

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE

HISTORY OF POPULAR MUSIC
MU 1020 A3 UT3(3-0-0) Fall 1998 }

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History of Popular Music serves as an introduction to various popular music styles of North America. This course concentrates 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. Topics will include the origins of and relationships between genres such as blues, jazz, gospel, country, folk, musicals, 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.

Term Project: You will demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of an aspect of the course through a research project involving a paper and class presentation. Topics should be chosen by October 23 in consultation with the instructor, and the paper will be due the date of your presentation. Presentations will occupy the last several days of the semester. The paper should be a minimum of 6 pages (1500 words) in length, and must be typed. Presentations should be approximately 10-15 minutes in length, and will share the content of the paper with the class. You may use any combination of available audio and visual tools, but it is expected that the main part of the presentation will be "performed live." Your presentation should include recordings of no more than three complete songs, or portions of several songs.

Evaluation:	Unit Quizzes	25%
	Mid-term examination	20%
	Term research project	25%
	Final examination	30%

Required Texts:

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

Reserved Texts:

Adria, Marco. *Music Of Our Times: Eight Canadian Singer-Songwriters* Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1990.

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 Music Chapters 15 —21, Joyner, selected other readings

Possible research topics include any aspect of popular music that interests you. Some examples of ideas are listed below.

- live performances
- recorded performances, use of video
- political and social activism in popular music
- propaganda in popular music
- 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 or groups
- careful analysis of the works of a single composer or small group of composers. (e.g. themes in the works of John Lennon, musical evolution of Elton John [different lyricists, band members], comparing the works of Paul McCartney and John Lennon, etc.)
- genres that we will not cover in class, such as Rap, Folk, Zydeco, Hip Hop, House, or Acid-Jazz
- topics in Canadian Native popular music, such as the music of Tom Jackson, Susan Aglukark, Kashtin, etc.
- popular musics from other parts of the world, e.g. Soukous, Celtic, Folk, Folk rock, Cine Music, Soca, Tango, M'Baqanga, JuJu, Bhangra, Flamenco, Cajun