

MUS122
Music of the United States
Fall 2015

MWF 2:30–3:20
Sloan 201

Instructor: Greg Weinstein

105 Sloan Music Center; (704) 894-2591; grweinstein@davidson.edu

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 3:30–5pm; Tuesday 1–4pm

Required Texts

The following text is available at the college bookstore:

- Judith Tick, *Music in the U.S.A.: A Documentary Companion* (Oxford, 2008)

Additional reading assignments will be posted to Moodle as PDFs. In order to be fully engaged in each day's material, you are expected to bring all assigned readings to class, so that you may refer to them in discussion.

Listening

Students are required to register for a free Spotify account. (While not required, a paid account will allow you to listen without advertisements and to use your mobile devices. It costs \$9.99 per month.) Most listening assignments will be posted to Moodle as links to Spotify playlists. Some additional listenings will be posted as MP3 files; these are to be used for purposes of this class only. Listening assignments should be treated as seriously as reading assignments. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading and listening.

Course Description

This course will explore themes relating to music in the United States from the colonial period to the present. The course will emphasize the development of listening skills, and of the critical interplay of listening and verbal (written and oral) analysis. The course structure will not be chronological, but rather, will emphasize the thematic interrelationships of musical styles and cultures across different geographies and times in American history.

Course Goals

This course will feature extensive critical listening and reading assignments, class discussion, and independent research and writing. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize and describe the features of several major musical styles and movements in the history of the United States.
- Critically assess the cultural and ideological contexts of America's musical forms.
- Engage in the intellectual work of evaluating, contextualizing, and responding to others' ideas about America's music, including both written and oral responses.

Technology

You are permitted (and encouraged) to bring to class any technology that you need to maximize your participation in discussions: laptop, tablet, printed copies of readings, pad and paper, etc. However, you should be aware that I can very easily tell when someone is using a computer for purposes other than our class, and consistently doing so will have a significant negative impact on your participation grade in the course.

Grades

I will calculate your cumulative grade in the course based on the following criteria:

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|--------------------------------------|-----|
| • Participation in Class Discussions | 20% |
| • Midterm Listening Review | 15% |
| • Debate | 10% |
| • Website | 10% |
| • Final Paper | 25% |
| • Short Response Papers | 20% |

Participation and Attendance

This course will heavily emphasize in-class discussion. Therefore, your presence in class is essential for you to derive the maximum benefit from the course. Participation counts for 20% of your cumulative grade; to earn this portion of the grade, you must be present and be an active participant in our conversations. Simply being in attendance is not enough!

Further, attendance will be taken in writing at every class meeting. It is your responsibility to sign in at every session to ensure that you receive credit for that day's class. Do not rely on my memory!

Sometimes there are legitimate reasons why you cannot be in class. You are permitted three (3) absences during the semester. (Please note: if you are on a sports team, these three absences cover the three permitted by the College's guidelines for student athletes.) In very rare circumstances, you may be granted an additional excused absence. If you believe you have a valid excuse for any absences beyond the permitted 3, you must ask for and receive approval as soon as possible. Any unexcused absences beyond your permitted three will result in the lowering of your final course grade by a half a mark (i.e., if you average 91 in the course, your average will be lowered to 86, and you will get a "B" as your final grade).

Debates and Response Papers

The course is structured around four central themes, and at the end of each of these thematic units, we will have an in-class debate about issues related to the unit. Once during the semester you will work in a group of four to present the argument for one side of the debate. You are expected to coordinate a presentation with your group and to conduct your own independent research to support your argument. You are encouraged to make use of any and all media available in our classroom. Each side in the debates will be permitted no more than 12 minutes to present their arguments, after which discussion will open to the entire class.

On debate days (when you are not in one of the presenting groups), you are expected to come having read the assigned article/chapter and prepared to engage with the relevant questions for that day. Bring questions for the groups; bring evidence you wish to share for one side or the other. You must be engaged in the debate, as you will be required to write up a short (3 page) response to the question.

These three debate responses will constitute the "Short Response Papers" portion of your grade. In your responses, you should consider the debate question and write a paper in response to it. Your paper should be a consideration of the relevant issue; it is NOT an evaluation of the effectiveness of the debaters! You are not required to include external citations in these papers, but they should be treated as formal writing assignments (in both style and citation practice). These responses are due on Moodle on the Monday following each debate.

Website

There will be a course website that will be curated by students. You will work with your debate group to curate the website as you see fit in the unit leading up to your debate. More information with specific requirements will be provided after debate sign-up, in the second week of the semester.

Listening Review

We will have a review in class on Friday, November 14. This review will be entirely listening-based: you will be asked to identify tracks (artist/composer and title) from our collective listening in class, and to respond to some short questions about each track (such as time period, musical style, etc.). One week before the review, you will be provided with a list of tracks from which the review will draw.

Final Paper

There will be no final exam in this course. Instead, you will develop a research project during the second half of the semester. This project will develop incrementally and detailed instruction will be provided at the appropriate time.

Writing Center

The college provides free consultations on writing that you do in any course. Writing Center tutors—who are themselves practiced writers and have been trained to help you with any aspect of your work—will work with you individually by appointment. I encourage you to take advantage of this resource! You can find out more information on the Writing Center's webpage:

<http://sites.davidson.edu/ctl/students/tutoring/writing-center/>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences

Davidson College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this class, complete the course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, contact the Dean of Students Office as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately recognized by the Dean of Students Office, which works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission.

Sensitive Course Materials

College education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it necessarily involves engagement with a wide range of information, ideas, and creative representations. In this course, students can expect to encounter—and critically appraise—materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar and/or personal understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are required to fully and critically engage with all of the course materials; however, please do not hesitate to bring any concerns about the course to the professor.

Counseling & Support

"Davidson College is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is free of sexual misconduct, stalking, and relationship abuse and violence, and that promotes a healthy spirit of responsibility, dignity, and respect in matters of sexual conduct and interpersonal relationships. The college does not condone and will not tolerate sexual misconduct, stalking, or relationship abuse or violence" (from the Davidson College Sexual Misconduct Policy). Furthermore, Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc.

Davidson College is committed to providing maximum support for all students who have experienced sexual misconduct and strongly encourages students to report any incident. All college services are available to survivors of sexual misconduct regardless of whether or not a student intends to file a formal complaint. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can get support and resources from the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.davidson.edu/offices/dean-of-students>) and Campus Safety (<http://www.davidson.edu/offices/public-safety/safety-resources/sexual-assault>).

The counseling office offers free counseling to all enrolled Davidson Students. You can find out how to make an appointment and learn about other counseling resources here: <http://www.davidson.edu/student-life/health-and-counseling/counseling>.

Resources for students include:

- Campus Police: 704-894-2178 or 911
- Dean of Students Office: 704-894-2225
- Student Health and Counseling: 704-894-2300
- Chaplain's Office: 704-894-2423
- Georgia Ringle, Health Educator: 704-894-2902
- Dean Kathy Bray, Title IX Coordinator: 704-894-2225
- Town of Davidson Police Department: 704-892-5131

Course Schedule

The course schedule indicates where each reading can be found—in the Tick reader, on Moodle as a PDF, or elsewhere.

This schedule is subject to revision with appropriate notice.

Week 1: Introduction and Musical Materials

24 August What do we mean by “Music of the United States”?

26 August Music as a Cultural Practice

Read:

- Christopher Small, “Prelude: Music and Musicking” (PDF)

28 August Recordings: A Language of Music

Read:

- Simon Zagorski-Thomas, “The Musicology of Record Production” (PDF)

Listen:

- Bob Dylan, “All Along the Watchtower”
- Jimi Hendrix, “All Along the Watchtower”
- Les Paul, “How High the Moon”
- Stevie Wonder, “Higher Ground”
- Whitney Houston, “I Will Always Love You”

Unit 1: Construction of Art and Popular

Week 2: Concert Music

August 31

Listen:

- *In C* (Africa Express/Terry Riley)

September 2

Read:

- “Lorenzo da Ponte Recruits an Italian Opera Company for New York” (Tick, ch. 28)

- “John S. Dwight Remembers How He and His Circle ‘Were But Babes in Music’” (Tick, ch. 31)
- “George Templeton Strong Hears the American Premiere of Beethoven’s Fifth” (Tick, ch. 32)
- “From the Journals of Louis Moreau Gottschalk” (Tick, ch. 37)

Listen:

- Beethoven, Symphony No. 5, mvmt. I
- Gottschalk, “The Banjo”

September 4

Read:

- “Theodore Thomas and His Musical Manifest Destiny” (Tick, ch. 50)
- “Henry Lee Higginson and the Founding of the Boston Symphony Orchestra” (Tick, ch. 54)
- “Henry Krehbiel Explains a Critic’s Craft and a Listener’s Duty” (Tick, ch. 58)
- “Recapturing the Soul of the American Orchestra” (Tick, ch. 141)

Week 3: Jazz

September 7

Read:

- “James Reese Europe on the Origin of ‘Modern Dances’” (Tick, ch. 70)
- “Ferdinand ‘Jelly Roll’ Morton Describes New Orleans and the Discipline of Jazz” (Tick, ch. 73)
- “Louis Armstrong in His Own Words” (Tick, ch. 76)

Listen:

- James Reese Europe, “Memphis Blues”
- Jelly Roll Morton, “Black Bottom Stomp”
- Louis Armstrong, “West End Blues”

September 9

No Class

September 11

Read:

- “Duke Ellington on Swing as a Way of Life” (Tick, ch. 104)
- “Wynton Marsalis on Learning from the Past for the Sake of the Present” (Tick, ch. 144)
- Scott DeVeaux, “Constructing the Jazz Tradition” (PDF)

Listen:

- Duke Ellington, “Black and Tan Fantasy”

Week 4: Art/Pop Intersections

September 14

Read:

- “George Gershwin Explains that ‘Jazz Is the Voice of the American Soul’” (Tick, ch. 82)
- “William Grant Still, Pioneering African-American Composer” (Tick, ch. 83)

Listen:

- George Gershwin, Piano Concerto in F, mvmt. I
- William Grant Still, *Afro-American Symphony*, mvmt. I

September 16

Read:

- “Harold Schonberg on ‘Art and Bunk, Matter and Anti-Matter’” (Tick, ch. 132)
- “Steve Reich on ‘Music as a Gradual Process’” (Tick, ch. 134)

Listen:

- Steve Reich, “Come Out”
- Brian Eno, *Ambient I (Music for Airports)*, excerpt

September 18 Debate I: Popularity and/or Art

Read:

- Milton Babbitt, “Who Cares If You Listen?” (PDF)
- Evan Ziporyn, “Who Listens If You Care?” (PDF)

Unit 2: From “Race Music” to “Black Music”

Week 5: Hip Hop

September 21

Listen:

- Run the Jewels, *Run the Jewels II*

September 23

Read:

- Jeff Chang, “What We Got to Say: Black Suburbia, Segregation and Utopia in the Late 1980s” (PDF)

Listen:

- Gil Scott-Heron, “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised”
- Sugarhill Gang, “Rapper’s Delight”
- Boogie Down Productions, “The Bridge Is Over”
- Public Enemy, “Night of the Living Baseheads”

September 25

Read:

- Eithne Quinn, “Straight Outta Compton: Ghetto Discourses and the Geographies of Gangsta” (PDF)

Listen:

- NWA, “Straight Outta Compton”
- NWA, “Fuck tha Police”
- Dr. Dre, “Nuthin’ but a G Thang”
- Compton’s Most Wanted, “This Is Compton”

Week 6: Minstrelsy and African-American Music in the 19th Century

September 28

Read:

- Clayton W. Henderson, “Minstrelsy, American” (Oxford Music Online)
- “Thomas D. Rice Acts Out Jim Crow and Cuff” (Tick, ch. 21)
- “William M. Whitlock, Banjo Player for the Virginia Minstrels” (Tick, ch. 22)
- “Edwin P. Christy, Stephen Foster, and ‘Ethiopian Minstrelsy’” (Tick, ch. 23)

September 30

Read:

- “Frederick Douglass from *My Bondage and My Freedom*” (Tick, ch. 41)
- “From *Slave Songs of the United States*” (Tick, ch. 43)
- “Ella Sheppard Moore: A Fisk Jubilee Singer” (Tick, ch. 48)

October 2

Read:

- W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (excerpts)

Week 7–8: Appropriation and Response

October 5

Read:

- Kyle Crichton, “Thar’s Gold in Them Hillbillies” (PDF)

- “Big Band Swing Music: Race and Power in the Music Business” (PDF)
- “Zora Neale Hurston on ‘Spirituals and Neo-Spirituals’” (Tick, ch. 98)

October 7

Read:

- “Elvis Presley in the Eye of a Musical Twister” (Tick, ch. 112)
- “Chuck Berry in His Own Words” (Tick, ch. 113)

Listen:

- Elvis Presley, “That’s All Right, Mama”
- Elvis Presley, “Hound Dog”
- Chuck Berry, “Maybelline”

October 9

Read:

- George Lewis, *A Power Stronger than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (excerpts)

Listen:

- Art Ensemble of Chicago, “A Jackson in Your House”
- Anthony Braxton, “Composition 6D”

October 12 No Class (Fall Break)

October 14

Read:

- Amiri Baraka, “The Changing Same (R&B and New Black Music)” (PDF)

October 16 Debate II: Is there an “authentic” musical identity?

Unit 3: Music, Politics and “America”

Week 9: The Folk

October 19

Listen:

- Lana Del Rey, *Ultraviolence*

October 21

Read:

- “Frédéric Louis Ritter Looks for the ‘People’s Song’” (Tick, ch. 64)

- “Frances Densmore and the Documentation of American Indian Songs and Poetry” (Tick, ch. 65)
- “John and Alan Lomax Propose a ‘Canon for American Folk Song’” (Tick, ch. 100)
- “Woody Guthrie Praises the ‘Spunkfire’ Attitude of a Folk Song” (Tick, ch. 101)

Listen:

- Blind Lemon Jefferson, “See That My Grave Is Kept Clean”
- Woody Guthrie, “1915 Massacre”

October 23

Read:

- Robert Cantwell, “He Shall Overcome: Pete Seeger” (PDF)

Listen:

- Pete Seeger, “If I Had a Hammer”
- Pete Seeger, “We Shall Overcome”
- Pete Seeger, “Wimoweh”

Week 10: Festivals

October 26

Read:

- “Bob Dylan Turns Liner Notes into Poetry” (Tick, ch. 116)
- “Bringing It All Back Home: Dylan at Newport” (PDF)

Listen:

- Bob Dylan, “Masters of War”
- Bob Dylan, “Maggie’s Farm”
- Bob Dylan, “Like a Rolling Stone”

October 28

Read:

- “Jimi Hendrix, Virtuoso of Electricity” (Tick, ch. 119)
- Nat Hentoff, “We Look at Our Parents and...” (PDF)
- “Janis Joplin Grabs Pieces of Our Hearts” (Tick, ch. 117)

Watch:

- Jimi Hendrix, “Wild Thing” and “Star Spangled Banner”
- Big Brother and the Holding Company, “Ball and Chain”

October 30

Read:

- Deborah Wong, “Making Space, Making Noise: Locating Asian American Resistance in the Festival” (PDF)

Listen:

- TBA

Week 11: Subcultures

November 2

Read:

- Alice Echols, “The Homo Superiors: Disco and the Rise of Gay Macho” (PDF)

Watch:

- The Village People, “In the Navy”
- Sylvester, “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)”

November 4

Read:

- “Willie Colón on ‘Conscious Salsa’” (Tick, ch. 148)
- “Gloria Anzaldúa on *Vistas y Corridos*” (Tick, ch. 151)
- Elijah Wald, “Narcocorrido” (Oxford Music Online)

Listen:

- Willie Colón and Héctor Lavoe, “Che Che Colé”
- Los Tigres del Norte, “Contrabando y Tracción”
- Los Tucanes, “Mis Tres Animales”

November 6

No Class

Week 12: Political Interventions

November 9

Read:

- “Marc Blitzstein in and out of the Treetops of *The Cradle Will Rock*” (Tick, ch. 89)
- “Arthur Berger Divides Copland into Two Styles, and Copland Puts Himself Back Together Again” (Tick, ch. 92)

Listen:

- Aaron Copland, *Appalachian Spring*
- Aaron Copland, *Fanfare for the Common Man*

November 11

Read:

- Tipper Gore, “The Cult of Violence”

Listen:

- Judas Priest, “Exciter”
- W.A.S.P., “Animal (Fuck like a Beast)”

November 13

Debate III: Is there a case for censoring music?

Unit 4: Industry and Technology

Week 13: Corporations

November 16

Listen:

- Kacey Musgraves, *Pageant Material*

November 18

Read:

- “Charles K. Harris on Writing Hits for Tin Pan Alley” (Tick, ch. 67)
- “Irving Berlin on ‘Love Interest as a Commodity’ in Popular Songs” (Tick, ch. 71)
- “Caroline Caffin on the ‘Music and Near-Music’ of Vaudeville” (Tick, ch. 72)

Listen:

- “Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair”
- “Cheek to Cheek”

November 20

Read:

- Harvey Kubernik, “Berry Gordy: A Conversation with Mr. Motown” (PDF)
- Jon Landau, “A Whiter Shade of Black” (PDF)

Listen:

- Gladys Knight and the Pips, “I Heard It Through the Grapevine”
- Marvin Gaye, “I Heard It Through the Grapevine”
- The Supremes, “You Can’t Hurry Love”
- The Four Tops, “Bernadette”

Week 14: Air Guitar

November 23

Watch:

- *Air Guitar Nation*

November 25–27

No Class: Thanksgiving

Week 15: Technologies

November 30

Read:

- William Howland Kenny, “‘His Master’s Voice’: The Victor Talking Machine Company and the Social Reconstruction of the Phonograph” (PDF)

December 2

Read:

- Kay Dickinson, “‘Believe’: Vocoders, Digital Female Identity and Camp” (PDF)

Listen:

- Cher, “Believe”

December 4

No Class

Week 16: Conclusion

December 7

Debate IV: Can art and technology coexist?

December 9

Assignment TBA

December 11: Response Paper #4 Due at 8:40am on Moodle

Week 17: Extended Office Hours TBA

December 17: Final Paper Due at 5:15pm on Moodle