

MUSI 102-K01
Popular Music in America
Fall 2023

Professor: Dr. Gyu Tag Lee

Time: Monday & Wednesday 14:00 – 15:15

Room: TBD

Email: gleeg@gmu.edu

Office: #608

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm or by appointment

Course Description:

This course offers a general overview of popular music in twentieth and the early twenty first century America. Throughout the semester, we explore many different genres of popular music including: Blues, Swing, Rock and Roll, Hip hop, etc. We study how these genres evolved and influenced each other over time. Another important dimension of the course will be learning the relations between popular music and society, copyright, and globalization. Since music is the focal point of the course, course materials and assignments include readings, listening to music, and videos about popular music.

Course Objectives:

- The course's goal is to familiarize students with the history of popular music in the United States from the late 19th through 21st century and to give students the listening skills to evaluate objectively and appreciate the various styles of music studied.
- The class will have two important focuses: 1) understanding of music as music (technical and theoretical appreciation) and 2) understanding of music as culture (the interaction of music and individual and group identities). Musical forms and how they are used within the genres listened to will be discussed during the class.

Course Textbooks:

- **There is no specific textbook for this class.**
- Most of the recommended course texts will be made available on Blackboard (<https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>) or will be provided by email. It is your responsibility to print these texts or read them electronically, and take good notes. Please check Blackboard regularly for course texts and announcements. Also, PowerPoint materials used in the class would be available on the Blackboard.
- There is only one book that I recommend you to use as a reference in this class. The title of the book is *American Popular Music* (6th edition), written by Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman (2021). You can find this book at the IGC library. For Korean students, the Korean translation is also available at the library.

- Another important “text” for this course is your **GMU email account**. I will be periodically sending out updates, announcements, and syllabus changes to your GMU email addresses and it is your responsibility to regularly check your email and maintain space in your inboxes. The phrase “I did not get your email” is not an acceptable excuse.

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities:

1. Attendance

- a. You are expected to **attend all classes**, arriving **before** the class begins and remaining engaged for the duration of each class meeting. If you cannot attend class due to illness or other emergency, you should notify your professor directly or by email before class.
- b. Arriving late or leaving early is equal to 1/2 absence. **Any more than 3 absences** will result in a grade penalty in participation.
- c. If a student misses **more than seven(7) classes** (eight(8) absences or more) he or she would be fail.

2. Class Preparation and Participation

- a. **Class Preparation and Participation**
 - Students must prepare in advance for every class meeting (recommended reading and written homework). Class participation means that you actively engage in the discussions/activities and that you take notes during discussions and lectures.
 - DO NOT WORK ON OTHER CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, TEXT MESSAGE/KAKAO TALK, READ EMAIL, FACEBOOK OR ENGAGE IN OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA DURING CLASS TIME. Your grade will be seriously lowered if the instructor finds you doing those things.
- b. **Mobile Phones and Other Electronic Devices** (Laptops, Tablets, etc.)
 - During class all mobile phones should be switched off or to silent mode, and put away out of sight. Mobile phones on your desk, lap, or within sight are not allowed. Using phones without permission can negatively impact your participation grade. If mobile phones or other devices use continues after the start of class you may be asked to leave the classroom, which could also affect your attendance score.
 - Students should keep in mind that this is a **laptop ban class**. Please bring your own notebook to take notes.
- c. **Homework and Written Assignments**
 - You must complete the homework and written assignments *independently and individually*. **Copying homework and/or a written assignment from a current or former student is cheating.** University policies for cases of academic integrity can be found at: <http://oai.gmu.edu/>. If you have any questions about these policies, please ask your professor before completing the assignment.

d. Course Readings and Worksheets

- You are responsible for completing reading homework for every class meeting if there is any. You should be prepared to share the main ideas from each reading and have the written assignments ready for in-class discussions/activities. Your professor may check to see if your homework is complete at any time. These homework checks are part of your Preparation and Participation Grade. Do not email “missing” or late worksheets to your professor. You must be present in-class to receive credit for homework.

e. Graded Assignments

- These must be typed using MS Word. All text must be in **12-point font** and **double-spaced**. Please check spelling and grammar prior to submitting your assignments.

f. Using AI writing programs (such as ChatGPT)

- The use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce writing for this course is NOT ALLOWED unless it is otherwise stated by the instructor. If a student is found to have used AI-generated content for an assignment, that student may fail the assignment or even the course.

※ If you want to get advising for your writing assignment, you can visit GMUK Academic Resource Center. Please find more information about it at the end of this syllabus.

3. Late Work

: You must get permission from the professor to submit work after the posted due date. Otherwise, late work will not be accepted and will result in a “zero” grade. Even when permission is given, late work may be subject to a certain percent grade penalty.

4. Blackboard

: You are expected to use Blackboard to access course materials. Also, you should be able to access your GMU e-mail account.

: Should any class sessions need to be recorded, students will be notified in advance. Any recordings will be stored on Blackboard and will only be accessible to students taking the course during this semester.

: A selection of certain works (e.g., articles, podcasts, videos, book chapters) will be available to students through Blackboard and remain subject to all rights and restrictions of the publisher and are to be used solely for academic purposes.

: Course materials and recordings are not to be distributed, sold, or employed for any other purposes.

5. Quizzes/Exams

: Basically, no make-up quizzes/exams will be given. If you have any issue on the quiz/exam date, you should tell the instructor prior to the date and discuss what you can do.

6. Time Management

: You are encouraged to make an appointment with the course professor as soon as you experience difficulty in the course or have questions about an assignment or exam. Do not wait to get help. Keep in mind that poor planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on the part of your professor (i.e. if you wait until the last minute to make an appointment with your professor, you may not have the opportunity to do so).

Students with Disabilities

: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Academic Affairs at 032-626-5060. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the Office.

Mason Diversity Statement

: George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

The reflection of Mason's commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed.

Course Assessments and Grading Scale
Fall 2023

Your course grade will consist of the following:

1. Short Essays	10% (total 100 pts)
2. Group Presentation: Issues in US Popular Music	25% (total 250 pts)
2.1 Presentation	20% (200 pts.)
2.2 Peer Evaluation	5% (50 pts.)
3. Reflection paper on a live performance	10% (100 pts)
4. Mid-Term Exam	15% (150 pts)
5. Participation	20% (total 200 pts.)
5.1 Attendance	10% (100 pts.)
5.2 Classroom Discussion Participation	10% (100 pts.)
6. Final Exam	20% (200 pts)
Total	100% (1,000 pts)

Grading Scale

- A+ = 97.0~100, A0 = 93.0~96.9, A- = 89.0~92.9
- B+ = 85.0~88.9, B0 = 81.0~84.9, B- = 77.0~80.9
- C+ = 73.0~76.9, C0 = 69.0~72.9, C- = 65.0~68.9
- D or F = below 65.0

Overview of Course Assignments

1. Short Essay: 10% (total 100 pts)

- During the semester, students will be given from three(3) to five(5) ‘Short Essay’ assignments. For each short essay, Professor will give students a topic related to main themes that they study.
- The essay does not have to be very formal and strictly academic. You can write your thoughts, opinions, and arguments more freely than the typical academic essay.
- **Avoid summarizing** the readings and other references – move quickly into an analytical response and show your own arguments/opinions. This essay should be argumentative, rather than too descriptive and/or informative.
- Note on grading: When marking this, I will NOT be strictly looking for grammar, organization, and so on. I will be looking for evidence that you are engaged with what we’ve done during the class, and your own thoughts/reflections/opinions about the topic that you choose to write about. Papers that simply re-hash the lectures or the readings, or that fail to show an explicit connection to the class **will receive reduced or even zero credit**.

- Using AI writing programs: Refer to the course policy 2-f.

2. Group Presentation: Issues in US Popular Music: 25% (250 pts)

- Each week, a group of students will be responsible for guiding class discussion with a specific topic that they choose for themselves.
- The topic does not have to be specifically highlighted within the readings or lectures. However, it should be related to the major theme of this class – American popular music.
- Each group presentation should be **between 15-20 minutes**. Details will be announced later.
- After giving a presentation, each group member will evaluate other members except for oneself. Details will be announced later.

3. Reflection Paper on a Live Music Performance: 10% (100 pts)

- During this semester, you should watch at least one live music performance (either online or offline). After watching the performance, you will write **one (1), 350-word reflection paper about it**.
- The performance can be any kind of music performance – it can be a performance by American musician, Korean musician, or musicians from anywhere in the world. Also, you can watch a street performance by unknown, amateur musicians, classical music concerts, traditional music performances, musicals, and even performance by your own colleague in our college!
- But you cannot write a paper about TV programs (such as ‘Music Bank’ or ‘Open Concert’) or recorded concerts on internet streaming services or on DVD/Blu-Ray.
- You can submit your reflection paper anytime during the semester – there is no specific due date. However, you should submit it **by the early December (Dec. 3, 2023)**.
- When you write this reflection paper, you should attach your ticket and/or brochure for the performance (if applicable), or the photo/screen-captured image (or even selfie) to your paper as evidence.

4. Mid-Term Exam: 15% (150 pts)

- The mid-term exam is supposed to let you know how the final exam will look like as well as to check what you have learned so far.
- It will consist of ‘Fill in the Blanks’ and a couple of ‘Short Essay’ questions.
- During the exam, you can open your hand-written notebook to refer to. However, any

other material (including printed-out lecture PPTs and recommended reading materials) is not allowed. Details will be announced later.

5. Participation: 20% (total 200 pts.)

In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class.

5.1 Attendance: 10% (100 pts.)

: Refer to the course policy section.

5.2 Classroom Discussion Participation: 10% (100 pts.) → ***Really Important!***

- Class participation is crucial to one's overall grade. It will be assessed by your participation during other students' presentation and other usual class participations.
- ***This is separate from your general attendance. They are separately graded. It means your attendance does not count as classroom discussion participation.***
- It will be counted based on how many times you participate. Therefore, you can get zero if you do not make any participation during class discussions in the semester. You can get the full participation grade when you make three(3) to four(4) participations through the whole semester (you will get some extra credit if you participate five(5) times or more).
- Just saying simple and short words (such as 'yes' or 'no') or raising your hands when the instructor asks simple OX questions will not count as participation.

*** It is your responsibility to check your participation status during the semester.**

6. Final Exam: 20% (200 pts)

- The format of final exam will be similar to that of mid-term exam. Details will be announced later.

Class Schedule:

(All dates are subject to change)

Week 1 (08. 21 / 08. 23) Course Introduction: What Is Popular Music?

Week 2 (08. 28 / 08. 30) Popular Music vs. Non-Popular Music

Week 3 (09. 04 / 09. 06) Adorno and His Analysis on Popular Music

Recommended Reading:

Adorno, Theodor (1941). "On Popular Music". In *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science, IX* (pp. 17-48). New York: Institute of Social Research.

First Group Presentation

Week 4 (09. 11 / 09. 13) Film (I): *Almost Famous*

: Watching the popular music-related film chosen by the professor during class time (or as an assignment) and writing a short essay about it.

Week 5 (09. 18 / 09. 20) 5 Themes of US Popular Music

Recommended Reading:

Larry Starr & Christopher Waterman (2013). Chapter 1 from *American Popular Music* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 6 (09. 25 / 09. 27) 5 Themes of US Popular Music (cont.)

*** NO CLASS on 09. 27 (Fall Recess)**

Week 7 (10. 02 / 10. 04) 3 Traditions of US Popular Music

Recommended Reading:

Larry Starr & Christopher Waterman (2013). Chapter 1 from *American Popular Music* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 8 (10. 09 / 10. 11) 3 Traditions of US Popular Music (cont.)

Week 9 (10. 16 / 10. 18) Midterm Exam / Blues: The Very Beginning of US Popular Music

Recommended Reading:

Larry Starr & Christopher Waterman (2013). Chapter 5 from *American Popular Music* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 10 (10. 23 / 10. 25) Film (II): *Dreamgirls*

: Watching the popular music-related film chosen by the professor during class time (or as an assignment) and writing a short essay about it.

With Recommended Reading:

Suzanne E. Smith (1999). “Afro-American Music, without Apology”. In *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit* (pp. 139-180). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

**Week 11 (10. 30 / 11. 01) Blues: The Very Beginning of US Popular Music (cont.) /
Swing: US Cultural Symbol**

Recommended Reading:

Larry Starr & Christopher Waterman (2013). Chapter 6 from *American Popular Music* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Week 12 (11. 06 / 11. 08) Swing: US Cultural Symbol (cont.) / Rock and Roll and
Elvis Presley**

Recommended Reading:

Larry Starr & Christopher Waterman (2013). Chapter 8 from *American Popular Music* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 13 (11. 13 / 11. 15) Rock and Roll and Elvis Presley (cont.)

Week 14 (11. 20 / 11. 22) Film (III): *Straight Outta Compton*

: Watching the popular music-related film chosen by the professor during class time (or as an assignment) and writing a short essay about it.

Week 15 (11. 27 / 11. 29) Issues in Hip Hop

Recommended Reading:

S. Craig Watkins (2005). “Remixing American Pop”. In *Hip Hop Matters* (pp. 33-53). Boston: Beacon Press.

Eithne Quinn (2005). “Gangsta’s Rap: Black Cultural Studies and Politics of Representation”. In *Nuthin’ but a “g” thang: The Culture and Commerce of gansta rap* (pp. 17-40). New York:

***Final Exam Schedule: TBD (Between Dec 6 – Dec 13)**

In the interest of everyone's safety, students and faculty must follow these guidelines during the Fall 2023 semester.

1. Now it is NOT MANDATORY to wear a face mask. However, you should still care about your own personal health. Clean your seat and desk space with disinfectant wipes before you begin class. Use hand sanitizer regularly, and avoid shaking hands or other forms of physical contact. Do not share pens, pencils or other personal items. Limit your use of the elevators, and use stairs to travel between floors of the building. Students are expected to purchase their own masks for personal use if necessary. Disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom.
2. Observe rules and regulations, and protocol regarding COVID-19 at all times during the class period and while in Mason's building or other public areas of the campus. Refer to messages and instructions from MK Office of Emergency, Health and Safety.
3. Make sure windows and doors open often to promote circulation of outside air. Classrooms without windows have mechanical systems that vent air.
4. All faculty and students must abide by these rules in the classroom. If you see others who are not observing the rules outside the classroom, you may report this to your instructor, student affairs or academic affairs.
5. Do not enter the Mason building or come to class if you have symptoms such as fever, chills, sore throat, persistent cough, shortness of breath or other respiratory difficulties. If you must miss class for this reason, send an email immediately to the professor prior to the beginning of class. You will not be penalized for missing class for this reason, but you may be asked to provide documentation that you sought medical diagnosis or treatment. You are responsible for making up any missed assignments or tests as a result of your absence.
6. Students who come to class with visible signs of illness will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and seek assistance from the IGC Health Clinic. Faculty will report your name and symptoms to the Office of Student Affairs (mksa@gmu.edu) to confirm that you have sought medical assistance.
7. Failure to comply with any of these guidelines may result in disciplinary action through the Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Integrity

: George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, Plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited.

: All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

Enrollment

- : Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class.
- : Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. Deadlines each semester are published in the Academic Calendar available from Mason Korea website (<https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/academic-calendars/academic-calendars>).
- : **Last day to add – Aug 28, 2023**
- : **Final Drop Deadline (with 100% tuition refund) – Sep 4, 2023**
- : **Unrestricted Withdrawal Period (100% tuition liability) – Sep 25, 2023**
- : After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons.
- : Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the website for selective withdrawal procedures.

GUMK Academic Resource Center

: The Academic Resource Center, GMUK is in the business of looking at your papers and problems to improve your academic achievement in the area of Writing, Mathematics, Accounting, Statistics, and Economics. You are invited to utilize the faculty and student tutor services at a variety of stages in your academic activities, checking to see that your project specifically meets the directions specified by your instructor.

While tutors are ‘fixing’ your writing or projects, they do help you become conscious of particular error patterns that emerge in your work. For more information, please contact Professor Eunmee Lee, director of Academic Resource Center (elee45@gmu.edu, office #521). You can refer to Mason Korea website (<https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/academic-resource-center/academic-resource-center>).