

## **MUSIC 166 Popular Music In America**

03 Credits

TTh 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 a.m.

**INSTRUCTOR:** Gloria Faltstrom  
**OFFICE:** Hale Palanakila 130  
**OFFICE HOURS:** MWF: 10:30 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.  
**TELEPHONE:** 236-9130  
**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Fall 2009

### **WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT**

*Windward Community College is committed to excellence in the liberal arts and career development; we support and challenge individuals to develop skills, fulfill their potential, enrich their lives, and become contributing, culturally aware members of our community.*

### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

MUS 166 Popular Music in America (3)

A survey of Pop Music (including Blues, Jazz, Rock and Folk), in the United States in the twentieth century. Activities will include listening to recordings, writing lyrics and tunes and learning various aspects of the business of music. Field trips and concert attendance required. (3 hrs. lect.) WCC: D

#### **Activities Required at Scheduled Times Other Than Class Times**

Optional attendance at a concert.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student learning outcomes for the course (as listed in the current catalog) are:

1. Describe the role of music in different communities
2. Describe and compare the distinctive aural features and music aesthetics of the various style of popular music.
3. Describe the historical, religious, social and political aspects of a society that contribute to the development of diverse musical styles.
4. Compare/contrast different styles of popular music.

## COURSE CONTENT

This course is a survey of Pop Music in the United States in the twentieth century. This includes blues, jazz, rock and folk and many other related styles performed in America during this time period. We will pay special attention to the origins and influences of popular American music during this period, influences pop music has had on the music of the many ethnic groups in the United States, as well as the influences that many ethnic groups have had on the development and evolution of popular music in America.

### **Format:**

The class will focus on two main areas: 1) developing an understanding of the cultural context and underlying metaphor (world view) with which the music we study has developed and is performed and, 2) the development of listening skills required to hear, understand, differentiate and articulate the expressive and musical characteristics for each piece of music or style that we study. To achieve our objectives, we will use a variety of learning methods including focused listening, performance, games, video clips, and lecture/discussion.

Learning to listen with an open, fresh, relaxed mind and heart is a crucial first step toward opening to and developing an awareness of the rich beauty, diversity and relevance of music of any culture or period of time. The idea of “deep listening” is not a skill or attitude that is generally emphasized in the dominant Western culture, but is one that we will consistently work with throughout the semester. In addition, understanding the context in which music is made is another critical factor in learning to fully appreciate it on its own terms. Therefore, we will spend a great deal of time trying to gain an understanding of the contexts and views of the people who play or played the music we are studying.

As we begin to develop these skills of deep listening and contextualization, it is my hope that many other areas of our lives will also open and relax and we will begin to notice more vividly the rich tapestry, the deep mystery and beauty that music of all cultures often seeks to describe or work with.

### *Concepts or Topics*

- **Musical genres**
- **Musical styles**
- **World view**
- **Chord**
- **Hook**
- **Instrumentation**
- **Lyrics**
- **Melody**
- **Rhythm**
- **Style**

### *Skills or Competencies*

- 1. Capacity to listen deeply*
- 2. Describe music and our experience listening to and playing music*
- 3. Understand correlation between culture's world view and its music*
- 4. Distinguish between music of different styles, genres and time periods*
- 5. Grasp cross-fertilization between various cultures, ethnic and social groups related to American music*

## COURSE TASKS

**Attendance and Reading/Listening Assignments**

Students are required to attend every class, with allowances made for emergencies (see attendance policy below). This course requires substantial reading and listening. I expect reading and listening assignments to be done prior to the class for which they are assigned, since class discussion will center around these.

**Daily Listening Journals**

Each student is required to listen to a piece of music of his or her relative choice twice each day and to keep a daily listening journal which will contain brief comments related to the music to which the student just listened. This journal will be turned in 3 times during the semester for review and grading. More detail about the nature of this daily listening assignment and of the journal entries will be offered in class. In addition to being a record of your own progress and interest during the semester, this journal is an excellent way to earn extra credit.

**Interest and Inquiry Assignments (Including Radio Listening Assignment)**

There will be several “interest and inquiry” assignments given over the course of the semester, which generally require a brief reflection paper to be submitted. These papers should be from 1-3 typed pages (11 pt. Times Roman, DS) in length. More specific details will be presented with each assignment.

**Audio/Video/Performance Summaries**

Each student is required to listen to two recordings (complete records, cassette, CD or video) or live concerts and submit a summary of each. More details about this assignment will be given in class.

**Research Project**

Each student will be required to present to the class a final project on a contemporary (performing within the last 15 years) performer (solo artist or group) of popular American music of his or her choice. At the heart of this project will be a graphic representation of all the precedents and stylistic influences that have led to this particular artist or group (aka, the School of Rock chart). Each student will spend from 10-15 minutes explaining his or her work to the class. This will be an opportunity for each student to demonstrate their comprehensive knowledge of the various genres of American pop music as well as the influences each has had on American music. Along with this chart, each student must submit a written reflection on the project. This paper should be 2-3 pages in length (11 pt. Times Roman, DS). Additional guidelines and details about this culminating project will be given in class.

**Final Exam**

There will be a final listening exam given during the final exam period. Students will be required to identify songs by ear (title and artist/performer) that we have worked with throughout the semester. More details will be given during the semester.

In general, if you are present and attentive in class and you listen comprehensively to the music outside of class time, you will do well in the course regardless of any previous knowledge of music or of popular American music. Openness and a willingness to learn is more important than what previous knowledge you may bring to this class. Participation (both in class and outside of class) is a key factor in doing well in the course. If you choose not to attend class, or not participate in other ways outside of class, your grade will more than likely directly reflect this.

On average, each student will need to spend roughly 2-5 hours per week to adequately keep up with the material we are covering.

## ASSESSMENT TASKS AND GRADING

Grades will be determined based on the following accumulation of points:

Regular Attendance/Discussion/Participation	20% (200 points)
Listening journals	20% (200 points)
Inquiry and interest assignments	10% (100 points)
Recording summaries	10% (100 points)
Final research project	25% (250 points)
Final listening exam	15% (150 points)
Total	100% (1,000 points)

Attendance Policy:

Since attendance is such a crucial factor in learning music, each student is expected to attend every class and arrive promptly. Every two unexcused absences after the second will automatically lower your grade by one letter. Each two unexcused tardies will be calculated as a tardy. Any absence or tardy for which the instructor is not informed **prior to class** is considered **unexcused**.

**There are no exceptions to this policy.**

## LEARNING RESOURCES

Course Materials:

- Required Textbook (w/ accompanying CD):  
Appell, Glen and David Hemphill. *American Popular Music: A Multicultural History*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. 2006. (ISBN 0-15-506229-8)
- Computer with high-speed internet access (best) or dial-up (poor option).
- Periodically, other reading and reference materials will be handed out in class or otherwise made available to students.

### Additional Information

**Some of our objectives will be to:**

- develop our capacity to listen deeply
- begin to develop a vocabulary and the skills necessary to describe music and our experience listening to and playing music
- begin to develop a sense of progression and evolution throughout the extensive styles of American popular music
- cultivate an appreciation for the music of our own culture as well as cultures other than our own
- begin to appreciate the correlation between a culture's world view and it's music
- begin to distinguish between music of different styles, genres and time periods
- begin to appreciate the cross-fertilization between various cultures, ethnic and social groups as it relates to popular American music

**Format:**

The class will focus on two main areas: 1) developing an understanding of the cultural context and underlying metaphor (world view) with which the music we study has developed and is performed and, 2) the development of listening skills required to hear, understand, differentiate and articulate the expressive and musical characteristics for each piece of music or style that we study. To achieve our objectives, we will use a variety of learning methods including focused listening, performance, games, video clips, and lecture/discussion.

I believe that learning to listen with an open, fresh, relaxed mind and heart is a crucial first step toward opening to and developing an awareness of the rich beauty, diversity and relevance of music of any culture or period of time. The idea of “deep listening” is not a skill or attitude that is generally emphasized in the dominant Western culture, but is one that we will consistently work with throughout the semester. In addition, understanding the context in which music is made is another critical factor in learning to fully appreciate it on its own terms. Therefore, we will spend a great deal of time trying to gain an understanding of the contexts and views of the people who play or played the music we are studying.

As we begin to develop these skills of deep listening and contextualization, it is my hope that many other areas of our lives will also open and relax and we will begin to notice more vividly the rich tapestry, the deep mystery and beauty that music of all cultures often seeks to describe or work with.

Whether or not you are comfortable speaking or learning music in groups, you can learn to make your participation more varied. Aside from actively engaging in dialogue and playing and singing the music which is taught, you can participate in any of the following ways (plus many more).

- listening carefully
- offering support
- recalling something from your relevant personal experience
- raising a new issue
- asking for clarification
- noticing that someone is trying to be heard
- explaining your idea
- explaining your confusion
- explaining someone else’s confusion
- ...and so forth

A thorough understanding of the following quote will predispose a high grade:  
*“Undertake until the last day of your life to learn; which to do readily requires a great humbleness, for the haughty do not win the hearts of those who know secrets.”*  
 – Louise Bourgeois

### **DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT**

*If you have a physical, sensory, health, cognitive, or mental health disability that could limit your ability to fully participate in this class, you are encouraged to contact the Disability Specialist Counselor to discuss reasonable accommodations that will help you succeed in this class. Ann Lemke can be reached at 235-7448, [lemke@hawaii.edu](mailto:lemke@hawaii.edu), or you may stop by Hale ‘Akoakoa 213 for more information.*