

**RYERSON UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Philosophy and Music**

**MUS 505****Popular Music and Culture****Class Times:****Instructor: Dr. Peter Johnston****E-mail: peter.johnston@ryerson.ca****Office Hrs (JOR 409):**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course explores the historical development of popular music and culture in North America. Lectures survey a selection of the major musical genres which define the popular idiom in the west, such as minstrelsy, ragtime, jazz, swing, blues, Tin Pan Alley, rock 'n' roll, folk, disco, soul, country, reggae, funk, pop and rap. The impact of changes in technology, political-economy, race relations and demographics will be discussed, as will the relationship between popular music and the shifting social conditions of each period. This course provides a basic understanding of music in and as culture; no prior musical knowledge is required to successfully complete this course.

**GOALS OF THE COURSE:**

1. To develop an understanding of the complex and shifting relationship between music and culture in the popular realm.
2. To survey popular musical genres, artists and innovations.
3. To improve your ability to discuss and understand musical concepts and pieces through analysis of basic musical parameters.

**COURSE EVALUATION:**

In-class Listening Analysis Quiz	10%
Midterm Test	15%
Midterm Listening Test	5%
Essay	35%
Final Test	20%
Final Listening Test	5%
Weekly Reading Questions	10%

Please notify the professor in writing of any accommodations requested during the term for religious observances or disability by the second class (as per university policy). Any alterations in assignments, tests or deadlines will be discussed in class prior to implementation. This course is lecture-based, with student participation through guided listening activities and group discussion.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

Starr, Larry and Waterman, Christopher. 2014. *American popular music: From minstrelsy to mp3*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Available at the bookstore.

\*Links to additional required readings will be provided in class or on Brightspace. Please refer to the reading schedule below\*

DATE	TOPIC	ASSESSMENT	READINGS
	Class Introduction: Popular Music and the Culture Industry		Chapters One On Blackboard: Popular Music/ Culture, Culture Industry, Mass Media
	Materials of Music: Sounds and Industry	Reading Quiz #1 (Sept 14)	Chapters Two and Three On Blackboard: The Elements of Music
	Social Genres: Tin Pan Alley, Race Records, and Hillbilly Music	Reading Quiz #2 (Sept 21)	Chapters Four and Five
	The Jazz Age, The Swing Era, and War Time	Reading Quiz #3 (Sept 28)	Chapters Six and Seven
<b>MIDTERM LISTENING TEST (YouTube Playlist on Brightspace)</b>			
<b>READING WEEK</b>			
<b>MIDTERM TEST</b>			
	Melting Pot: Country, Rhythm & Blues, and Early Rock and Roll	Reading Quiz #4 (Oct 19)	Chapter Eight
	Youth in Revolt: The Early 1960s and the British Invasion	Reading Quiz #5 (Oct 26)	Chapter Nine

	Psychedelic Sounds: Countercultural Currents in the late 1960s	Reading Quiz #6 (Nov 2)	Chapter Ten
<b>LISTENING ANALYSIS QUIZ (material from the beginning of the course)</b>			
	That 70s Sound: Heavy Metal, Hard Funk, and the Joy of Disco	Reading Quiz #7 (Nov 14)	Chapter Eleven
	Outsider Music: Punk, Reggae, and The Golden Age of Hip Hop	Reading Quiz #8 (Nov 16)	Chapter Twelve
	Video Killed the Radio Stars: Pop Music in the 1980s	Reading Quiz #9 (Nov 23) Essay Due (Nov. 29 at 12 AM)	Chapter Thirteen
<b>FINAL LISTENING TEST (YouTube Playlist on Brightspace)</b>			
	The Millennials: Alternative Musics and the Digital Revolution	Reading Quiz #10 (Dec 5)	Chapter Fourteen
<b>Date TBA</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM (material from the midterm on only)</b>		

<b>WEEKLY READING QUIZZES</b>
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Beginning in Week 2, a series of 10 multiple choice questions based on the week’s readings will be posted on Brightspace that students are to answer before coming to class. Each week, the quizzes will be available from the end of class until the beginning of class the following week. It is the students’s responsibility to log in to Brightspace at any time during the week between classes to complete the quizzes. If this window is missed, it will not be possible to go back and do the quizzes.

### LISTENING TESTS (Midterm and Final)

Students will be played 10 musical examples chosen from a list of 20 songs that have been played in class, and asked three multiple choice questions per song, addressing: the name of the artist, the name of the song, and a concept or theme of the course to which the example is connected. A YouTube playlist of the 20 songs will be available on Brightspace.

### MIDTERM TEST

The Midterm Test will consist of definitions, short answer, and multiple choice questions based on lecture and textbook materials—be sure to study both.

### LISTENING ANALYSIS QUIZ

Students will be asked to answer multiple choice questions that test their familiarity with the musical styles, forms, and artists discussed in class. The examples played will not be examples heard in class, but will be representative of materials covered in class. Examples will be drawn from the beginning of the course to the material covered directly before the quiz. A study guide will be available on Brightspace.

### ESSAY

Students will be given a choice of topics for an essay. It is expected that students use academic reference materials in the library (books, journals, encyclopedias, recordings) and reliable sources on the internet. Authors must therefore be cited in all websites used, and proper bibliographic format used. **Use of Wikipedia is strictly prohibited.** Students must use a minimum of **four** peer-reviewed written sources in addition to recordings, and must cite all directly or indirectly quoted and paraphrased material, including the professor's notes or lectures. The course reader and class notes **will not** be counted as one of the four required written research sources.

The document must be formatted and sources cited in APA style.

**Essays are to be submitted online through the dropbox module in Brightspace.** This feature accepts documents in MSWord or PDF format.

Plagiarism is dealt with seriously under the Ryerson academic code, and all written assignments will be subject to further investigation of research sources used should it be warranted. Further details outlining citation practices, proper bibliographic referencing, and research techniques will appear in the essay handout and will be discussed in class. Any questions regarding the use of source material, proper citation and bibliographic format, and other essay concerns are welcome during office hours. As email is a poor format for these types of discussions, please save them for appointments in person.

### FINAL TEST

The final test will consist of multiple choice questions based on lecture and textbook materials, delivered in Scantron format. The material covered will be from the midterm to the end of the course.

### LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of **10% per day** for the first week after the due date, counted from **12:00 am each day**. A grade of "0" will be permanently assigned to essays or tests missing **after one week**. Exemptions from the penalty will only be granted with appropriate written documentation and in person consultation with the professor within one week of the submission deadline.

Assignments are to be submitted online through the dropbox module in Brightspace. This feature accepts documents in MSWord or PDF format.

### MISSED TEST POLICY

Makeup tests and quizzes will only be permitted when official documentation detailing the reason for the absence is presented to the professor. It should be noted that makeup tests and quizzes are in a different format (usually essay and long answer, no multiple choice or short answer) and are considerably more difficult than those given on the scheduled exam date. Students are encouraged to attend all scheduled exams unless *serious* extenuating circumstances arise.

### USEFUL MUSIC SOURCES:

The Ryerson library contains many good sources on all genres of music, including books, journals, recordings, and videos. Consult the Ryerson Library Music Research Guide for access to online sources such as the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, various music encyclopedias, and databases of journals and articles in music and other disciplines, many of which will be useful for your research topics. Some of these sources, and methods for accessing them, will be discussed further in class.

Music Research Guide:

<http://learn.library.ryerson.ca/music>

Students may or may not be successful in finding articles on the specific artist, topic, or composition they are researching, but are encouraged to research artists, topics and compositions that may be useful points of socio-historical or artistic comparison for their essays as well, so as to provide a framework for their own individual ethnographic analysis.

### ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to attend class each week, to read the required readings, and to be prepared to engage in in-class discussion about the content in the readings.

If a class is missed, students *cannot* submit in-class assignments or reading questions over email or at a later date.

Unavoidable absences during tests must be discussed in person with the professor within one week of the date of absence, and written documentation of illness, vehicular accidents and funerary attendance is mandatory by that time in order to avoid a grade of “0” on the test. Students will not be excused from deadlines for work, extracurricular or family obligations, or transportation issues other than a documented transit breakdown. *Unless there is a test or assignment due, if you do not have written documentation, you **do not** need to notify the professor that you will miss class.*

### COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR PROFESSOR

E-mail should be used only when you are unable to meet the professor in office hours. In all communications with the professor, you must identify yourself by full name (as written on the course roster) **AND** by your course and section number (e.g., “John Smith, Music 211-01”). Due to the temptation for misuse of communication technology, e-mail and phone messages requesting 1) explanations of material or announcements in classes not attended, 2) extensions or 3) grade information will not be granted. Students must consult their professor *in person* in the office hours posted or immediately before or after class for all such matters.

Emails received after 5 pm on Fridays will not be answered until the following Monday morning. Please allow 24-48 hours to receive an email response from the professor on weekdays.

Class notes will *not* be provided by the professor over email, but will be available on the course Brightspace site after the lecture. Students are responsible for consulting Brightspace regularly for pertinent announcements and notes as they become available.

Students may wish to explore the Learning Success website at [www.ryerson.ca/learningsuccess](http://www.ryerson.ca/learningsuccess) to improve their core academic skills as useful workshops on note taking, essay writing, and learning from textbooks are presented there.

Cell phones, mp3 players, Blackberries, etc. should be turned off at the beginning of each class. Lectures and tutorials may not be recorded without the permission of the professor. Recorded audio and visual examples played in class are under copyright. Students are expected to be respectful of the professor and their fellow students; please do not talk in class, especially during special presentations or musical examples.

The Faculty Course Survey dates will be announced in class.