

*MUSC 140 Introduction to Modern Popular Music*

*Many A Voice To Sing With: American Popular Music Since WWII*

**Instructor:** Teng Jimeng

On-line Contact: [teachbfsu@gmail.com](mailto:teachbfsu@gmail.com)

**Course Location/Times:** Friday 6-9pm Room316

**Credit Hours:** Lecture hours        3

**Course Length:** 14 weeks

***Required Texts:***

*American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MP3*, Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford University Press 2017

***Course Description:***

This course examines the historical significance of popular music in the United States from the mid twentieth century to the present.

Ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax stated, “As we live, so do we sing.” Those words have never been more applicable to the plight of the African American who came to America as slaves. We will examine a variety of musical genres beginning with the music of West Africa and moving to Plantations songs (spirituals, work songs), and a variety of musical genres ranging from the blues, rhythm and blues, country, folk, soul, rock, disco, and hip-hop. As we examine the various genres we will need to identify some of the individuals who were instrumental in shaping the landscape of what became American popular music. Such figures as Woody Guthrie, Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, Buddy Holly, Robert Johnson, Ma Rainey, Elvis Presley, Stevie Wonder, James Brown, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Peter, Paul and Mary, Bruce Springsteen, Lauryn Hill, Tracy Chapman, and Jay-Z and many others. All of these individuals helped to shape and define the American popular music scene. All of the musical innovations and opportunities experienced by them are tempered by social, political, economic and religious variables.

As we progress through each era, we will examine many of the social, economic, religious, political and technological variables that influenced the direction of the music. For example, Jim Crow laws, the church, the Civil Rights Movements, the student, the anti-war movement, the environment protection and the Women’s Liberation movements, (anti)-Globalization, all played a major role in how the music was influenced. This course will also consider the global impact American pop music has had on the direction and influences of various musical styles and the economic

force it has had on the global economy. The diversity dimensions for this course will be *Race, Religion and Gender*. This will be the reoccurring theme throughout the semester as we examine the various developments and contributions of African Americans.

We will think about how to analyze musical sound as “text.” More crucially, we will focus on the cultural, social, political, and economic dimensions (the “context”) of genres mentioned above. Readings include a textbook and selected primary and secondary documents.

### Objectives

- Recognize the connections between history and popular music, identifying ways in which popular music reflected trends in society and ways in which popular music shaped society.
- Understand and interpret primary and secondary sources relating to the history of popular music.
- Define the major political, social, and economic changes in U.S. history since 1955 and explain their influences on popular music.
- Research, write, and present on a topic or theme within popular music, demonstrating an understanding of content and analysis.
- Improve your critical analysis skills for primary and secondary documents.

### Learning Methods

- Classroom lectures and discussions
- Recordings—listening and analysis, film and video examples, demonstrations
- Textbook readings and listening assignments
- Fieldwork—live performance attendance and review
- Web site—announcements, course material, links, suggested reading

### Exams

There will be a midterm and a final for this course. These exams will be a combination of identifications and short essays based on lectures, class discussions, readings, and the music and documentaries we listened and viewed in class. These exams are each worth 100 points, and are not cumulative. A study guide with potential identification terms and essay questions for each exam will be available two weeks before the exam. The midterm exam is on October 17 (tentatively). The final is Wednesday, Dec. 14 (tentatively). Please note the date of the final exam and plan accordingly;

Only illness and university-sponsored events are acceptable excuses for missing an exam and must be confirmed with written documentation.

### Course Requirements

**Reading/Listening.** Each week, you will need to complete reading and listening assignments before coming to class. The classroom lectures and discussions are designed to reinforce the reading and listening assignments, not replace them. Be prepared.

**Videos.** Check them out on Youku.com. These videos will help reinforce the material covered in lectures and readings.

### Grading Procedures

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Exam (Midterm) 20%

Exam (Final) 30%

Class attendance: 25%

Review of classroom discussion participation: 25%

### Class Schedule

Week 1: The Postwar Era, 1946–1954 Chapter 7

A. Southern Music; Rhythm & Blues (pp.166-182)

B. Country and Western Music (pp.182-194)

Week 2: Rock 'n' Roll, 1954–1959 Chapter 8

A. Early Rock 'n' Roll, and the Rock 'n' Roll Business (pp.195-217)

B. Early Rock 'n' Roll Stars: Country Side and R&B (pp. 217-229)

Week 3: Rock 'n' Roll and American Pop: The 1960s Chapter 8-9

A. Women, Songwriters, and Producers of Early Rock 'n' Roll (pp.229-235)

B. Early 1960s: Dance Music and “Teenage Symphonies” (pp. 236-245)

C. Mowtown; Beach Boys (pp. 245-254)

D. Blues, Blacks, and Music Theories (Guest Lecture: David Moser, on the chords, melodies and scales of the blues)

- Week 4: The Folk Revival, the Student Movement, and Civi Rights.  
 A. We Shall Overcome: Politics and Music in the 1960s (pp. 106-139, Eyerman)  
 B. SDS and “Everybody Get Together” (pp. 195-221, Gitlin)
- Week 5: The British Invasion, Country, Soul, and Urban Folk Chapter 9-10  
 A. The Beatles and the British Invasion (pp. 254-268)  
 B. Country; Soul (pp. 269-283)  
 C. Urban Folk (pp. 284-295)
- Week 6: The Emergence of Folk Rock as an Art Form  
 A. The Age of Rock Revisited (pp. 183-210, Dickstein)  
 B. Rock and Folk Rock as A Voice of Unity and Liberty (Gilmore, Rolling Stone, 1990)
- Week 7: The Counterculture and Psychedelic Rock Chapter 10  
 A. San Francisco Rock: Jefferson Airplane (pp. 295-311)  
 B. The Rise of Women (Folk ) Rockers (pp. 356-368)  
 C. *Dylan Goes Electric!* (pp. 201-227, Wald)
- Week 8: The Greenin of America: Dylan as America’s Cultural Hero  
 A. Roll over Gutenberg: The Greening of the Campus (pp. 257-270, Shelton)  
 B. The Man Who Brought It All Back Home (pp. 357-403, McNally)
- Week 9: Country Music and the the Pop Mainstream Chapter 10-11  
 A. The 1970s; Country Music; the Popular Mainstream (pp. 305-329)  
 B. Rock Comes of Age (329-341)
- Week 10: The 1970s: Disco and Progressive Country Chapter 11-12  
 A. “Night Fever”: The Rise of Disco. (pp. 341-349)  
 B. The Outlaws: Progressive Country; Reggae. (pp. 350-361)
- Week 11: Country Music, Richard Nixon and the Origin of Modern Conservatism

- A. “With God on Our Side and Religious Issues, Southern Culture, and Republican Realignment in the South”, (pp. 55-72, Slocume)
- B. Is Country Music Conservative? (NPR, 2007)

Week 12: The 1970s: Outsider’s Music; 1980s: Digital Technology; MTV Chapter 12-13

- A. 1970s Punk and New Wave; Funk (pp. 361-376)
- B. Rapper’s Delight: The Origins of Hip-Hop (376-381)
- C. Digital technology, MTV, 1980s Music (pp. 381-397)

Week 13: The 1980s: The Popular Mainstream: Prince and Madonna Chapter 13-14

- A. Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon (pp. 397-406)**
- B. Prince, Madonna, and the Production of Celebrity (pp. 406-441)
- C. The 1990s: Hip-Hop and Rap. (pp. 420-438)

Week 14: Conclusion (Review and wrap -up)

Final EXAM

Suggested Readings:

Baranovitch, Nimrod. *China’s New Voices: Popular Music, Ethnicity, Gender, and Politics*. (2003)

Bayles, Martha. *Holes in Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty & Meaning in American Popular Music*. (1994)

Dickstein, Morris. *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties*. (1989)

Eyerman, Ron. *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (1998)

Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (1993)

Jones, Andrews F. *Like A Knife: Ideology and Genre in Contemporary Chinese Popular Music* (1997)

Lee, Gregory B. *Troubadours, Trumpeteers, and Troubled Makers: Lyricism, nationalism, and Hybridity in China and Its Others*. (1996)

McNally, Dennis. *On Highway 61: Music, Race and the Evolution of Cultural Freedom*. (2014)

Rodnitzky, Jerome L. *Minstrels of the Dawn: The Folk-Protest Singer As a Cultural Hero* (1976)

Shelton, Robert. *No Direction Home: The Life and Music of Bob Dylan* (1986)

Wald, Elijah. *Dylan Goes Electric: Newport, Seeger, Dylan and the Night That Split the Sixties*. (2015)

Lee, Gregory B. *Troubadours, Trumpeters, Troubled Makers: Lyricism, Nationalism, and Hybridity in China and Its Others*. (1996)