

Bergen Community College
Division of Business, Arts, and Social Sciences
Visual and Performing Arts Department

Course Syllabus

MUS-111 History of American Popular Music

Basic Information about Course and Instructor

Semester and year:
Course and Section Number:
Meeting Times and Locations:

Instructor:
Office Location:
Phone:
Departmental Secretary: [optional]
Office Hours:
Email Address:

Course Description

MUS-111 History of American Popular Music is an introductory study of the development of popular music traditions in the United States from the nineteenth century to the present.
3 lectures, 3 credits

Student Learning Objectives: As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to:

1. employ the basic vocabulary used to describe the physics of musical sound, the psychology of musical perception, and the description of musical elements, such as timbre, rhythm, harmony, melody, and structure, in written and oral communication;
2. describe and identify the musical characteristics that differentiate American popular music styles from the 19th century to the present.
3. articulate a critical perspective on the historical, socio-cultural, political and economic forces that have influenced the composition, performance, production, and consumption of popular music in the United States;
4. discuss the ethical implications of race, ethnicity, gender, and class on the production and consumption of popular music in the United States;
5. utilize library and online resources and research tools to retrieve primary and secondary sources, in order to present an individual perspective on the role of popular music in American society.

In pursuit of the foregoing goals, the course is based on the reading and discussion of historical, ethnomusicological and sociological writings on popular music, as well as on attentive listening techniques for musical selections; students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions; and students are required to do a substantial amount of expository and critical writing in response to the material presented in the course.

Learning Assessment

The Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in this course are intended to be aligned with as many of the college's General Education Goals as possible. They are also correlated with the overall Learning Goals of the Music Program. In addition, student progress in reaching the course's SLOs is to be assessed through various means of assessment, such as the "Suggested Means of Assessment" listed below.

Student Learning Objective	Suggested Means of Assessment
1. Employ the basic vocabulary used to describe the physics of musical sound, the psychology of musical perception, and the description of musical elements, such as timbre, rhythm, harmony, melody, and structure, in written and oral communication;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay examinations • Quizzes and objective tests • Writing assignments
2. Describe and identify the musical characteristics that differentiate American popular music styles, from the 19 th century to the present;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay examinations • Quizzes and objective tests • Writing assignments
3. Articulate a critical perspective on the historical, socio-cultural, political and economic forces that influenced the composition, performance, production, and consumption of popular music in American society;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay examinations • Quizzes and objective tests • Writing assignments
4. Discuss the ethical implications of race, ethnicity, gender, and class on the production and consumption of popular music in the United States;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay examinations • Quizzes and objective tests • Writing assignments
5. Utilize library and online resources and research tools to retrieve primary and secondary sources, in order to present an individual perspective on the role of popular music in American society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay examinations • Quizzes and objective tests • Writing assignments

Course Content

The course is intended to introduce students to the academic study of the history of American popular music, including musicological analysis and various approaches to the historical and socio-cultural issues regarding American popular musical traditions. Therefore, the course includes the following (mandatory) components:

1. A review of the musicological analysis of music, studying the musical elements of timbre, rhythm, melody, harmony, texture, and form.
2. The variety of ways music can be studied: e.g., the science of acoustic and musical sound, the psychology and neuroscience of human musical experience, and the historical and sociocultural context of musical expression.
3. The history of American popular music traditions from the nineteenth century to the present including parlor songs, minstrelsy, ragtime, Tin Pan Alley, country, gospel, rhythm and blues, rock n' roll, folk, rock, disco, hip hop, and mainstream pop music.

Special Features of the Course (if any) [to be designated by the instructor]

E.g., the use of learning technologies in the course (Internet, PowerPoint, web enhancement via a parallel course website, etc.); the inclusion of technological literacy learning in the course; etc.

Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials

American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MP3. Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press,

Alternative textbooks or resources can be used by individual faculty with permission of the music discipline textbook committee. The Faculty Senate "Policy on the Selection of Texts and Other Instructional Materials," states that "individual faculty members and/or departments should strive to select texts, whenever possible, that are most affordable for students."

Writing and Critical Thinking Requirement(s)

MUS-106 History of American Popular Music requires students to complete a variety of critical thinking and writing assignments. These assignments may include class discussions and debates requiring the application of critical thinking skills, short in-class essays, out-of-class writing projects (journals, research papers, argument-analysis papers, book reviews, etc.), tests and examinations containing essay components, and so forth. Instructors will respond to and comment on students' writing in detail.

Grading Policy

A student's final grade for the course is based primarily on his or her performance on the required work for the course (writing assignments, examinations, class presentations, etc.) and on his or her overall mastery of the material covered in the course. A student's class participation may also be evaluated, and the grade thereon may be used as a factor in determining the student's final grade for the course; but a class participation grade will count for no more than twenty percent (20%) of the final grade. A student's research and writing work will count at least fifty percent (50%) of the final grade.

BCC Attendance Policy

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

Attendance Policy in this Course

[To be designated by the instructor]

Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements [optional but recommended]

Examples:
 Statement on plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty.
 ADA statement.
 Sexual Harassment statement.
 Statement on acceptable use of BCC technology.
 Statement on the purpose and value of faculty office hours.

Statement on Accommodations for Disabilities

Bergen Community College aims to create inclusive learning environments where all students have maximum opportunities for success. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Specialized Services at 201-612-5269 or via email at ossinfo@bergen.edu for assistance.

Student and Faculty Support Services [optional but recommended]

List support services, e.g., the Writing Center, the Math Lab, the Tutorial Center, Online Writing Lab (OWL), Office of Specialized Services, etc. Include information on the BCC Library.

Example:

Student and Faculty Support Services

The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing your online courses	Room C-334	201-612-5581 psimms@bergen.edu
English Language Resource Center	On Line at:	http://www.bergen.edu/elrc
The Tutoring Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 http://www.bergen.edu/tutoring
The Writing Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 http://www.bergen.edu/owl
The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities)	Room L-116	201-612-5270 http://www.bergen.edu/oss
BCC Library – Reference Desk	Room L-226	201-447-7436

Special Note on the Tutoring Center

The **Henry and Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center** encompasses the Tutoring Center, the English Language Resource Center, and the Writing Center. The website of the Learning Assistance Center is located at www.bergen.edu/elrc. Tutoring services are available for this course in the Tutoring Center. As listed above, the Tutoring Center is located in Room L-125, and its phone number is 201-447-7908.

Include a Course Outline and Calendar [can be combined in a single syllabus section]

The Course Outline and Calendar must include all of the following elements:

- A daily or (at least) weekly schedule of topics to be covered.
- Dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment. (This does not mean that all evaluation of students must be in groups and at the same time. Exams and other means of assessment can be listed as "to be scheduled individually.")
- Due dates for major assignments – e.g., when is a paper due; if the topic has to be approved, when; if an outline or draft is an interim step, when it is due.
- Any required special events must be included in the outline/calendar, e.g., a lecture by a visiting speaker, a dramatic or musical performance, a field trip.
- Designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic (see sample below).
- A note to students stating that the course outline and calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Sample Format for Course Outline and Calendar

Note to Students: The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topics & Assignments	Learning Objectives
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

See the Sample Course Outline and Calendar below.

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

[with designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic]

Note to Students: The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topic/Activity/Assignments	Student Learning Objectives
1	Sep 6, 8,	Themes and Streams of American Popular Music European, African American and Latin American Influences	1-5
2	Sep 13, 15	Popular Music of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Minstrelsy, Parlor Songs, Brass Bands, Ragtime	1-5
3	Sep 20, 22	Social Dance and Jazz, 1917-1935; Tin Pan Alley The Jazz Age	1-5
4	Sep 27, 29	Race Records and the Blues Classic Blues and Delta Blues	1-5
5	Oct 4, 6	Early Country Music Hillbilly Music and the Great Depression	1-5
6	Oct 11, 13	The Swing Era: 1935-1945 The Big Bands	1-5
7	Oct 18, 20	The Postwar Era: 1946-1954 Rhythm and Blues; Country and Western Music	1-5
8	Oct 25, 27	Rock 'n' Roll, 1954-1959 Cover Recordings; Rockabilly, R&B	1-5
9	Nov 1, 3,	Rock 'n' Roll and American Pop Women, Songwriters, and Producers; Motown; Beach Boys	1-5
10	Nov 8, 10	The British Invasion and the Folk Revival The Beatles and Bob Dylan	1-5
11	Nov 15, 17	The Rise of Rock, Country, and the Pop Mainstream Country Rock, Progressive Rock and Soul	1-5
12	Nov 22, 24	The 1970s Disco, Punk, and New Wave	1-5
13	Nov 29, Dec 1	The 1980s and 1990s Hip Hop, Michael Jackson, Prince and Madonna	1-5
14	Dec 6,8	American Popular Music in the Twenty First Century Digital Technology, New Media	1-5
15	Dec 13, 15	Final Review and Final Exam	1-5