ARTS 2004: History of Contemporary American Music
Spring 2015 – Hybrid Course

Sections and Meeting Times:
ARTS 2004 (850) – 6 – 7:15 (Monday)
ARTS 2004 (851) – 1 – 2:15 (Tuesday)

Instructor: Dr. John Stanislawski
Email: jstanisl@spsu.edu
Office: J327
Office Hours: Email to schedule an appointment. I’m generally available Mondays between 2PM and 6PM and Tuesdays after 2:30PM.
Website: https://spsu.view.usg.edu/d2l/


Course Description: This course is intended to help you think creatively and critically about past and present American music(s) from the popular sphere. We will interrogate issues of American identity, mass media and technology’s role in music’s creation and dissemination, the business of music, and the impulses that bear on what “contemporary American music” means today and what it may mean in the future. By and large, we will adopt a chronological approach in tracing the history of significant styles beginning with the late 19th century and continuing to present day, highlighting several recurring themes:

• The interaction of European American, African American, and Latin American traditions
• The influence of mass media and technology (printing, recording, radio, video, Internet)
• The role of popular music as a symbol of identity (race, class, gender, generation)

Hybrid Course: We will meet once a week face-to-face and the remainder of the course will take place online. As such, our in-class meetings will address questions, clarify points that arise in online discussions, provide overviews of specific topics, and facilitate discussion and activities. The online portion of the course will integrate case studies, artist profiles, listening guides, and additional materials in a way that augments our time in the classroom. As with any course with an online component, students must be leaders in their own education; you must be self-motivated! Since online learning is a team environment, all students need to be active participants and must have a sense of self-discipline to maintain engagement throughout the course.

Goals for Learning: The course will enhance your enjoyment and understanding of the music you already know, as well as introduce you to less familiar styles and genres. At a broader level, the course is also intended to help you think about how music comes to be defined not only by elements within the music itself, but also by the continually shifting social, cultural, and industrial contexts that surround it. Ultimately, you will develop critical analytical and listening skills and become more informed consumers of popular music.
Students who have not taken this type of course before will find that studying for a course with a listening component is quite different from studying for other courses. Last-minute cramming simply does not work unless you have an outstanding memory or are already very familiar with the music covered. Plan to build into your daily schedule a chance to listen to assigned pieces both actively and passively to build familiarity. That may mean taking a half hour to sit down with headphones and listen along with textbook in conjunction with listening on the way to class or while studying. Solidifying your musical memory in advance of test time will not only allow you to focus on more detail-oriented studying, but also greatly decrease your stress. Believe me.

**Course Evaluation:** Your grade for the course will be derived from class participation, quizzes and online discussion question responses, two writing assignments, and two exams.

- Participation/online check-ins: 7.5%
- Weekly quizzes: 7.5%
- Online discussion: 15%
  - Four responses: 4/25 points = 100
- Paper One Concert Response: 10%
- Paper Two Artist Bio and Playlist: 15%
- Midterm: 20%
- Final Exam: 25%

**Grade Scale:** A 90 –100% / B 80 –89% / C 70 –79% / D 60 –69% / F 0% -59%

Both the midterm and final exam will feature a listening section, multiple-choice questions, and a short answer section. For the listening sections, you will identify and answer questions about music excerpts selected from the required pieces, which are listed in the course schedule. These exams are NOT cumulative, although terminology and concepts for the final will build on material from the first half of the course.

PLEASE NOTE: All components of the course must be completed as scheduled to pass. There will be no allowances without official documentation.

PLEASE NOTE: Students may add/drop courses until the end of the Drop/Add period (listed at end of syllabus under “Important Dates.” I, as an instructor, am also responsible for reporting your engagement in the course by the end of the third week of class, as well submitting mid-term progress reports of your work. These are used not only as a way to gauge your investment and progress in the course, but to allow you to have information on which to base withdrawal decisions if necessary.

**Course Requirements:** Each student is required to purchase, read, and use the textbook as outlined in the syllabus. Students MUST have a textbook for the class! Students must own the *American Popular Music* textbook by the fourth in-class meeting to pass the class for the semester. No *APM* textbook = failing class for the semester! A receipt of purchase may be requested.

**Student Site:** *American Popular Music’s* website contains many useful student resources such as
chapter outlines, sample quizzes and essay questions, and music playlists that can be directly streamed using Spotify and iTunes. See: 

Communication/Feedback: You may use my SPSU email to email me with questions related to the course. As the semester moves forward, I will also create anonymous discussion forums in D2L for you to ask questions, make comments, discuss assignments, etc. Homework will typically be assessed and returned within a week.

Regarding emails, I will NOT respond to emails that lack greetings or sign-offs that do not include your name. Not only does a formal greeting demonstrate respect, but also your seriousness about the course. This is an expectation that will serve you well throughout your academic career and life in general.

Example:

Dear Dr. S,
This is the best class in the history of the world. Can I take it again?

Sincerely,
Abraham Lincoln

Communication Rules:
1) Be sensitive to what others are saying. Anyone can make a mistake. Be forgiving.
2) Avoid typing in all capitals because it is difficult to read and is considered the electronic version of shouting.
3) Don’t flame. These are outbursts of extreme emotion or opinion. Think before you hit the post (enter/reply) button. You can’t take it back!
4) When posting a message: choose your words carefully to communicate what you intend. It is difficult to convey subtle meaning and humor in online communications. Consider rewording your message if you think there is a chance that others will misunderstand your message. Ask your roommate, family member, dog, clergyman: “does this make sense?”
5) Do not use offensive or politically incorrect language. Keep the dialogue collegial and professional.
6) Always assume good intent and respond accordingly. If you are unsure or annoyed by a message, wait a day before responding—the 24 hr. rule (Crain, 2014).
7) Abbreviations and/or acronyms are not permitted in the discussion areas or in any part of this course. “U” does not equal “you”
8) Do use clear subject lines.

Attendance: Weekly in-class and online check-in/attendance and “participation” through homework completion, quizzes, and discussions, etc. are expected. Attendance has a direct correlation with your grades. Indeed, missing more than THREE in-class meetings can result in a lower course grade. For on-line class, a quick, weekly attendance question may be asked with students having 48 hours to answer the question. This will also count as part of your attendance grade. Students need to be “checking in” a minimum of 2-3 times per week.
Participation & Homework Assignments: Classes are also based on participation. To ensure that all students are able to fully participate in the in-class activities, students may have a few questions to complete in the Quiz or Dropbox section in D2L due the evening before your class is scheduled to meet face-to-face (this day is subject to change, so make sure you check D2L often).

Homework Assignments: Weekly homework will largely consist of assigned reading, listening, short quizzes and discussion question responses. Each week, there will be a short quiz drawn from assigned materials. These should be a breeze as long as you’ve done your homework and actively listened to the assigned recordings. Discussion questions, also relating to the weekly content, will also be required (see below).

Discussion Posts: At the beginning of the course, I will assign each student a group number—either Group 1, 2, or 3. Listed on the course schedule are the weeks that members of each group are required to respond to my discussion prompts. So, for week two, students in Group 1 will be responding. For week three, students in Group 2, and so on. Each group will be responsible of responding a total of four times throughout the semester. Complete thoughts, proper spelling and grammar are expected. Responses should allow for deep thinking and invite other students to follow-up your post.

Paper One/Concert Response: Students in History of Contemporary American Music must attend one outside concert event. These do not have to be huge ticketed events (although they can be)—coffee shop shows, open mic nights, local shows at clubs, etc. are acceptable. I will post a list of possible concert options on D2L shortly after the semester begins along with guidelines for the reflection paper you will write about your concert-going experience. Feel free to also check newspaper listings, facebook, online events pages, etc. NOT acceptable are Youtube concerts or concert DVDs. I want you there in the flesh. Feel free to check with me if you find something you’re interested in but unsure will be acceptable.

Paper Two/Artist Biography and Playlist: This paper will require you to research an artist you’re interested in. You will use primary and secondary sources to write a concise biography of the artist/band, including discussion of influences, style, musical output, and position within the historical narrative traced throughout the course. You will then create a playlist comprised of the musical selections informed by your research and what you feel best represents the artist’s work. This playlist might be comprised of the artist’s most popular tracks, tracks rarely discussed, or tracks that have received some critical attention by others (fans, journalists, critics, etc.) You will need to provide reasons for your selections using appropriate musical terminology and incorporating issues discussed in class. Guidelines for this assignment will be provided in more detail on D2L early in the semester.

Late Quizzes, Discussion Responses, Papers: Quizzes and discussions will be submitted in D2L by the due dates. Please do not submit any work via email. All due dates for activities are in Eastern Standard Time and in the D2L Calendar. Late assignments will not be accepted. Discussion responses may be accepted 24 hrs after the due date for intellectual value, but will not be considered in your grade. Technical issues (PED, computer, etc.) do not qualify for submitting
late assignments.

Class Policies
- Correspondence must have proper etiquette. Do not begin an email or conversation to me with “Hey.”
- Please address me as Dr. Stanislawski or Dr. S, not “Yo, Teach!”
- Assignments will not be accepted late. A grade of “0” will be recorded.
- Make-up exams or incomplete grades will only be given for dire emergencies (death in the family; hospitalization; something that provides legal documentation).
- Etiquette and respect are expected at all times. Class disruptions (even online) will not be tolerated.
- The use of ALL CAPS is not permitted. I will call the police.
- Bullying the teacher for a grade will not be tolerated and will automatically result in a failing grade for the semester.
- If you did poorly on your tests or homework, do not email me at the end of the semester and question your grade.
- Use of correct punctuation, grammar and syntax are expected in written assignments and an abundance of errors will result in points being subtracted from the grade.
- The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus and the right to adjust grades in accordance with a student’s participation and attitude throughout the semester.
- Teacher has no control over D2L. Any issues with D2L: submit a helpdesk ticket immediately.

Emergency Plan: Due to inclement weather classes will not be held on campus when cancelled by the University. However, online course work is still expected to be completed. If you are extremely ill (with the flu), please do not attend our face-to-face classes. Your missed class will be excused when you return to class healthy and with a doctor’s excuse note.

Disabilities: Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class should contact the counselor working with disabilities at: 678-915-7361. See also: http://www.spsu.edu/attic/disabilities/faq.htm.

“If you have a documented disability as described by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that may require you to need assistance attaining accessibility to instructional content to meet course requirements, we recommend that you contact the ATTIC at (678)915-7361 as soon as possible. It is then your responsibility to contact and meet with your instructor. The ATTIC can assist you and the instructor in formulating a reasonable accommodation plan and provide support in developing appropriate accommodations for your disability. Course requirements will not be waived but accommodations will be made, when appropriate, to assist you to meet the requirements.”

Plagiarism: All work submitted must represent your original work. Outside sources used as references must be documented to reveal the source and the extent to which that source has been used. Plagiarism and/or falsification are serious matters and will result in a grade of F for the assignment and failure for the course. Assisting other students in plagiarism will result in the same penalties. Plagiarism detection software, “anti-plagiarism software,” may/will be used by
the professor for this course. We always know.

**Honor Code:** SPSU students should be aware of an Honor Code and a new procedure relating to when academic misconduct is alleged. Information about the Honor Code and the misconduct procedure may be found at [http://spsu.edu/honorcode/](http://spsu.edu/honorcode/):

“As a member of the Southern Polytechnic State University community of scholars, I understand that my actions are not only a reflection on myself, but also a reflection on the University and the larger body of scholars of which it is a part. Acting unethically, no matter how minor the offense, will be detrimental to my academic progress and self-image. It will also adversely affect all students, faculty, staff, the reputation of this University, and the value of the degrees it awards. Whether on campus or online, I understand that it is not only my personal responsibility, but also a duty to the entire SPSU community that I act in a manner consistent with the highest level of academic integrity. Therefore, I promise that as a member of the Southern Polytechnic State University community, I will not participate in any form of academic misconduct. I also understand that it is my responsibility to hold others to these same standards by addressing actions that deviate from the University-wide commitment to working, living, and learning in an environment conducive to a quality education. Thus, I affirm and adopt this honor code of Southern Polytechnic State University.”

I recognize that the following actions will result in a charge of academic misconduct and may result in dismissal from the University.

1) Collaboration or cheating on examinations will result in a grade of zero, a reduction in the course grade, and possibly other penalties including failure of the course, dismissal from the program, and dismissal from the University.

2) Plagiarism, fabrication, or other academic misconduct will result in a grade of zero, a reduction in the course grade, and possibly other penalties, including failure of the course, dismissal from the department, and dismissal from the University.

**Important Academic Deadlines and Dates:**

- January 5: First day of classes for Spring 2015
- January 8: Last day to Add/Drop course
- January 19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- February 19: Mid-term grades Due
- February 25: Last Day to Withdraw
- March 2 – 6: Spring Break
- April 27: Last day of class
- April 29 – May 5: Finals
- May 9: Graduation
- May 11: All grades due