

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **Music and Culture**

Course Number and Section:

ENGLISH

4851G 550

Instructor Name(s): Dr. John Vanderheide

Instructor Email(s): jvande29@uwo.ca

Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

Music is as much magic as it is math, as much discipline as spontaneity, and as much the power of the oppressed as that of the ruling class. Through such broad themes, our seminar in the cultural studies of music explores the development of American popular music in the last 100 years. Students encounter important genres of music, certain iconic musicians, and important critical and theoretical voices who reflect on music's impacts on themselves, their disciplines, life and the culture. Students learn ways to think about America, its social ontology and its cultural possibilities, from the perspectives of its popular musicians, most of the very best of whom were born relegated in one way and/or another to that nation's social and political margins. They attest to a counter-history of America, composed from the margins, not so much written as played, performed.

Learning Outcomes:

- Develop critical and historical perspectives on the development in North America, Europe and the rest of the world of a variety of American popular musical forms from the early twentieth century to the present
- From close readings in cultural studies, develop theoretical perspectives on the nature of music, its reproduction and transmission, the social and cultural conditions of its formal developments.
- Develop theoretical and historical perspectives on the ways in which different arts inform, represent or otherwise make use of music, whether in poetry, the novel, or in film.
- Develop the capacity to appreciate the scholarship of a subject and communicate effectively in a selected scholarly (critical/theoretical) tradition, both in writing and in a verbal presentation. This includes learning effective research methods, utilizing and incorporating secondary sources, formatting and documenting work in MLA format, timing and practicing public speaking.
- Deepen one's appreciation of music, its often vulnerable practitioners, its cultural histories, and the kinds of cultural forces that shape its production, as well as how it is distributed, attended to, and enjoyed.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

- Baraka, Amiri. Blues People (\$21 CAD)
- Bowen, Cristalle ("Psalm One"). Her Word is Bond (\$28 CAD)
- Dylan, Bob. Tarantula (\$23 CAD)
- Goldman, Vivienne. Revenge of the She-Punks (\$22 CAD)
- Holiday, Billie. Lady Sings the Blues (\$23 CAD)
- Maner, Sequoia. Kendrick Lamar's To Pimp A Butterfly (\$21)
- Rose, Tricia. Black Noise (\$33 CAD)
- Tagaq, Tanya. Split Tooth (\$20 CAD)

There are no restrictions to prevent a student from using borrowed, second-hand or digital copies of the required books.

For all other readings in the course, PDFS will be made available.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Blues and Jazz Reflection	January 31	15%
Seminar Presentation	Weeks 5-12	30%
Music/Lit Review (x3)	Weeks 5-12	15% (5% each)
Research Essay	March 31st	30%
Participation	Ongoing	10%

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Friday, January 24, 2025