

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Division:	Humanities
Department:	Speech and Performing Arts
Course ID:	MUS 105
Course Title:	American Popular Music
Units:	3
Lecture:	3 hours
Laboratory:	None
Prerequisite:	None

Catalog and Schedule Descriptions:

This course traces the social history of America through its music by comparing the works of outstanding musicians and examining them in detail to demonstrate similarities and differences among the various styles.

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- A. Differentiate between the many styles, genres, and cultural directions of American popular music
- B. Describe various experimental techniques and innovations used throughout American popular music
- C. Define and trace the roots of and influences on a given contemporary style of American music
- D. Evaluate the impact of political, social, and economic forces upon American popular music.

IV. COURSE CONTENT:

- A. Sousa, the band, and the phonograph
- B. The rise of Tin Pan Alley
- C. The music of Charles Ives
- D. The early twentieth century
- E. Blues, jazz, and a rhapsody
- F. Classical music, the mass media, and the depression
- G. Improvisation in American popular music
- H. American folk song and its collectors
- I. Jazz goes national
- J. The Big Band
- K. Ellington, Basie, and the Swing band
- L. The golden age of the American musical
- M. Classical music in the postwar years
- N. The rise of rock and roll
- O. Postwar vernacular trends
- P. Jazz, Broadway, and musical permanence
- Q. Elvis Presley and Rockabilly
- R. The Beatles, Rock, and Popular Music
- S. Dick Clark, American Bandstand, and Payola
- T. Songs of protest: Bob Dylan
- U. Acid Rock
- V. White blues and soul
- W. Corporate rock versus punk rock

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. Lecture
- B. Group discussion
- C. Critical evaluation of audio and video recordings
- D. Guest lecturers
- E. Field trips to concerts

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading: After reading the section on blues music, discuss in your group the differences and similarities between traditional blues and "white" blues.
- B. Writing: Research a musical figure in American popular music. Be sure a) explain the factors which influenced him/her; b) trace his/her impact on American popular music. Prepare a 4-6 page paper in which you present your findings.
- C. Critical Thinking: Compare and contrast the social and cultural implications of music in different historical contexts. Prepare a 4-6 paper in which you detail your analysis.

VII. EVALUATION:

- A. Methods of evaluation: In general, students are evaluated on their ability to apply course concepts in their analyses and to write clearly and coherently. Sample test question includes:
 - 1. Discuss the factors which lead to the rise of the "golden age of the American musical".
- B. Frequency of evaluation:
 - 1. One midterm examination
 - 2. One final examination
 - 3. At least two research papers or written analyses

VIII. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- A. Crawford, Richard. America's musical life: A history. W. W. Norton, 2001.
- B. Hitchcock, H. Wiley. Music in the United States: A historical introduction (4th edition). Prentice Hall, 1999.
- C. Dorrough, Prince. Popular-Music Culture in America, Ardsley House Publishers, 1992.

IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None.