Popular Music in America
MUH 3025, E-Learning
Sections 003B, 1D22
Prerequisites: None

Instructor: Christopher Witulski (witulski@ufl.edu)
Virtual office hours by appointment

Course Objectives
Music as we know it, as we hear it, and as we think about it is not created outside of a culture or society. We may often forget this as we listen or dance to the music we know and love.

This course is designed to achieve three goals. First, it introduces new styles, genres, artists, and eras of American popular music while adding social and historical contexts to those that are already familiar. Second, it will help each student to experience music differently, more intentionally, through the discussion of musical and social elements. The final goal is to bring about a stronger conception of and more attention to what music is saying, who it is speaking to, where it comes from and is going, and how it fits into American historical experience.

With hard work, this course will widen your comprehension of the times, places, cultural contexts, intellectual debates, and economic conditions that bring foster (or hinder) artistic innovation. It will also change the way you hear music throughout your life.

Course Structure
The course is organized around a series of units that explore the place of music in relation to social and political forces in American history and popular culture. There is no expectation of previous musical or music theory study for this course. Each week will have a set of modules, accessible through a page in e-Learning (Sakai) that outlines and links to a set of readings. Readings will be drawn from assigned textbooks or given as PDF downloads or internet links. Each module will also include listening example playlists (links to your Rhapsody account, described below), embedded lecture videos, quizzes, blog prompts, or other assignments. Deadlines are clearly posted in e-Learning and no late work will be accepted outside of the conditions outlined below.

Readings
There are two required textbooks for this course. Because the course registration gives you access to the list of required materials, you are expected to have them before the beginning of the course. Therefore, if you have not already ordered these materials, I recommend that you either visit the UF bookstore or order them online with express shipping. Not having required textbooks in hand will not be an acceptable reason for an extension on the first week’s deadlines. The History of Rock and Roll (with Rhapsody) is now available as an e-book directly through the
publisher. I recommend you go this route, and if you do, be sure to order the version “with Rhapsody.”

- Thomas E. Larson. *History of Rock and Roll (with Rhapsody)*.

Readings from the text are listed in the schedule as “HoRR” or “PRS,” identifying which book, and should be prepared prior to the watching the lecture video. This includes reading the text, listening to all musical examples, and reviewing any other materials. It is necessary to spend the time doing the listening in order to fully grasp many of the points made in the text. Also, listening examples are a large portion of some quizzes. The ends of the chapters will help with review, as well.

Other readings will be posted as PDF files, materials in e-Learning’s “Resources” tab, 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. They will often be more challenging than the text and, on occasion, quite difficult. This is a reading-heavy class. Expect to spend a good deal of time with these materials.

**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 does not mean that you should do your only listening while talking on the phone, doing math homework, or using Facebook. I believe that you will enjoy much of the music from the class, and while I hope that you do, in fact, listen to it often because you want to, this is “passive” listening. To best understand the course material, I recommend listening to each example three times: before you start the week’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.

If you do not have a good set of computer speakers or headphones, consider them a course expense that will improve your life on a daily basis. Most laptop speakers do not properly reproduce a full recorded sound and will therefore fail to provide you with the best (active) listening experience.

Most examples will be drawn from Rhapsody. You will receive this service for four months with your textbook purchase. If you buy a used book, and therefore do not get Rhapsody with it, you must find another way to access these files. YouTube, GrooveShark, Spotify, iTunes, Last.fm, and the rest of the wealth of internet services might get you by, but it will require a bit more time and energy on your part since you cannot easily click on the playlist links from Sakai.

**Lecture Videos**

For each unit, I will post 2 or 3 lecture videos. While these fail to replicate a live setting, they give me the opportunity to discuss the readings and listening examples, and develop larger
themes. I will often embed audio or video clips into the lecture. I recommend watching these lectures last, after completing the reading and listening for the module, unless otherwise noted in the schedule. The videos are either embedded into the module’s page in e-Learning or given as links.

**A note:** I am in the process of transitioning some videos from one online service to another. Ignore any references to specific “weeks,” as these do not necessarily line up with our schedule. Also ignore any references to discussion groups or “VoiceThread” since they are no longer part of our course. I believe that I removed all mentions of these things, but I may have missed one or two.

**Quizzes**
Quizzes will be drawn from the reading material and lectures. They may include material that was not discussed in the lecture, but will never include content from outside the course. These must be completed before each unit’s deadline. These quizzes account for a very large portion of your semester grade. They are open book, but they are timed. You only receive one chance to complete them, and they must be started and finished in one sitting. You cannot pause the quiz and come back to it later.

**Essay Responses**
Each module will have one or two essay prompts. You will choose one discussion prompt for each unit and address it as a short essay via e-Learning’s “Assignments” tab. For the first unit you will also have a short “introduction” response, which means that you will have two assignments. Every unit’s response will be graded according to the “Essay Response Rubric” document in e-Learning’s “Syllabus” tab.

**Classroom Policies**

**Grading Scale**
Grades will be figured on the point system below. Scores will be available on Sakai over the course of the semester. There will be extra credit assignments offered during the semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Quizzes</th>
<th>Essay Responses</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
<th>Extra credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Makeup work
Because you can work at your own pace throughout the course, makeup work will rarely be accepted. An excused absence must be proven to consume the entire week and is defined as

• a medical issue accompanied by a signed statement from your doctor,
• a serious family emergency with a signed statement from parent or guardian,
• an official University of Florida activity accompanied by a signed statement from an appropriate faculty representative with a two-week prior notification to instructor,
• a religious holiday observance with a two-week prior notification to instructor,
• military service or court-imposed legal obligations accompanied by written proof two weeks prior to absence.

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. It is your responsibility to complete your assignments early in the week in order to avoid issues that arise later. (In other words, you will not be excused because of a weekend issue, even if unplanned, when you could have completed your assignments beforehand.)

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 Sakai for that week. Late work will not be accepted. Deadlines will be posted clearly in their respective places in e-Learning, 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 Gainesville at any point. Therefore, I will conduct any meetings with students virtually using a program like Skype, Google Hangout, or Google Talk. I will not hold regular office hours, but will be available by appointment using one of these technologies. To request a face-to-face meeting, send an email with a block of free time(s) and your account name for any of these services. We will then work out a specific time and method.

Technology
It is your responsibility to be sure that your computer and browser are compatible with the e-Learning interface. You must also be sure that you can play and listen to all embedded musical examples, YouTube videos, and Rhapsody playlists in order to avoid losing points. If you have any technical issues or questions, contact the Computing Help Desk first (learning-support@ufl.edu, 352-392-4357). Do not come to me with these types of questions as I will simply respond with the information for the help desk. Technology issues are not a valid excuse for missing deadlines. There is a computer lab open in the Architecture building 24 hours per day, 7 days per week along with the many others across campus.
If you have a technical issue during an assessment, contact the help desk (by phone is the quickest). Work through the problem and e-mail me with a detailed description of the steps you took to fix it, a screen shot (you can do a quick search online to discern how to get a screen shot in your specific operating system), and the Help Desk ticket number. Depending on the problem and resolution you may or may not be able to make up the assessment.

*Students with Disabilities*

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Dean of Students Disability Resource Center at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/.

*Academic Honesty (and Dishonesty)*

All students are expected to adhere to the University of Florida Honor Code. This includes the Student Honor Code Oath and Academic Honesty Guidelines. The Honor Code Oath: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”