

**GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT
COURSE OUTLINE**

HISTORY OF POPULAR MUSIC

DD1021 A2 3(3-0-0) Fall 2003

University Transfer to: UofA, UofC, UofL, AU, AugUC, ConcordiaUC, KingsUC

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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. They will be related to, and reflect, information covered in the readings. In addition to the required text, additional readings may occasionally be assigned. Those readings will be put on reserve in the library. Topics covered in the course may include the developments in and relationships between 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 no music knowledge or course prerequisite for DD 1021.

Evaluation:	Unit quizzes	30%
	Mid-term examination (probably October 23)	20%
	Term research project (due November 18)	20%
	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 must be chosen in consultation with the instructor, and an outline of your proposed project will be due by October 9. Without an outline submitted by October 9, you will not be able to submit your paper, which is due on November 18.

The paper must be a minimum of 1500 words in length, and must be typed. A list of suggestions for possible topics is appended to the end of this outline. Be aware: you will probably have to order through NEOS or inter-library loans some of the sources you will need for the paper. Do not take your time ordering your sources (i.e. order early!), or you will find writing your paper extremely difficult.

Required Text:

Joyner, David Lee. 2003. American Popular Music, 2nd Edition. Madison, WI: WCB Brown and Benchmark.

Progression Policy: If students fail to complete and submit 85% of the graded requirements of the term mark, they will not be allowed to write the final exam, or complete the course. In such a case, the student will automatically receive a grade of "0" on the exam. You **MUST** submit the term project to be able to pass this class. See P. 32-36 of the Calendar for more details, and for explanation of many other policies and regulations.

It is a Fine Arts Department guideline that students will lose 10% a calendar day for submitting projects after the due date. After ten calendar days, a grade of zero (0%) will be recorded.

The Term Project (AKA your research paper)

Restrictions on minimum length and number of sources are firm!

By the time you start work on your paper, you will hopefully have written some papers in an English class, and have an idea about structure, presentation, academic honesty (giving credit to others for their original ideas), how to cite sources, develop ideas, etc. Regardless, here is some information you might find useful as you plan and produce your paper for this class.

1) This is not meant to be an original research paper. I don't want you to go home and listen obsessively to your Beatles or Britney CDs to ferret out obscure details. This project *is* meant to achieve a number of goals:

- A. To get you to focus some energy on a topic of our negotiated choosing, which I didn't cover in great depth in class.
- B. To get you to explore something you find interesting within the popular music environment
- C. To encourage you to recognize that many scholars are doing serious work exploring facets of popular music, as legitimate topics of study.
- D. To get you to do some work that you are directing, rather than just doing work that I am directing (e.g. studying for quizzes or exams that I set for you).
- E. To help you to become somewhat of an expert on one facet of popular music or popular music culture.

2) You will negotiate a topic with me in advance of the date for submitting your paper outline. We need to discuss a topic to ensure that you don't choose a subject that is too narrow for our library and this course level, or too broad to be of practical value to us. This negotiation is for **your** benefit, not mine. Why do I require the outline? Because it encourages you to start work on your paper early enough that you will be able to complete it without rushing at the end of the semester. Plus, it allows you adequate time to find, order, and receive materials that are not in the College library, once you have discovered their existence.

3) Submit an *outline* of your paper on October 9 as the course outline requires you to do. That outline should be a page in length. It should include a basic version of your thesis, a brief discussion of the content you intend to have in your paper, and a preliminary bibliographic list of no less than eight specific items (not, for example a generic entry like "Revised New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians"). In the outline, I am looking for strong evidence that you have given thought to your project, and have started working on it. A poor outline will be reflected in your paper's final grade.

4) Be sure that you present a useful and focused thesis statement as you begin your paper. If your paper is to be an explanation of something, state that. If you are attempting to win an argument, state what the argument is, and then take a position on it. Your paper should support your position.

5) Create an appropriate "Works Cited" list or bibliography. You may use a particular style guide if you are partial to one. Chicago (Turabian), APA, and MLA are three of the most common. If all else fails, list your citations by:

Last name, First name. Date. Title (Underlined or italics). City: Publisher.
(Use a hanging indent if the entry is more than a single line in length.)

Use at least six distinct sources that are external to the course. That is, you should not include the text or my lectures in your six sources. Certainly, you are welcome to use the text and lectures, but only if you are including them in a larger list of sources. For every source you use in your paper, you must submit a printout or photocopy of its first page, regardless of whether it is a journal article, a book, a website, or something else. Three of your sources should be refereed; that is, they should be books from an academic or scholarly press, or articles in a music journal.

6) Correctly include footnotes or endnotes. Once again, you should be familiar with how to do this from your English course. You must recognize someone's original idea or words by citing it in a footnote or endnote—to ignore that responsibility is to commit plagiarism. At the very least, use the "name: page" method of parenthetical citation. Otherwise, present complete bibliographical information in a footnote or endnote.

7) Start looking for sources early. NEOS and Inter-Library Loans almost always take longer than you will expect or hope. The earlier you order them, the more likely it is that they will be usable for your paper. The first person into

the library to sign out a source gets to use that source when they want to, not when it eventually gets returned...

8) Hint: To find recordings of popular music in the College library, do a keyword search using the term "contemporary music recording" on the computer catalog. A listing of all popular music recordings will appear.

9) Consider the value of your sources before you totally buy their freight. Books published by respected presses, especially academic presses such as Oxford University Press, generally command a certain amount of respect in terms of the probable accuracy of their information, and value of their opinions. Websites which present no indication as to the sources of their information may have been written by a 15 year old fan of some particular artist, and be full of poor information or outright un-truths. Read critically, and think critically about your sources. Poor sources must be taken with a grain or chunk of salt. As you start to research your paper topic, you will probably find it advantageous to take advantage of the web, because the College library does *not* have a large popular music collection.

10) Using the Web for research:

If you are looking for websites, my site (<http://finearts.gprc.ab.ca/~Geoff/>) is a good place to start. Several fine sites and sources are listed under the General and Popular Music Sites link, including Gil Rodman's excellent "Every Day I Write the Book," a huge bibliography about popular music sources. All the sites were active as of this summer.

The College subscribes to the Infotrac Database service. You will find useful a database there called "Academic ASAP." Go to <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/departments/library/labs/onlineDbase.html> to access the database. If you are on campus, no authentication is needed; just click the campus button. If you are at home, click the home button, and enter your ID barcode number (numbers only, no letters) to access the database. Similarly, it also subscribes to IIMP (International Index of Music Periodicals). To access that database from anywhere in the college or from home, go to <http://music.chadwyck.com:8085>. The username is `grndprc` and the password is `welcome`.

Search engines on the Web are useful tools for research; some are more useful than others. Each engine finds different information, and organizes that information differently. Never use just a single search engine when doing research on the Web.

Some examples of the better engines are;

Google.com (the most popular engine on the web right now).

Dogpile.com (a meta-engine, searching a number of other search engines (including google)).

Metacrawler.com (another meta-engine).

Yahoo.com

Altavista.com

Wisenut.com

Keep a look out for *web rings* that are linked sites that share the same topics or themes. Once you get into a site that is a member of a ring, it is easy to check out a number of sites dealing with that topic.

11) Hand your outline and your paper in on time. The outline is due on October 9, and the paper is due on November 18. Aim to complete your project early. The more you are on top of your work, the greater the likelihood of you producing a good product.

12) Proofread and proofread again. Write multiple drafts. The more drafts you write, the better your paper will be. Your writing should be clear, thoughtful, well structured and organized; exhibit proper use of vocabulary, grammar, style, and tone; show quality of expression; maintain focus; and generally present itself as appropriate, college-level academic writing. Does presentation count? Yes. If you can't express your ideas in an academically appropriate manner, your ideas don't count for much in this venue.

13) Do not write less than the minimum number of words (1500) that the course outline requires of you. A quick way to fail this paper is to present only 1400 words. Use the word count feature of your word processor to assure yourself that you have sufficient content if you have any doubt.

14) Type or word-process your paper. You MUST present me with a typed paper. Handwritten papers are NOT acceptable. Some things to keep in mind:

- A. Double space your content. Do not leave extra space between paragraphs.
- B. Do not number the title page.
- C. Do not use contractions.
- D. Use normally sized margins and fonts. I will notice if you use 2" margins and a size 16 font...

15) Use a 12 point, serif font. Times is the most common font used for Academic papers, but Palatino, New York, and various others are also common. A completely full page of double spaced 12 point Times text contains about 300 words, and a page of double spaced 12 point New York contains about 200 words, but that will vary with your computer OS, word processing software, margins, and more.

How to save effort and fail the paper:

Any of the following will help provide you a failing grade on your paper:

Don't submit the required outline on time.

Don't submit the paper on time.

Write less than the required 1500 words.

Plagiarize.

Don't begin researching early. Even better, don't bother to order your sources until the last possible minute.

Use less than 6 sources external to the class lectures, and Joyner's text.

Don't submit the required photocopies of the first pages of your sources. (I will just assume you are plagiarizing.)

Ignore the suggestions and requirement on these pages.



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, but you are welcome to (and encouraged to!) create your own topic.

- A history of any popular music that I have not touched on, or only lightly touched on, in class. Examples from around the world might be flamenco, juju, bhangra, salsa, soukous, Celtic, cine, soca, tango, etc.; examples from mainstream pop might include any specific type of metal, house, techno, acid jazz, post 1950 jazz (cool, fusion, west coast, etc.), zydeco, trip hop, ambient, etc.
- Music as process or product: live performances vs. recorded performances or use of video
- Political and social activism, propaganda
- Advertising
- Specific themes in music, such as romance, fantasy, government, sex/sexism, spirituality, the supernatural, history, social commentary, racism, fear, humour, satire, etc.
- In-depth studies of specific genres, or alternative viewpoints on a genre
- Careful analysis of the influence or 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.) Don't let an influence paper become a biography; it will only be acceptable if it is an analysis.
- A critical look at Canadian awards, such as the Junos, Maples, ECMAs, PMAs, etc.
- Issues in Canadian popular music: regionalism, racism, language, Canadian First Peoples popular music, the Celtic influence, identity, CanCon, etc.
- The impact of technology (and its changes) on popular musics of all kinds (choose either recording or playback format?)
- The effects of situations such as globalization, urbanization, etc., on various musics
- Recent papers that were successful looked at the impact of Sun Records, flamenco music, censorship

of popular music, gender issues, salsa, the Celtic influence on Stephen Foster, and the development of songwriting in the music of the Beatles. Papers on jazz, Tin Pan Alley, and country music have been rare...