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MUSI 133L.50: Introduction to Country Music - Cowboys, Opry, Nashville

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Introduction to Country Music
MUS 133L Section 50
3 Credits
Spring Semester, 2016

Please read this document thoroughly...

There's a quiz at the end

Who is the Professor?

Professor Smart teaches this class. **I do not have an office on campus.** Please do not try to find me there (you'll only end up lost and frustrated). If you need to contact me, please do so via e-mail using your University of Montana e-mail account. My e-mail address is amy.smart@umontana.edu. **I prefer to be called Professor Smart, not by my first name.**

What Materials are Required for the Course?

No prior knowledge of country music is necessary to take this class. The only things you need for the course are a reliable computer with internet access and the textbook.

Textbook:

Neal, J. (2013). *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*.
New York: DK Publishing, Inc.

You may purchase this textbook at the University Bookstore. If you choose to order it online, please expedite your shipping so that you do not fall behind in coursework. There shouldn't be a reason to not complete the readings as there is a copy of the book on reserve in the campus library.

What Will We Do During the Term?

This course will explore the country music genre, including its major performers, songwriters, songs and impact on culture from the early times on the radio to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The course will examine some of the "off shoots" of country music including cowboy songs, bluegrass and rockabilly, as well as the development of country-pop and Nashville. Students enrolled in this course will evaluate country music's content and contemporary cultural role through course readings, concert reviews, and asynchronous discussions.

Student Goals:

Following this course, students should be able to these:

1. Describe and analyze the varieties of music that fall under the umbrella term of the “country music”
2. Identify and evaluate the contributions of influential musicians and people involved in country music
3. Understand how country music has contributed to American culture

Learning Outcome	Assessment Method
Describe and analyze the varieties of music that fall under the umbrella term of “country music”	*Concert Review projects *Discussion Board *Final and Midterm Exams
Identify and evaluate the contributions of influential musicians and people involved in country music	*Discussion Board *Final and Midterm Exams
Understand how country music has contributed to American culture	*Concert Review project *Discussion Board *Final and Midterm Exams

TOPICS

Each week in the course is divided into topics. Each week’s topic contains everything you need for the week, including: assignment links and relevant websites. If you come across websites in your studies that are not already a part of this course, please feel free to share them! Sometimes the links become unavailable. Please let me know if you experience this so that I can get a new one posted. Feel free to reference websites in your assignments.

COURSE WRITING EXPECTATIONS:

As this is a college-level course, it is expected that you use advanced writing skills for your assignments. A simple proofreading of your work goes a very long way!

Your assignments represent you. We won't have the opportunity to meet face-to-face, so take pride in what you submit. Push yourself to write well, conscientiously and most importantly support your opinions/ideas.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. You will fail the course if you are found to have plagiarized your assignments. If you use someone else's writing, you must use quotation marks where necessary and properly make a citation within the body of your assignment. If you need help with this, you can use a website such as <http://citationmachine.net/> to guide you. I am interested in your thoughts and ideas, not those of other people. A good rule of thumb to remember is that if it is not your original thought, you need quotation marks.

Because I've had students in the past who have been confused on this issue, here are some examples of plagiarism:

1. copying and pasting material from a website
2. copying and pasting another student's discussion post
3. copying and pasting another student's assignment and submitting it as your own

ASSIGNMENTS:

You will find information on course assignments in this syllabus as well as in each week's topic. If you have questions on how to proceed with an assignment, please e-mail me (amy.smart@umontana.edu).

ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSIONS:

*These are the main, weekly assignments in this course.

*Each is due on the last day of the current course week, Sunday by 11:59pm, MST. For example, Week 1 of the course runs from Monday, January 25-Sunday, January 31. All work for that week is due by 11:59pm MST on Sunday, January 31. **Late work will not be accepted.**

*Due dates aren't suggestions. Because of the nature of this course, I have to be very black-and-white regarding assignment deadlines. Again, late work will not be accepted.

What's an Asynchronous Discussion?!?

An asynchronous discussion is simply a way to have an online conversation with other members of the class. "Asynchronous" means that the conversation is not happening all at once. Responses will filter in throughout the week. Please try not to wait until the last minute to make your initial posting to a topic.

One-sided conversations aren't fun. Therefore, **a minimum of two postings is required of each student each time there is a specific discussion topic.** One of these postings should be of a more "extensive" nature, i.e.: at least a paragraph in length and is worth 25 points. The second posting can be a response to something

another member of the class has written, and is worth 10 points. Here is an example of what a discussion thread might look like:

Discussion Topic: *Who is one of your favorite country music artists?*

Original Response: *I adore Willie Nelson, in particular his “Red Headed Stranger” album.*

Response to Classmate: *(a classmate’s response indicated that he/she loves Alison Krauss to which you might respond:) I love her too! Have you caught her album collaboration with Robert Plant from Zeppelin? It is killer.*

To clarify: for **each** discussion topic I post during the week, you are to give two responses.

How Will Discussions be Graded?

These discussion assignments will be graded on:

- depth of contribution,
- focus of ideas
- supplying supporting evidence for opinions.

You should view these discussions as a central component of the course. These discussions will make our work together that much more rich and rewarding. It should go without saying that it is expected that all students’ ideas be treated with respect. Although differences of opinion are welcomed, they must be presented and reacted to with courtesy and remain germane to the topic at hand.

You will find a document regarding the grading of discussions in the Week 1 Topic. It is your responsibility to read, understand and ask questions (if necessary) about the document.

CONCERT REVIEW PROJECTS:

You will be required to attend two country music concerts **DURING** the course of this class (not before January 25, 2016). If you choose to submit a review for a concert you saw before the start of the term, you will not receive credit. You also will not receive credit for a review submitted about a video of a concert. The concert must fall under the umbrella of the country music genre.

What kind of concert “counts?”

The concert can range from:

- a local band playing at a bar
- a public performance in a park
- a major name act.
- a free bluegrass performance at Wheat Montana

Plan now for the events you will attend! The country music umbrella is wide and there are many styles that fall under the term. Opportunities are plentiful, but if you need help finding a performance to attend please ask for help.

How will my review be graded?

Your reviews should be a minimum of one and a half pages in length (12-point font, single-spaced). Correct spelling and grammar are expected.

Tips for writing a good review:

- *As you attend the performance, be thinking to yourself “What would a reader want to know about what I am seeing?”
- *Take notes at the show. Include such details as the make up and instrumentation of the band, the repertoire, the country music style (give evidence for why you classify it as such), and the performance itself.
- *Try to talk with some of the members of the band before, after or during a break at the show. Of course this depends on the artist you are seeing. If you catch a Miranda Lambert show, this probably won’t happen! If you are seeing a local/regional artist, this is more of a possibility.
- *You could also interview members of the audience for a nice narrative touch.

Read the guide for writing a concert review project. This is in the Week 1 Topic.

When are they due?

The first is due on Sunday, March 20 at 11:59pm, MST.

The second one is due on Sunday, May 1 at 11:59pm, MST.

Please start making plans now for these review projects. The due dates will sneak up on you.

OUTLINE OF WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS/DUE DATES:

Dates	Material to be Covered
Week 1 (1/25 – 1/31)	Reading: Chapter 1 Syllabus Quiz Asynchronous Discussion 1
Week 2 (2/1 – 2/7)	Reading: Chapter 2 Asynchronous Discussions
Week 3 (2/8 – 2/14)	Reading: Chapter 3 Asynchronous Discussions
Week 4 (2/15 -2/21)	Reading: Chapters 4 Asynchronous Discussion
Week 5 (2/22 – 2/28)	Reading: Chapter 5 Asynchronous Discussion
Week 6 (2/29 – 3/6)	Reading: Chapter 6

	Asynchronous Discussion
Week 7 (3/7 – 3/13)	Reading Chapter 7 Asynchronous Discussion
Week 8 (3/14 -3/20)	MIDTERM (3/14 – 3/16) CONCERT REVIEW 1 DUE 3/20
Week 9 (3/21 – 3/27)	Reading Chapters 8 and 9 Asynchronous Discussions
Week 10 (3/28 – 4/3)	Reading Chapters 10 and 11 Asynchronous Discussion
Week 11 (4/4 – 4/10)	SPRING BREAK
Week 12 (4/11 – 4/17)	Reading Chapter 12 Asynchronous Discussions
Week 13 (4/18 -4/24)	Reading Chapter 13 Asynchronous Discussion
Week 14 (4/25 – 5/1)	Reading Chapters 14 and 15 Asynchronous Discussions CONCERT REVIEW 2 DUE 5/1
Week 15 (5/2 – 5/8)	Article reading (link in topic) Asynchronous Discussion
Week 16 (5/9 – 5/13)	FINAL EXAM (5/9 -5/11)

RANCH HAND PERFORMANCE EXAMS (MIDTERM AND FINAL)

Midterm: opens in Moodle on Monday, 3/14 at 12:00am MST (midnight)
closes on Wednesday, 3/16 at 11:59pm MST

Final: opens in Moodle on Monday, 5/9 at 12:00am MST (midnight)
closes on Wednesday, 5/11 at 11:59pm MST

Tips for testing success:

*SAVE YOUR WORK to a word document so that you don't lose your work! I can't stress this enough. Every semester a few people don't heed my advice and they lose credit for their testing work because there was a glitch with Moodle. **Moodle will log you out after a couple of hours of inactivity.** If your work wasn't saved it will be lost.

*Give yourself time to complete the exam. Don't log in five minutes before the exam is set to close. You will be out of luck once the exam is closed.

*The exams are each about seven questions. You'll write short essay responses.

OVER-ALL GRADING

Your grades will be based on the total points you earn for the term. I do not grade on a curve. All assignments are important, and nothing is weighted.

Points for course work are assigned as follows:

Syllabus Quiz: 25

Asynchronous Discussions: 35 points (1st post is 25 points and 2nd post is 10 points)

Concert Review Projects and Exams: These are each worth 100 points

Grades will be awarded as follows:

A= 90-100%

B= 80-89%

C=70-79%

D=60-69%

F= 0-59%

*I do not offer extra credit of any kind in this course.

COMMUNICATION

Please make sure you check your university e-mail daily. This is the way I will communicate with you should I need to get a message out.

STUDENT INTEGRITY

Cheating is not tolerated in any form in this class and will be prosecuted to the full extent. According to the University of Montana Code: *All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page1321.*

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who are in need will receive reasonable accommodations in this online course. To request course modifications, please contact me as soon as possible. I will work with you and Disability Services in this process. For more information, please visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umt.edu/dss/> or call (406) 243-2243.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

UMOnline Support Desk

For questions:

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. (excluding holidays)

Call: 406.243.4999 or 866.225.1641 (toll-free)

E-mail: courseware-support@umontana.edu

If you need additional plug-ins, please utilize this IDD webpage:

<http://umt.edu/xls/techsupport/pluginsdownloads.aspx>

FINAL THOUGHTS

It is your responsibility to thoroughly read through this document and ask questions as needed. When you feel you have read and understand course expectations, please take the “Syllabus Quiz” located on Moodle. This quiz must be completed by Sunday, Jan. 31st, at 11:59pm MST.

Please remember that I don't accept late work.

I reserve the right to make changes and/or adjustments to this syllabus as I deem them necessary at any time.

Let's get moving.