

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE  
FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT

POPULAR MUSIC in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century  
DD1021 A3 3(3-0-0) Fall 1999

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History of Popular Music serves as an introduction to a number of North American popular music styles. This course focuses on popular music from the beginning of this century to the present day, with an emphasis on the evolution of the various musical styles and the placement of these styles in their social contexts. Both assigned readings and critical listening are important aspects of the course, and exams and quizzes will reflect material from readings and recordings. Recordings will be on reserve for you in the library, or available on the web. They will be related to, and reflect, information covered in the readings. In addition to the required text, additional readings will occasionally be assigned. Such readings will be put on reserve in the library. Topics covered in the course will include the origins and developments in, and relationships between, such genres as blues, jazz, gospel, country, folk, musicals, vaudeville, and rock. When you have completed this course, you should have a good perspective of the history and evolution of popular music in North America during this century.

**Prerequisite:** This is an introductory course that requires no previous knowledge of music and no prerequisite courses.

<b>Evaluation:</b>	Unit Quizzes	25%
	Mid-term examination (February 17)	20%
	Term research project	25%
	Final examination	30%

**Term Project:** You will demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of an aspect of the course through a research project resulting in the creation of a formal academic paper. Topics should be chosen in consultation with the instructor, and an outline of your proposed project worth 5% of the total paper grade will be due on March 5. The paper is due on April 5. It must be a minimum of 1500 words in length, and must be typed. Part of the project (30%) is the presentation of your project, in the last couple of class sessions. Expect to present for up to 20 minutes, depending on the size of the class. You may use a variety of audio and visual aids in your presentation. A list of suggestions for possible topics is appended to the end of this outline. Be aware: you will have to order through inter-library loans many of the sources you will probably need for the paper. Do not take your time ordering your sources, or you will find writing your paper extremely problematic.

**Required Texts:**

Joyner, David Lee. American Popular Music.  
Madison: WCB Brown and Benchmark, 1993.

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**Schedule:**

Unit One	Tin Pan Alley and the Theater Chapters 1 and 2
Unit Two	The African-American Tradition Chapters 3 → 9
Unit Three	Country Music and the Anglo-American Tradition Chapters 10 → 14
Unit Four	Rock and Related Musics Chapters 15 → 21

Possible research topics may include any aspect of popular music that interests you, with the exception of biographical portrayal of artists. Some examples of ideas are listed below.

- music as process or product: live performances vs. recorded performances or use of video
- political and social activism
- propaganda
- advertising
- a specific theme in music, such as romance, fantasy, government, sex (sexism?), spirituality, unemployment, the supernatural, history, social commentary, fear, humour, satire, nonsense, etc.
- use of symbolism
- concept albums
- creolized or cross-pollinated genres such as Zydeco or Tex-Mex
- comparing original and cover versions of the same songs (live or studio covers of recorded originals)
- in-depth studies of specific genres
- careful analysis of the works of a single composer or small group of composers. (e.g. themes in the works of John Lennon, the musical evolution of Elton John [through different lyricists and/or band members], comparing the works of Paul McCartney and John Lennon, etc.)
- genres that we will not cover in class, such as Folk, Zydeco, Hip Hop, House, or Acid-Jazz
- topics in Canadian Native popular music
- popular musics from other parts of the world, e.g. Soukous, Celtic, Folk, Folk Rock, Cine Music, Soca, Tango, Mbaqanga, JuJu, Bhangra, Flamenco, or Isicathamiya
- the impact of technology (and its changes) on popular musics of all kinds
- the effects of situations such as globalization, urbanization, etc., on various musics