

Syllabus

Course Information

Course title: MUHL4300/5330 Music in the United States

Course number: MUHL4300/5330

Course discipline: Music

Course description: **MUHL4300/5330 Music in the United States** is a one-semester graduate-level course exploring the interactions of American music and cultural history since first Colonial contact, with particular emphasis upon vernacular traditions which have historically been unique to the North American experience.

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 12, 2006 through Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Location: Music M248

Meeting day(s): TR

Meeting time(s): 12:30-1:50pm

Prerequisite(s): MUHL2301-02-03 or permission of instructor

Instructor Information

Name: Dr Christopher Smith

Email: For MUHL5330 issues, WebCT email (via "Course Menu") is best

Office location: Music M203

Office hours: Email for appointment

Phone: 806/742-2270 x249

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

Teaching assistants: N/A

Course Goals

Course goals:

Goals:

Developing familiarity with a range of social, cultural, historical, economic, and biographical factors which have shaped American music since the first European colonization. Emphasis upon understanding the interaction of “content” (musical structure, procedure, aesthetics versus agendas, biographies, and writing, etc) and “context” (times-places-peoples from which musical idioms and cultural phenomena originated). Enhance sensitivity to interactions of music and cultural history.

Emphasis:

This course will concentrate on music and musical life in the Americas (primarily, due to limitations on scope and time, musics in the United States). We will start with the roots of indigenous and emigrant music, through the Colonial, Federal, Antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction periods, tracing the rise of the popular music industry and the creation of an American canon of “great works,” exploring the parallel traditions of popular song, concert music, and indigenous styles, most notably African-American derived. We will study both popular and “classical” music and both traditions generally considered to be at the center of the canon of American music and traditions that have been excluded from it. Our theme will be the special problems and cultural issues that have confronted American musicians since the founding of the Republic.

Skills:

- By the end of the semester, you should have a framework for understanding what American musicians have done for the past 400 years, why they did it, and how their musics were constructed.
- As part of the framework, you should be able to summarize the major traditions and schools of American music, distinguish them from other musics, and show how American solutions to various issues reflect American cultural and musical contexts.
- As part of the “what,” you will be expected throughout the term to be able to identify the works we study by sight or by ear, up to a reasonable level of proficiency, and to discriminate between the styles of music we concentrate on. You should also be able to identify composers, pieces, genres, and other important names and terms we encounter, to

summarize the careers of major composers, and to show a general knowledge of major events and trends in American music.

- As part of the why, you will be expected to be able to synopsise and critique writings by musicians about music, including their own.
- As part of the “how,” you will be expected to be familiar with some basic tools for analyzing (i.e., taking apart and describing) pieces of music from these periods and traditions. To practice these tools, we will analyze some pieces in class and you will prepare some analyses for class discussion.
- Finally, you should be able to take new facts and plug them into the framework you have learned, showing that you can apply a general view of American music in your future work.

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 American musics as a cultural expression across boundaries of geography and chronology, and recognizing both the *unique style characteristics* and *shared functions* which have shape American music and music culture across five centuries.
2. You will be able to summarize the major American traditions addressed in class, distinguish them from other musics, and show how specific stylistic solutions to various functions 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 music we concentrate on. You should also be able to identify composers, 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 various American traditions.
4. You will be expected to be able to synopsise and critique writings by musicians, ethnomusicologists, and other commentators about music.

5. You will be expected to be familiar with some basic tools for analyzing (i.e., taking apart and describing) pieces of music from these periods and traditions. To practice these tools, we will analyze some pieces in class and you will prepare some analyses for class discussion. However, because much American music has been transmitted via aural/oral methods--using the "ear" and memory more than the "eye"--much of our analysis will be according to terminology and ways of hearing indigenous to various American music sub-cultures. The use of Western notation and terminology, which are alien to most of these musics, will be de-emphasized in these cases, though employed in others.

Textbooks

- Required reading: *An Introduction to America's Music*, Richard Crawford, Norton, 2nd, 0-393-97409-X
- Required reading: *To Stretch Our Ears: A Documentary History of America's Music*, J. Heywood Alexander (ed), Norton, 2003, 0-393-97411-1
- Required reading: *Recordings for an Introduction to America's Music*, (CD Anthology), Sony Special Products, 2003

Course Requirements

- Introduction: This course will include lecture, listening, discussion, readings, a mid-term and final examination, and a semester-length research project.
- 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 Crawford, Alexander, the Course Readings packet and/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

Both 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.

The Mid-Term examination is scheduled for Tuesday March 7.

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 Saturday May 6 10:30am-

1:00pm.

Research project:

Over the course of the semester, each student will develop a thesis, construct a bibliography, create a detailed outline, and finally create and deliver a research report in the style of a conference presentation.

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.

Undergraduates' course grade for this assignment will be based upon the in-class research and presentation. Graduates' course grade will be based in addition upon the written text and enhanced criteria for grading. In Weeks 12-14 of the semester, the majority of our class time will be spent in delivering and responding to each other's papers. This presentation is the major written requirement of the

Grading:

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

Policies

Introduction: **Introduction:**

The following policies are required for this class by the MUHL department and 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 unexcused absences will be penalized, with adverse effect on final grades.

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.