

Syllabus

Course Information

Course title: **Music, Folklore, and Traditional Culture in Irish History**

Course number: MUHL4000/5320

Course discipline: Ethnic Studies

Course description: This seminar is an intensive, topics-oriented survey of the styles, practices, and cultures of music and oral tradition in Ireland since St. Patrick. Drawing on lectures, reading, listening, audio/visual sources, in-class performances, and individual research, this course provides students with an enhanced learning experience combining approaches from folklore, ethnomusicology, cultural and literary history, performance studies, anthropology, geography, and more.

Exploring the interaction between music and other aspects of cultural expression—talking, reading, listening, playing, and singing together—we will discover Irish influences from and to the other Celtic nations and to global communities; the interaction of orality, memory, texts, music, dance, and the sacred; and the impact of the Irish Diaspora on music and culture worldwide.

Tracing the Irish tradition's histories, influences, and modern permutations, and examining them on recordings, video, and in live performance, we will expand our own artistic and intellectual insight and cross-cultural sophistication. Our theme will be the complex combinations of social, historical, political, colonial, economic, biographical, and artistic factors which have shaped Irish culture and identity over the last two millennia.

Intersession study abroad: A final component of HONS3304 will be a spring intersession trip to the West of Ireland, May 14-28, during which Dr Smith will lead day trips, musical expeditions, and roaming seminars on music, folklore, and cultural history in the Irish countryside. Participation in this trip is a mandatory part of the course and Study Abroad scholarship assistance is available.

THIS COURSE FULFILLS THE HONORS SEMINAR AND CORE CURRICULUM VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS REQUIREMENTS.

Computer access: Since this course relies heavily on web-based activities, it is essential that students gain access to a reliable computer with Internet capabilities. If your computer is slow, doesn't support media applications, or if your Internet connection is prone to

busy signals or disconnects, please schedule your day so that you can use a computer in the library. Technical problems do arise, but do yourself a favor and get acquainted with a good computer.

Please note: you the student are responsible for identifying, articulating, and seeking solutions for any computer problems you may encounter; most commonly, you can do this via the Academic Teaching and Learning Center, in the basement of the Main Library. "Computer problems" will not be considered an acceptable excuse for late or missed assignments.

Course date: Thursday, January 11, 2007 through Tuesday, May 1, 2007

Location: Administration Building 245

Meeting day(s): TR

Meeting time(s): 9:30am-10:50am

Prerequisite(s): Permission of instructor

Instructor Information

Name: Dr Christopher Smith

Email: For MUHL4000/5320 issues, the best means of contacting me is by employing WebCT Email (under "Course Menu"). However, I am only available via this email MTWRF 10AM-4:30PM.

Office location: M203: Music Building (just north of the "band lot") at the corner of 18th and Boston

Office hours: By appointment

Phone: 806/742-2270 x249

Biography: Find a Chris Smith [Biography](#). Find Chris Smith's commercial site and CD.

Course Goals

Course goals:

- *To develop, sharpen, and employ analytical tools that permit critical listening, reading, writing, and speaking about musical style and cultural function in Irish folkloric traditions;*
- *To develop cultural insights and participatory skills that permit us to begin to function appropriately in Irish traditional contexts.*

Outcomes and Assessments

Outcomes and Assessments: What you will be expected to learn and to do

: *Upon completion of this course, students should have the following skills:*

1. You should have a framework for looking at Irish music and folklore as a cultural expression across boundaries of geography and chronology, and recognizing both the *unique style characteristics* and *shared functions* which have shaped this oral tradition around the globe.
2. You will be able to summarize the major folkloric traditions addressed in class, distinguish them from other traditions, and show how specific artistic solutions to various social tasks reflect specific cultural and historical contexts.
3. You will be expected throughout the term to be able to identify the works we study, primarily by ear, up to a reasonable level of proficiency, and to discriminate between the styles of players, singers, dancers, and storytellers we concentrate on. You should also be able to identify genres, pieces, and other important names and terms we encounter, to summarize the careers of major musicians and ways in which those biographies reflect musical and cultural priorities, and to show a general knowledge of major events and trends in these musical traditions.
4. You will be expected to be able to synopsise and critique writings by musicians, ethnomusicologists, and journalists about Irish folklore.
5. You will be expected to be familiar with some basic tools for analyzing (i.e., taking apart and describing) performances from these traditions. To practice these tools, we will analyze some pieces in class and you will prepare some analyses for class discussion. However, because most of the world's traditions (both art music and "folk music" varieties) are taught by sophisticated aural methods--using the "ear" more than the "eye"--much of our analysis will be according to terminology and ways of hearing indigenous to the various musical cultures. The use of Western notation and terminology, which are alien to most of these musics, will be de-emphasized.

Textbooks

Required reading:

The Pocket Book of Irish Traditional Music, Gearoid O hAllmhurain, (may be difficult to obtain)

Required reading:

Last Night's Fun: In and Out of Time with Irish Music, Ciaran Carson, North Point, 1998

Required reading:

Readings Packet, MUHL4000/5320, Chris Smith, ed, Available at CopyTech

Textbooks

Required reading: *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History in an Ulster Community*, Henry Glassie, Indiana University Press, Reprint edition (Paperback), 0253209870

Course Requirements

Introduction: This course will include lecture, listening, discussion, readings, a mid-term and final examination, participation in an online course weblog ("blog"), and a semester-length research project consisting of a formal paper or creative art work.

Requirements: *Reading and listening*
For each class meeting, one or more readings and one or more recordings will be assigned. Readings will be found in the Course Readings packet or online; primary listening material will be available as mp3 files via this WebCT site. It will be essential that students complete the reading and listening assignments prior to the meeting in which they will be discussed.

Examinations

The mid-term and final examinations will be administered as qualifying-exam style essay tests. Prior to the mid-term, which will focus on reading, lecture, and listening materials, a list of 8-10 essay topics to be prepared will be distributed. On the test day, a sub-set of these topics will be distributed to students, who will then select 3-5 topics from that sub-set upon which to write essays. Essays will be expected to refer to readings, listening, and in-class discussion; students will be permitted during the exam to refer to required texts but only to those texts.

The Mid-Term examination is scheduled for Thursday March 1.

Prior to the final exam, which will focus on both lecture and listening materials, a list of pieces to be recognized will be distributed. On the test day, students will be expected to identify the excerpts played, and write short essays discussing each excerpt's musical and cultural significance.

The Final Exam is scheduled for Friday May 4, 7:30-10:00am.

Blog:

You will be provided guidelines and "seed questions" to prompt your own personal responses to the material, perspectives, and insights gleaned during the semester and the Ireland field trip. These blog entries may include expository or subjective writing, questions, poetry, quotations, sketches, photographs, musical compositions, stories, or all of the above. Ideas will be broached and may also be discussed. Students will be expected to both respond to Discussion Questions, to comment upon one another's postings, and to originate postings themselves. Points will be assigned on the basis of number of

entries, quality of data and expression, and range of integrated ideas.

Research/Performance project:

Over the course of the semester, each student will **either** create and present a formal research paper **or** a creative art-work. Students will thus select from **one** of the following two options.

Formal research paper: You will be asked to prepare a 20:00-minute (10-12 double-spaced pages) paper on a topic drawn from within the body of our course work, to deliver it to the class in the fashion of a conference paper or classroom lecture, and to field questions from the class on the paper or related topics. Afterwards, you will be asked to submit your reading text for comparison.

Creative work: Pending approval by Dr Smith, you may opt instead to develop a creative art work (cycle of poetry, paintings, short film, play, short story, or performance) and to present it for the seminar members.

Performance project: You will also be asked to develop a small repertoire (10-15:00 minutes) in one or more traditional performance genres: instrumental music, song, dance, storytelling or other verbal arts, etc. Repertoire should be drawn directly from recordings or live performances in a specific genre and you should strive to create a performance which is both stylistically and technically accurate.

In Weeks 12-14 of the semester, the majority of our class time will be spent in delivering and responding to each other's presentations. These presentations are the major written requirement of the semester.

Grading:

- **Exams:** 35%
- **Attendance, preparation, and participation:** 30%
- **Research:** 35%

Policies

Introduction:

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The following policies are required for this class by the professor, by the Honors College, and/or by the University.

Additional information:

Attendance and participation: Because our time together in class is very limited, it is essential that we make the most efficient and constructive use of that time. Therefore, attendance is mandatory and any unexcused absence will be penalized, with direct adverse effect

on final grades.

Course content issues: This course will observe the university's guidelines for avoiding sexual harassment. However, because the arts often imitate and represent human living and because sexuality, politics, religion, and personal ethics are all part of life, some materials in this course may deal with sexual, political, religious, or ethical behaviors, situations, or language. People offended by such subjects may want to reconsider taking this course.

Conduct: Students participating in MUHL classes are expected to maintain a respectful and professional level of conduct. In the event of student misconduct, it is MUHL policy that teaching staff may exercise any or all of the following:

- Ejection from class
- Grade of F for class session
- Report of student misconduct to upper-administration, faculty colleagues, or studio teacher
- Grade of F for course

Computer and technology usage: Students are encouraged, when possible, to employ modern technology during class-time, including laptops, iPods, etc.

Students employing technology during lectures are required to sit in the front row of the classroom, nearest the instructor.

Technology usage is expected to be relevant to class work, and is strictly prohibited in any testing situation.

Playing video games, text-messaging, and so on are likewise strictly prohibited. Any such activities are grounds for ejection from class.

ADA Compliance: any student who because of a disability may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary accommodations. Student should present appropriate verification from AccessTECH. No requirement exists that accommodations be made prior to completion of this approved university procedure.

Class Attendance: Absence due to religious observance The Texas Tech University Catalog states that a student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day

within a reasonable time after the absence.

Absence due to officially approved trips: The Texas Tech University Catalog states that the person responsible for a student missing class due to a trip should notify the instructors of the departure and return schedule in advance of the trip. The student may not be penalized and is responsible for the material missed.

CHANGE IN TTU OPERATING POLICIES The 45th day of class is the *last* day to drop a class. After that day, all students must complete the course and receive a grade. The grade of WF will no longer be given.

Please note: It is essential that any student missing a class, for an excused or unexcused absence, should promptly contact classmates and visit the course website to get class notes and catch up with missed work.

It is our experience that students who frequently miss class do poorly or fail. Any day you are late or absent, please get class notes from one or more classmates. You are responsible for knowing what is said in class, including announcements. Instructors cannot take responsibility for filling you in on what you missed.

Academic integrity: It is the student's responsibility to know and understand Texas Tech University's policies, procedures, and penalties regarding academic integrity, as discussed in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct. Negligence or ignorance of the policy will rarely be accepted as an excuse for violation of the policy. Cheating on examinations or plagiarism or falsification on the research project is likely to result in an F for the course.

Informed Consent

I have read and understood the contents of the syllabus for MUHL4300/5320 "Music, Folklore, and Tradition in Irish Cultural History," and agree to abide by the rules, guidelines and schedule contained within it. In particular, I understand that

1. Dr Smith also agrees to abide by the rules, guidelines, and schedule in the syllabus.
2. I will consult the syllabus if I have a question about the course rules, guidelines, and schedule.
3. Dr. Smith cannot make special exceptions for me without being unfair to everyone else taking this course.
4. I understand that my continued enrollment in the course will

be taken as indicating my consent to these conditions