

DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS

COURSE OUTLINE – Winter 2026

MU1021 (A3): Popular Music in the Twentieth Century – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:	Kara Friesen	PHONE:	780-539-2979
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OFFICE HOURS:	By appointment		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This course explores major movements in North American popular music. Topics include blues, jazz, hillbilly, country, musical theatre, folk, and rock music.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: No prerequisites, no musical knowledge or skills required.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- **MYCLASS:** You will need to visit our myClass page at <http://myclass.nwpolytech.ca/d2l/home> where you will be able to access a variety of necessary resources.
- **Required Readings** are available on myClass; these will include a selection of online documents as well as materials from the NWP Polytechnic Learning Commons.

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture. Note: NWP reserves the right to change the course delivery.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to explain ways in which popular music has developed and discuss the people and forces that drove those developments. Additionally, students will be able to aurally identify the aesthetic and stylistic characteristics of many genres of popular music.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>.

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

EVALUATIONS:

Student grades will be assigned by the following weighting:

Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Exam:	30%
Unit Assessments:	10%
Live Performance Reflection:	15%
Term Assignment:	15%
Attendance and Participation	10%

You will demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of an aspect of the course through a term assignment research project. Deadlines will be discussed for a project proposal and a finished project submission.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Unit 1: Minstrelsy, Tin Pan Alley, and Musical Theater. **Quiz.**

Unit 2: African American Roots and Onward (Songs, Ragtime, Blues, Race Records). **Quiz.**

Unit 3: Jazz. **Midterm exam.**

Unit 4: Hillbilly and Country Music. **Quiz.**

Unit 5: Rock and Associated Genres. **Quiz.**

Final Exam

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Attendance at all class sessions is highly recommended in order to succeed in this course.
- Assigned readings need to be completed by the proposed deadlines to effectively contribute to class discussion.
- Late assignments will receive a deduction of one letter-grade increment per calendar day.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>.

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Depending on which live performance you choose to attend, there may be a ticket fee associated with that performance. Be prepared to purchase a ticket as part of your course materials. For free and paid concert listings, consult your professor.