifelong learner; and a team builder. In addition, this course has been approved for the Liberal Studies disciplinary requirement of College of Music and thus is designed to help you become:

1. a critical analyzer of quantitative and logical claims,

2. a clear, creative, and convincing communicator; and critical reader, and

3. a thoughtful patron of and participant in cultural practices, and

To demonstrate college-level writing competency as required by the State of Florida, the student must earn a "C" (2.0) or higher in the course, and earn at least a "C" average on the required writing assignments. If the student does not earn a "C" average or better on the required writing assignments, the student will not earn an overall grade of "C" or better in the course, no matter how well the student performs in the remaining portion of the course.