Course Syllabus for GEO 2426 (section #1C38) --Fall 2013

Pop Music & Culture: A Geographic Perspective

Instructor: Dr. Timothy J. Fik, Associate Professor, Dept. of Geography, University of Florida
Lectures: Tuesdays—Periods 5-6 (11:45AM to 1:40PM) FLG, room 0260
Thursdays—Period 6 (12:50PM to 1:40PM) CSE, room E121

Course Description

GEO 2426 is a course that highlights the geographic origins and diffusion of “pop music”, focusing on the geo-historical underpinnings of American music in its various manifestations. The course will provide an overview of American roots music and survey various and important regional styles. Emphasis is placed on analyzing music innovation, trends, and movements in relation to location, culture, counter-culture, and the social/geo-political climate. Also examined is the theory that music innovation and artistic expression are linked to the dynamics of the counter-culture (in response to mainstream trends), with innovations occurring at locations, places, and/or economies that can best be described as “marginalized” or remote in a socio-spatial sense.

Discussions and Power Point presentations will (a) trace the roots and lineage of various music styles or genres; (b) identify pioneering artists, trend-setting regions and cities; and (c) describe the diffusion of musical ideas across regions and geographic boundaries. The course will examine the importance of music and lyrics as modes of expression and the role of artists as agents of change. More importantly, the course will examine and discuss the broader social, economic, and cultural implications of the evolution of pop music and alternative counter-culture music scenes. Emphasis will also be placed on the evolution of popular music and the emergence and proliferation of various hybrid forms of music (e.g., the influence of folk, rockabilly, bluegrass, country and western swing, blues, boogie-woogie, and rhythm & blues/R&B in the creation of “rock ‘n roll”). The course will highlight the importance of the music of black Americans and the contribution of black artists (with emphasis on Delta and Chicago blues, Piedmont and country blues, R&B, gospel and soul, funk, jump blues, ska and reggae). Discussions will also focus on the punk and post-punk movements, cross-over artists, folk-rock, blues-rock, corporate rock, new wave, goth & glam, shock-rock, rap and hip-hop, techno and electronic music, and the “indie” music scene.

This course will also examine the restructuring and organization of the music industry in spatial and economic terms. Discussions will include an analysis of the impact of technology, the effects of competition, the role of radio and television (and later video), Internet and digital music (file-sharing, MP3s), the rise of independent artists and “indie” labels, and the manufacturing and marketing of pop artists and music. Within this context the course will explore the influence of demographics, the growth of niche markets, the birth and evolution of the performing artist, the overt and covert commercialization of pop music, the ever-important impact of the counter-culture and underground music scenes, and the rise of artists to pop icon status. Artist profiles and music documentaries will be presented to supplement lecture material.
Office Hours for GEO 2426 (Fall 2013)
Tuesdays—8:45AM to 11:00AM
Thursdays—8:45AM to 12:00 Noon

Office Location: 3137 Turlington Hall (3rd floor, 2 doors down from Geography Dept. office)

Course Requirements

Students are expected to write 2 “reaction papers” (of approximately 5-6 pages in length) in response to material and/or ideas presented in lecture or current pop music and culture events. Students must also complete a final term project on a related topic of their choice (with permission from the instructor) – this may take the form of an artist profile, overview of a music genre, book review, analysis of a music scene, etc. Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis and participate in classroom discussions. Attendance will be taken periodically.

Course grades are based on a 250-point system:

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Two reaction papers (25 points each)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Due dates: TBA in class]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Project (due date TBA)</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>250 total pts.</td>
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Note that “Poor Attendance” may result in 0 points for the classroom attendance/participation component! Attendance sheets will be circulated from time to time (to officially monitor attendance). No “Incompletes” (grades of I) will be given out for any reason. Students who fail to turn in all required materials by the specified due dates and times will receive a grade of “E” for the course. Failure to turn in a project “on time” (that is, by the project due date/deadline) will result in the loss of 50 points per each day late. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please provide adequate citation of sources for your written work… and any of the commonly used referencing or literature cited systems including bibliographies, endnotes, or footnotes will suffice.

Students turning in “manufactured” papers or cut-and-paste/downloaded replicas of already existing materials or articles found on the Internet will receive a grade of “E”. Please recast the ideas in your own words. There are no exceptions… you must provide citations and sources. Note that there are No Make-Ups for late submissions (with exceptions). No extra credit. No rewrites. Note that I do not do previews or pre-reviews. Regarding attendance… If your name does not appear on an attendance sheet for a given day, you will be marked absent. Medical excuses must be validated.

Students with Disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Medical and Family Emergencies: Note that valid Medical or Family Emergency excuses are accepted, and students will not be marked absent for classes missed or late assignments associated with those events. The instructor will work with students to extend due dates accordingly.
Instructor Bio

Timothy J. Fik is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Florida (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences). He earned a Master of Arts in Economic Geography (1986) from the State University of New York at Buffalo and a Ph.D. in Geography & Regional Development from the University of Arizona (1989). Author of several books, approximately 40 journal articles, and co-author of dozens of reports, his research interests include applied quantitative methods, price competition models, real estate modeling, market-area analysis, regional economic development, spatial interaction modeling, recreational and coastal resource management in the state of Florida, and musicology. Dr. Fik is an accomplished musician, writer/arranger, producer, and guitarist with 35 years experience as a professional musician playing in regional bands that have opened concerts for numerous National Recording/Touring Acts (from 1977 through 2013) including Black Oak Arkansas, The Kentucky Headhunters, Blackfoot, Confederate Railroad, The Oak Ridge Boys, Wade Hayes, Shenandoah, Mark Chestnut, Daryl Singletary, Ricky Van Shelton, Doug Stone, Gary Allan, Chad Brock, Steppenwolf, Platinum Blonde, Blotto, The Romantics, Talk-Talk, The Psychedelic Furs, Igor and the Red Elvises, Nicole Hart, Willie Green, Albert Castiglia, Victor Wainwright, and the Claire Lynch Band. Currently, he can be seen performing with his wife Bridget Kelly Fik (under the name Bridget Kelly or the Bridget Kelly Band, not to be confused with the R&B artist under the same name), having released their 3rd CD “Back in the Blues” in the Spring of 2013; playing on weekends at venues, clubs, dance halls, and festivals throughout the state of Florida. They have performed at the Will McLean Festival, the Florida Folk Festival, Riverfest (Ormond Beach), the Larimar Arts Center & Theatre, Azalea Festival, Roberts Hall ( Lynn Haven), Topsail Hill State Park, Thunder Music Park, Gainesville’s own Thomas Center, the Downtown Gainesville Art Festival, and local establishments including Satchel’s Pizza (Lightning Salvage), Dutty Nelly’s, the Dirty Martini Bar, Dos Mama’s, The High Dive (Gainesville), The Great Outdoor’s Café, The Dive (High Springs), Skipper’s Smokehouse (Tampa), and Billy’s Downtown Blues Bar in Palatka. Dr. Fik is working on finishing a draft of a book on “the Blues”, tentatively entitled: Wishing the Road Were Blue: A Geo-Historical Perspective on the Birth, Diffusion, and Meaning of Blues Music in America.

Official e-mail is fik@ufl.edu. Please use it sparingly.

Note: No textbooks are required for this course.

Here’s an Archived Reading List of various pop music related topics (for the curious)… Feel Free to Add Your Own Titles!

"The Sounds of People and Places" (paperback edition), George C. Carney (editor), Rowman & Littlefield (1994);

"Mapping the Beat: Popular Music and Contemporary Theory" (paperback edition), Thomas Swiss (editor), Blackwell (1998);


"Global Pop: World Music, World Markets" (paperback edition), Timothy Taylor, Routledge (1997);
"Popular Music of the Non-Western World" (paperback edition), Peter Manuel, Oxford University Press (1990);

“Generation Ecstasy” (paperback edition), Simon Reynolds, Routledge (1999);

“Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern Dream of Freedom” (paperback edition), Peter Guralnick, Back Bay Books (1999);

"Fast Food, Stock Cars, and Rock-n-Roll" (paperback edition), George Carney (editor), Rowman & Littlefield (1995);

"Reggae Routes: The Story of Jamaican Music" (paperback edition), Kevin O'Brien Chang and Wayne Chen, Temple (1998);

"Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place" (paperback edition), George Lipsitz, Verso (1997);

"Interpreting Popular Music" (paperback edition), David Brackett, Univ. of Calif. Press (2000);

“Lost Highways: Journeys and Arrivals of American Musicians” (paperback edition), Peter Guralnick, Back Bay (1999);

“Hot Stuff: A Brief History of Disco” (paperback edition), John-Manuel Andriote, Harper Collins (2001);

“Hip Hop America” (paperback edition), Nelson George, Penguin (1998);

“The Music of Black Americans” (3rd edition), Eileen Southern, Norton (1997);

“The Death of Rhythm & Blues”, Nelson George, Plume/Penguin (1988);


ADD YOU Favorite POP Music & Culture Book Here!
A Note on Courtesy-- Please refrain from engaging in the following activities while the class is in session: texting, cell-phone conversations, checking voice-mails, social networking, on-line surfing, website browsing, or checking your e-mail or Facebook status. Talking while the instructor is speaking is also frowned upon. Students engaged in any of these activities will be asked to leave the room/lecture hall… and will be marked as “absent” for that day. Bottom line here: Let’s respect one another… and let’s show respect for your fellow classmates.

Reaction papers – short essay format… 5-6 pages (expected); written in response to topics, subjects, discussions or debates brought up in class, articles you have read, or documentaries you have watched, etc. For example, students from past semesters have written reaction papers with the following titles:

- Punk Music: “Counter-Culture” goes Mainstream
- Revisiting Woodstock (’69, ’94, and ‘99)
- The Role of Technology in Music Distribution
- Philadelphia Soul & the Neo-Soul Movement
- Video killed the radio star / Internet killed the video star
- MP3s and File sharing: The Controversy Continues
- Ten Things I Dislike about Pop Music/Culture
- Explicit Lyrics, Censorship, and Big Brother
- The Death and Rebirth of Rock Music
- Grunge… The Rise and Fall
- Pop Music and the Corporate Influence
- Pop Stars and Icons: made, bought, and sold
- American Idol – True Talent or Glorified Karaoke?
- Lip-Syncing… Does anybody really care?
- “Selling Out”
- “The Voice”-- A Prime-Time Addiction
- The Justin Bieber phenomenon (Selling an Image)

References or bibliography may be attached (when and where applicable). Note: The reference list/bibliography does not count as a page of text.

Term Projects (DUE DATE: TBA)

Artist profile – an overview of an artist or group (highlighting their material, contribution(s) to a music genre, major influences and musical lineage, links to particular regional styles, etc). Format: Term Paper and/or Power-Point presentation, with CDs, music files, photos, etc. to supplement text. Past examples include:

- Bob Dylan… in the footsteps of Guthrie (from the Dust Bowl to Greenwich Village)
- Michael Jackson – from Motown to the World
- The Orlando-Based Boy Band Phenomenon
- Pink Floyd: uncharted musical territories
- The Dixie Chicks: Country-Fried Controversy
- Bob Marley: First Global Pop Superstar?
- John Lennon: Imagine…
- The British Invasion
- The Omaha Music Scene
- 90’s Grunge: The Seattle Sound
- Indie Folk-Music
- Contemporary Country: the New Sound of Nashville
Adele – Super Talent / Over-night Sensation
The Evolution of Techno, Electronica, and Dance (No Vocals Necessary)
The Gaga/Madonna Legacies – Revisiting Shock-Pop
Jam Bands... Alive and Well: Long Live “the Dead”
Dub Step—The Techno Dance Craze Continues
Americana: An All-American Music Experiment
Emo—Emotive Music for a Niche Market
Tween Music and Tween Idols
America’s Obsession with Singers: The Voice vs. American Idol
To Bieber or Not to Bieber?

Note: An overview of a music genre or book review is also acceptable.
Examples include…

Kentucky Bluegrass to “Newgrass”
R&B: The Southern Gospel Influence
Heavy Metal Madness: A Look at a Diverse Genre
Contemporary Christian Music
Sweet Soul Music: R&B and the Southern Dream of Freedom (book review)
Generation Ecstasy and the Origins of Techno (book review)

Term project guidelines:
(1) Term projects/term papers must focus on a topic related to popular music and pop culture and have a significant geo-historical, regional, socio-political/economic, and/or cultural component;
(2) Permission to pursue a given topic must be obtained from the instructor; and
(3) Term projects/term papers must be turned in by the due date (TBA). No exceptions.
(4) Students may choose one of two project options:

Option 1. Power-point presentation (submitted on CD or flash-drive) –
Must be the content equivalent of a 30-page term paper
⇒ That is, approx. 60-65+ power-point slides, properly referenced
(note: graphics and photo inserts may be used)
Bibliography/citations and cover/title pages do not count as slides.

Option 2. Term Paper (30 pages of original text) with an attached bibliography or reference list…submitted on CD or flash-drive—as a Word file or submitted as hardcopy (i.e., a paper copy). If you choose the CD or flash-drive option, make sure your file(s) are on the CD or flash-drive, and make sure that the files can be opened using Microsoft Word or PowerPoint (please use .doc, docx, .ppt, or .pptx file tags). Again, the bibliography and cover/title pages do not count as pages of text. Apply standard 1-inch margin, double-spacing, w/12 point font (times roman preferred).

Bottom line... It’s all about content – the more content, the higher the grade!

Note: Term papers/term projects will not be accepted via e-mail due to the size of the class. Also, reaction papers will not be accepted via e-mail due to the size of the class. No exceptions.
List of possible topics that are open for discussion (not necessarily in order):

- Course overview and “Pop” – Definitions and Interpretations
- Rap Music & Hip Hop Culture
- The “50’s Era” and the birth of “Rock ‘n Roll” -- the Golden Age (overview); 50’s rock ‘n roll documentary (video);
- “Blues” and Rhythm & Blues (roots and evolution) - regional styles and pioneering artists: Delta Blues, boogie-woogie and barrel-house piano, Piedmont and country blues, electric and urban blues, Texas blues, the music of Chicago, Kansas City, and St. Louis (link to Ragtime, swing, jazz).
- “Blues-Land” music documentary (video)
- The music of New Orleans, southern Louisiana, and vicinity (R&B, Cajun, Zydeco, Caribbean/Island, Dixieland influence)
- **Western Swing** (Texas-Oklahoma origins)
- Kentucky Bluegrass (east and central Kentucky) and “Newgrass”
- **Tejano, Cajun/Acadian, and Native American Roots Music**
- Country Music (overview): roots country – hillbilly, mountain, and “Old-time” music; Nashville vs. Honky Tonk (Outlaw Country); and “New Country”
- **American Folk** music, from the Dust Bowl to New York City
- **British Invasion**, blues revival, and 60’s psychedelic rock; “Britain Invades America, America Strikes Back” (video); Waves of the British Invasion
- “Doo-wop” and the early vocal groups
- **Soul Music** (Motown, Memphis, and the Sound of Philadelphia) - “Soul Music” (video); its southern Gospel connection; Neo-soul
- The 1970’s: American music: West coast, Midwest, and New York; FM radio; corporate and arena rock; easy-listening/soft rock; disco; bubble-gum and 70’s teen idols; early heavy metal
- **Punk rock** and Post-Punk (from America to London… and back again)
- The 80’s Recap… Hair Bands to New Wave
- **Ska and Reggae**
- Bob Marley: A Musical Documentary
- Alternative & Lesser-known American roots genres
- **The Rise of Heavy Metal**
- Techno and Electronica-- Rave Culture

NOTE: Formatting and reference style: Any formatting and reference styles are acceptable… feel free to choose. Students who do not carefully read this syllabus seem to ask this question over and over again. Note that it is only required that you reference the sources of your information… using any system you like – feel free to use a citation page, end-notes, footnotes, a bibliography, a reference list, etc. …listing by number or source designation, or by the name of an author (and this includes Websites, books, articles, Internet addresses, etc); basically, giving credit to the sources of your information or ideas presented. References should be attached at the end of your term paper or Power-point presentation. Again, to be perfectly clear, the title page and reference page(s) do not count as pages of text.
**Attendance.** Attendance sheets will be circulated from time to time… at the beginning, middle, and/or end of the class period on selected days… and sometimes twice in the same day. Students not signed in (or not signed in on both sheets) will be marked absent. Numerous attendance sheets will be distributed over the course of the semester (typically on either randomly selected or low-attendance days). Attendance points will be assigned accordingly. A total of 50 points can be earned by having a good attendance record.

Students who leave class after signing an attendance sheet, without proper justification, will be marked absent (and an additional 10 points will be deducted from their attendance points). Students engaged in surfing the Internet or caught on sites unrelated to the course… or students engaged in social networking during lecture (and that includes writing or checking e-mails, Facebooking, accessing any of the various social-networking websites/portals, tweeting, etc.) will be marked absent for that day and will be asked to leave the class as they pose a distraction to the class (they will also be penalized an additional 10 points for failure to participate in the proper class attendance protocol). Students should also refrain from talking while the Instructor is lecturing… as that is rude and unacceptable behavior…and will not be tolerated.

In short, I have **zero tolerance** for people disrespecting my class by engaging in chatting, computer-based web-surfing, smart-phone/I-pad/and/or I-pad use, social networking, texting, etc. Do these things on your own time.

Out of courtesy to the instructor and other students, cell phones/smart phone/I-pads/I-pods, should be turned off or silenced by the start of class, and remain so until the end of the class period. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. If we work together, we can make this course a pleasurable experience for one and all.
Grades & Final Grade Determination

Students can earn as much as 50 points for their reaction papers (2x25 points each) and as much as 150 points for their final term project. The allocation of points for the final term projects is based on the performance of your peers (subject to the instructor’s expectations as to what constitutes an acceptable versus an unacceptable presentation or term paper in terms of content, length, quality, etc.). Clear distinctions exist between papers or presentations that are marginally acceptable versus those that are stellar or outstanding based on submissions from past semesters.

Remember that content is everything. The more work you put into your project, the higher the grade.

Your term project topic should be cleared by the instructor before you begin working on it. This can be done informally or informally. Note that you should not wait until the last minute to begin your research. No late term projects will be accepted for any reason. Failure to turn in a project by the deadline (TBA) will result in zero points and a final course grade of E. Also, no “Incompletes” will be given out for this course. The determination of a final course grade will be based on the percentages shown (points earned out of a possible 250 points) x 100%:

91.0-100% = A
90.0-90.9% = A-
87.0-89.9% = B+
80.0-86.9% = B
78.0-79.9% = B-
75.0-77.9% = C+
65.0-74.9% = C
60.0-64.9% = C-
57.0-59.9% = D+
50.0-56.9% = D
45.0-49.9% = D-
00.0-44.9% = E

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<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
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<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
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<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
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Good Luck and Good Journey!

Go Gators!!!

Go Wildcats!!!