

# INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC IN THE UNITED STATES

TOWSON UNIVERSITY

MUSC 111 / Spring Semester 2018

Instructor: Dr. Nick Reeder  
T/TH 12:30-1:45  
CA 2079

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## COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Traditional, popular, and classical music in the U.S. from the colonial period to the present.  
GenEd II.B.1 or Core: The United States as a Nation.

## UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to: (1) speak to what characterizes the United States as a nation, whether through consideration of American culture and society or through comparison and contrast with other societies and cultures; (2) define several major issues involving American experience, past or present; (3) discuss more than one perspective on those issues; (4) develop a reasonable command of specific knowledge pertinent to the central issues of the course; and (5) demonstrate the ability to express their understanding and views using substantive analysis and argument.

## INTEGRATED COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course presents an introduction to the diverse array of music traditions in the United States throughout the nation's history. With the goal of inclusivity, our examination will span a broad range of musical styles and genres, covering compositions from the art music (or "classical") tradition, folk or traditional music making, and songs from popular and vernacular styles. Although our core focus centers upon the United States, some topics will push beyond the nation's political boundaries to explore the geographic Americas more generally. Throughout the semester, we will examine historical and stylistic trends, composers, artists, cultures, and listening contexts that have contributed to a distinctively American musical culture. We will also discuss the technological innovations that have shaped American music, and explore how different streams of American music have

intersected and changed along with new technologies. Emphasis is placed upon the development and strengthening of your skills as music listeners, with the ultimate goal of equipping you with the tools necessary to comprehend and intelligently discuss whatever styles of music you might encounter in day-to-day life.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

All assigned reading from the course comes from Richard Crawford & Larry Hamberlin An Introduction to America's Music, 2nd ed. (W.W. Norton, 2013). Cook Library reserves: ML200.C72 2013. New or used copies can also be purchased in the campus bookstore, on Amazon, or rented on bookrenter.com.

All assigned listening for the course can be found on Spotify. I have published a playlist for the class:

[https://open.spotify.com/user/drnickreeder/playlist/0Tm0fzU2H0m7OfbgcSFw6t?  
si=vKPGdsyyT5SgtsKVCio1xQ](https://open.spotify.com/user/drnickreeder/playlist/0Tm0fzU2H0m7OfbgcSFw6t?si=vKPGdsyyT5SgtsKVCio1xQ)

Please create a Spotify account for the semester, and then listen well and often! Students can sign up for a discounted premium account (\$4.99/month) here: <https://www.spotify.com/us/student/>. Alternatively, ad-supported FREE accounts are available here: <https://www.spotify.com/us/signup/>.

## BLACKBOARD & EMAIL

Visit the Blackboard course space for syllabus updates, announcements, assignment instructions, important links, listening lists, digital music scores, and other important information throughout the semester. All email correspondence for the class will be via your towson.edu email address. It is very important that you check your TU email and the class Blackboard space regularly for important course announcements, updates, and class information! The instructor will assume that a message was delivered once it has been posted.

## MUSIC RESEARCH HELP

Please make use of the MUSC Subject Gateway for access to any music-related library resources, including the Chicago Manual of Style. The library liaison for music, Lisa Woznicki, [lwoznicki@towson.edu](mailto:lwoznicki@towson.edu)

Do not hesitate to ask for Lisa's help with any music research-related queries: achieving productive catalog and database searches, locating material in the library, interlibrary loan requests, proper citation of research sources, etc.

## PARTICIPATION, ATTENDANCE POLICY, & TIME MANAGEMENT

Active participation is a crucial aspect of this course and your attendance is expected at all class meetings. Students are expected to arrive on time to lectures, and to actively participate in discussions and group work. As a class, we will cultivate a respectful and supportive classroom environment in which every student feels comfortable sharing his or her ideas, opinions, questions, and observations. Assigned reading for the week should be completed before each lecture. The following statement is quoted from the TU Course Catalog: “Faculty expect students to spend at least two hours reading, writing and doing research outside of class for each hour spent in class.”

Attendance will be taken at every class session. Absences are excused for illness or injury, religious observance, and professional performance obligations with official documentation. All excused absences require official documentation, preferably discussed prior to missing a class. Please note that emailing me to say you are feeling unwell does not count as official notice of an excused absence. Note also that “attendance” means arriving on time and remaining for a full class session: tardy entries and early exits will be considered absences. Unexcused absences will directly affect your course grade. Students are allowed only two unexcused absences before poor attendance will begin to negatively affect your final grade!

Please read the COFAC Policy on Attendance:

<http://www.towson.edu/cofac/resources/documents/classattendance.pdf>

## CELL PHONES AND COMPUTERS

Cell phones should be turned to silent and put away during classes. You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet for taking notes in class. However, any use of electronic devices in the classroom that distracts either you or your colleagues from focused learning is entirely unacceptable and shall be considered a violation of the COFAC Civility Code (see below). “Acceptable use” of technology means that such devices will only be used for the purposes of note-taking and on-screen score viewing—nothing else. Violations will result in the withdrawal of this privilege.

## DISABILITIES

Students who believe that they have a disability but do not have documentation are encouraged to contact DSS for advice on how to obtain appropriate evaluation. Please bring a memo from DSS authorizing an accommodation within the first two weeks of class, because no accommodation can be made without it.

## GENERAL REMINDERS and ADDITIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Students may not repeat a course more than once without prior permission of the Academics Standards Committee.

2. Students are expected to follow Towson University rules of conduct and to observe the highest levels of academic integrity, particularly in regards to plagiarism. Please refer to the Towson University Student Rights and Responsibilities and Academic Integrity Policy found in Appendix F of the Towson University Undergraduate Catalog.

3. Students may not repeat a course more than once without prior permission of the Academic Standards Committee.

4. If you are struggling with the writing tasks in this course, do not hesitate to seek assistance from the Writing Center located in the College of Liberal Arts. Students can make an appointment in person in LA 5330 or by calling 410-704-3426. For more information, visit their webpage: <http://www.towson.edu/cla/centers/writing/>.

## CIVILITY CODE

All College of Fine Arts & Communication Studies students, staff, and faculty are committed to collegial and academic citizenship demonstrating high standards of humane, ethical, professional, and civil behavior in all interactions.

We must take responsibility for the relationship between our personal conduct and the quality of campus life. What we do and say always has an effect on others, whether we see it or not. Civility means more than respecting campus facilities and grounds. Civility means consistently treating people with consideration and respect. It means being courteous, polite, and fair. It means recognizing diversity and honoring differing points of view. When our behavior is guided by concern for others in our community, we are being civil. Practicing civility requires thoughtful behavior and checking our assumptions and perceptions of others' race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, abilities, culture, belief systems, and economic status.

COFAC places a priority on learning. We value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, thereby fostering a community of mutual respect. Students have the right to a learning environment free of disruptive behaviors and offensive comments. Faculty members have the right to define appropriate behavioral expectations in the classroom and expect students to abide by them. Faculty members have the responsibility to manage and address classroom disruption. Staff members have the right and responsibility to define appropriate behaviors necessary to conduct any university activity free of disruption or obstruction. We believe that in order to achieve these ideals, all COFAC students, staff, and faculty are expected to exhibit and practice civil behaviors that exemplify: (1) respecting faculty, staff, fellow students, guests, and all university property, policies, rules and regulations; (2) taking responsibility for one's choices, actions and comments; (3) delivering correspondence - whether verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic - with respectful language using professional writing standards and etiquette; and (4) accepting consequences of one's choices and actions.

The use of offensive, threatening or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix F of the most recent editions of the *Towson University Undergraduate Catalog*.

Please see:

<http://catalog.towson.edu/undergraduate/appendices/appendix-f-code-student-conduct/>

## GRADING RUBRIC

The breakdown of the final grade for the course is as follows:

- Attendance & Participation 10%
- Online Assignments 15%
- Concert Report 15%
- 5 Quizzes (6% each) 30%
- In Class Presentation 15%
- Final Exam 15%
- Total 100%

A: 93-100

A-: 90-92

B+: 87-89

B: 83-86

B-: 80-82

C+: 77-79

C: 73-76 \*Grades below C are considered failing in all MUSC courses

C-: 70-72

## ASSIGNMENTS: PROJECTS, EXAMS, & QUIZZES

1. In Class Presentation (Group Presentation, 10 minute presentation, 2-3 min per person). See prompt for assignment on blackboard.

2. Ethnographic Concert Report (2-4 pages)

Students will write a musical ethnography of a live concert/performance of their choice. The performance must be related to a culture or musical tradition discussed throughout the semester, but can take place at a variety of venues (concert hall, outdoor festival, home performance, etc.) Students must take careful notes during the performance and discuss the following aspects of the experience in the paper: 1) Where and when did the performance occur? Who were the performers? What was the audience like? 2) After providing basic information about the event, discuss some of the pieces individually, giving detailed musical descriptions. Discuss musical elements such as: Form, Timbre, Melody, Harmony, Instrumentation, Tempo, Dynamics, Tension and Resolution, etc. 3) Discuss your personal experience and opinion of the performance.

3. Quizzes

There will be five quizzes throughout the quarter that will test students on their listening skills through multiple choice, fill in the blank, and/or short answer questions. *These may or may not occur on the days posted, making it essential you attend each class!*

#### 4. Online Assignments

These are short writing assignments that will be submitted via Blackboard. They will include critiques or analyses of articles or listenings, and/or participation in online discussion forums. Details will be shared via email and posted on the MUSC 111 Blackboard space.

#### 5. Final Exam

The final exam will cover assigned listenings, reading, and lecture content. It will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and/or short essays. Listening & study guides will be posted on Blackboard prior to the exam.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

#### JAN 30-FEB 1. WEEK ONE.

**Introduction to the Course. Sacred & secular music in the colony.**

**Talking about music.**

Reading: Introduction; Chapters 1-2

**Online Assignment #1: “Talking About Music”**

#### FEB 6-8. WEEK TWO.

**African-American music.**

Reading: Ch. 3-4

#### FEB 13-15. WEEK THREE.

**Cultivating musical tastes in Antebellum America.**

**Minstrelsy & popular song through the Civil War.**

Reading: Ch. 5-6

[QUIZ 1]

**Online Assignment #2: Race: The Power of an Illusion**

#### FEB. 20-22. WEEK FOUR.

**Band Music, Gospel hymns, and popular song after the Civil War.**

**Classical Music in the US. Musical nationalism.**

Reading: Ch. 7-8

IN CLASS EXERCISE – MUSICAL ANALYSIS OF ORCHESTRA

#### FEB. 27- MAR 1. WEEK FIVE.

**American Indian music. Early ethnomusicology.**

Reading: Ch. 9

#### MAR 6-8. WEEK SIX.

**Ragtime & blues.**

Reading: Ch. 10-11

[QUIZ 2]

#### MAR 13-15. WEEK SEVEN.

**Jazz: New Orleans through cool.**

Reading: Ch. 12

## **MAR 18-25 Spring Break**

### MAR. 27-29. WEEK EIGHT.

#### **Jazz and Popular Song Continued**

Reading: Ch. 13

### APR 3-5. WEEK NINE.

#### **In Class Presentations on Blues and Jazz Artists**

#### **Online Assignment #3: Jazz Biographies**

### APR 10-12. WEEK TEN.

#### **Folk, Country, and Popular Music Streams: 1920-1950.**

Reading: Ch. 14

### APR 17-19. WEEK ELEVEN.

#### **Early Rock & Roll and the Folk Revival**

Reading: Ch. 17

### APR 24-26. WEEK TWELVE.

#### **1960s Rock and Pop**

Reading: Ch. 18

[QUIZ 3]

**April 25 Symposium** – Convocation at 10 AM, option to write concert report on one of the performances; attend one participatory class with same guest artist for extra credit.

### MAY 1-3. WEEK THIRTEEN.

#### **70's Jazz, Rock, Dance Music; Sound Systems and the Roots of Hip-Hop**

Reading: Ch. 19

#### **Online Assignment # 4: Musical Subcultures**

### MAY 8-10. WEEK FOURTEEN.

#### **Music and Politics: Music of the Civil Rights Movement; Hip Hop**

Reading: Thomas Turino, “Music and Political Movements” ; Ch. 20

[QUIZ 4, 5]

### MAY 15. WEEK FIFTEEN.

#### **FINAL EXAM CA 2079**

[CONCERT REPORT DUE – 5/15]

\*schedule and syllabus are subject to slight changes.\*

