AMU 130: American Music (AMCS)
Spring 2008
(Mon/Wed/Fri 1:50-2:55pm in TMC 120)

Professor Jennifer Milioto Matsue
Office Location: TMC 208
Office Hours: Wednesday 3:30-5:00pm, Thursday 4:00-5:30pm, and by appointment
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Course Overview:
This course surveys some of the major influences, societal shifts, great works, important
styles, and prominent musicians in American Popular Music. Lectures, listening assignments
and reading focus on the amalgam of social and artistic influences that have shaped popular
music in the United States and on the diverse musical languages that constitute it. The class
will focus primarily on popular music styles from the eighteenth century to the present
including Tin Pan Alley, bluegrass, country, rock 'n' roll, folk, punk, alternative, grunge, and
electronica, as well as the development of black musics such as minstrelsy, blues, ragtime,
jazz, R&B, Motown, and hip-hop. Through exploring the history and development of a broad
variety of popular musics, students will ultimately gain a better understanding of
contemporary American music and culture.

Required Material (Available at the campus bookstore)

American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MP3 by Larry Starr and Christopher

Additional materials may be placed on reserve or distributed in class.

In-class expectations: Students are expected to complete reading and listening assignments as
indicated in the schedule AND be prepared to discuss them in class. Students are also required to
complete two listening quizzes, two reviews, and a final project, proposal, and selected
presentations. Five pop-quizzes will also be given throughout the term (no rescheduling the
quizzes).

Evaluation:
Grading will be based on the following assignments:

4/5 “pop” quizzes @ 5pts each* 20pts
2 listening quizzes @ 15pts each 30pts
Reviews (2-3pgs) @ 7.5 pts each 15pts
Final Project/ Proposal (1-2pgs) 25pts
Class Participation 10pts

*The best grades from four out of five pop-quizzes will count towards the final grade. These
cannot be rescheduled. Materials covered in the quizzes will come from the reading AND
listening assigned for that day.

Final Grades: 94+ A, 90-93 A-, 87-89 B+, 84-86 B, 80-83 B-, 77-79 C+, 74-76 C, 70-73 C-,
67-69 D+, 64-66 D, 60-63 D-, 59 or below F.

Regular attendance AND participation are both absolutely necessary to successfully
complete this course. Greater than three absences will result in a deduction of a full letter
grade from the final course grade. Greater than six absences will result in failure of the
course.
All assignments must be submitted by the dates and times as indicated. Any late work will be penalized with a full grade deduction per each day late. **All assignments must be completed to pass the course.**

*Please note that any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak to me by the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Dean of Students may be consulted to verify the documentation of the disability.*

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1**
- 3/31  Introduction to the course
- 4/2   What is American Music?
  - *American Popular Music (APM)* Preface and Chapter 1
- 4/4   Early Popular Music
  - APM Chapter 2

**Week 2**
- 4/7   Early Dance and Jazz
  - APM Chapter 3
- 4/9   Tin Pan Alley
  - APM Chapter 4
- 4/11  Race Records and Hillbilly Music
  - APM Chapter 5

**Week 3**
- 4/14  **Review #1 Due IN CLASS (2-3 pgs, 7.5pts)**
- 4/16  Swing
  - APM Chapter 6
- 4/18  Guest Lecture – Lei Bryant on “Asian American Spoken Word Artists”

**Week 4**
- 4/21  Postwar Musics
  - APM Chapter 7
- 4/23  **Listening Quiz #1 (15pts)**
- 4/25  Early Rock ‘n’ Roll
  - APM Chapter 8
  - Film Viewing – “Good Rockin’ Tonight”

**Week 5**
- 4/28  American Pop, Motown, and the British Invasion
  - APM Chapter 9
- 4/30  Film Viewing – “Standing in the Shadows of Motown”
- 5/2   **Steinmetz – suggested presentations TBA**

**Week 6**
- 5/5   Growth in the 1960s
  - APM Chapter 10
- 5/7   1970s Pop and Rock
  - APM Chapter 11
5/9  **Final Project Proposal Due IN CLASS**

**Week 7**
5/12  1970s Country, Reggae, Punk, Funk and Disco  
      APM Chapter 12
5/14  Film Viewing – “The Filth and the Fury”
5/16  Guest Lecture – Brian Gibney on “Guitar Techniques”

**Week 8**
5/19  **Review #2 Due IN CLASS (2-3pgs, 7.5pts)**
5/21  1980s Digital Revolution  
      APM Chapter 13
5/23  Alternatives  
      APM Chapter 14

**Week 9**
5/26  American Popular Music in Review  
      APM Chapter 15 Conclusion
5/28  **Listening Quiz #2 (15pts)**
5/30  Asian-American Music Making – Taiko Day

**Week 10**
6/2   Selected Presentations
6/4   Selected Presentations
6/6   Selected Presentations

**Final Project Due by NOON on Tuesday, June 10th, 2008 – Hardcopy Only!**