ARHU 106: HONORS HUMANITIES PRACTICUM IN THE ARTS

[Working Syllabus 1/24/07]

20th Century Music and Mass Media in the United States

INSTRUCTOR:
Dr. Sibbie O’Sullivan
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OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

SECTION:
Section 0101 Wednesdays 4:00-4:50 pm, QAN 0108

REQUIRED TEXT:
Required readings come from the coursepack which will be provided by instructor. You may also be asked to access and print readings online from WebCT (www.courses.umd.edu). In addition, you will be asked to listen to assigned music files on the WebCT page before each class meeting.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The meeting of southern American musical traditions and mass media during the early twentieth century resulted in the advent of two American musical forms labeled and later categorized as Country and the Blues. And these two styles together laid the foundation of Rock n’ Roll and Rhythm and Blues. The relationship between southern musical traditions and the new industries of radio and recording during the last century is a distinctly American story. This history (the topic of our class) recounts the ways various sounds and styles of early American music became lucrative, popular, influential, and pervasive cultural forms through new technologies, and what those new technologies meant for the idea of an authentically American music.

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to instances when southern musical traditions met these burgeoning new
technologies and to examine the sociological, cultural, political, and musical contexts of these moments. For the practical application students will then compose or arrange their own pieces and experience the recording process.

By the end of the course, students will have:
1. An introductory knowledge of musical forms including Southern work songs, play songs, ballads, dance music; Hillybilly or Old-time music; Classic Blues; Country Blues; Honky Tonk; Bluegrass; Country-Western; Urban Blues; Rhythm and Blues; and Rock n’ Roll.
2. An introductory knowledge of early broadcast and recording pioneers and their methods.
3. An introductory understanding of the social and cultural climate of early twentieth-century America.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

*Class participation:*
Students are expected to attend class regularly. Absences are excused *only if* the absence is caused by illness of the student, or illness of a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave; religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); participation in university activities at the request of University authorities; and compelling circumstance beyond the student's control. Participation is based on the student’s contribution to and demonstration of knowledge of the course material in class discussion.

*Assignments:*
All students are expected to read the assigned articles and engage in class discussion. In addition, music files are available for each week on WebCT. It is important that you listen to the
music files BEFORE class since we will not have enough time in the fifty minutes to listen to all of the music—and the music is the core of this class. You are also required to bring to class a typed question referencing each of the week’s readings. This question should reflect your engagement with the essays and serve as a possible discussion topic in the class. Other written assignments will have an individual assignment sheet.

Class Project:
ARHU106 is an arts practicum. Thus, the practical application is the most important part of this course. Students may work individually or in groups (up to 4 people) for the final project which involves composing or arranging a musical piece/s based on the musical forms we have looked at and the recording of that/those piece/s at the University radio station. More details will be provided as the course progresses.

Keystone Project Progress:
Students are required to maintain satisfactory progress towards completion of their Keystone Project during the spring semester in ARHU106. This semester you will continue to research your topic. You will complete an updated description of your project, its current state, your plan of action for the summer, and you will expand your bibliography from ten to at least twenty sources, if applicable. You will annotate all of your sources in Chicago, Turabian, or MLA style. Your formatting should follow your chosen style correctly—you will be graded on formatting. Guidelines for annotation are available on the WebCT page. To access your WebCT space go to www.courses.umd.edu <http://www.courses.umd.edu/> and follow the student tutorial.

GRADING METHOD:
Grades will be assigned based on the following:

Class participation and discussion 30 %
Assignments 15%
Final Class Project 35%
Updated Keystone Project 20%

The grading will be on a traditional scale of 90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, etc.

Documented Disabilities

Students who have documented disabilities and who wish to discuss academic accommodations within this course should contact the instructor as soon as possible after the beginning of the course.

Incompletes

In this course, the mark of "I" will be granted only to a student who meets both of the following criteria: (1) the student has satisfactorily completed a major portion of the work of the course and (2) the student has been unable to complete some small portion of the work of the course because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control. Examples of reasons for the inability to complete course work that will not qualify a student for an "I" mark include the following: employment or volunteer commitments, social responsibilities, travel plans, and unexpected difficulties in satisfying course requirements.

Academic Integrity

It is expected that each student will behave honorably throughout this course. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students who are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty should consult the Student Honor Council Code of Academic Integrity http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html.
SCHEDULE

**Jan. 29**: Introduction to the Course, the Music, the Media

**Reading Assignment for Next Class:**


**Feb. 5**: Discuss Music, Media, Authenticity and Commercialization

**Reading Assignment for Next Class:**


**Feb. 12**: Discuss Race, etc.

**Reading Assignment for Next Class:**


TONIGHT: 5:30-6:30, University Honors presents a Student Panel on Virginity; Anne Arundel Hall

Feb. 12: Race Records and the Classic Blues Singers

**Reading Assignment for Next Class:**


**Feb. 19:** Discuss Lomax, Construction of a past

**Reading Assignment for Next Class:**

YOU SHOULD BE PRACTICING YOUR SONGS, WORKING WITH YOUR COLLABORATORS. THOSE READY WITH A SONG, BLUES OR FOLK, PREPARE TO SHARE NEXT CLASS

**Feb. 26:** Discuss renewable tradition; student singing/playing

**Reading Assignment for Next Class:**

**Tuesday, March 1,** Russell Banks’ reading for Writers’ House

Joe Goode in residency in Dance Department; March 5-10’ public presentation on March 10

**March 5:** Discuss Grand Ole Opry and Barndance Radio

**Reading Assignment for Next Class:**

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE NEXT WEEK, MARCH 12**

**March 12:** Discuss Honky Tonk and Urban Cowboy

**Reading Assignment for Next Class:**


**SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS** Keep listening and practicing; try writing a song

**March 26:** Discuss Radio, Records and the Southern Blues Men; announce to class your progress on your performance

**Reading Assignment for Next Class:**

**April 2:** Discuss Chess Records and the Chicago Sound

**Reading Assignment:**

Greil Marcus essay (forthcoming)
View *Mystery Train* (forthcoming)
** LAURIE ANDERSON IS AN ORIGINATOR OF AVANT-GARDE ROCK; SHE IS ALSO THE WIFE OF LOU REED; GOOGLE REED, PUNK ROCK, ETC.

APRIL 9: Discuss Sun Records, Elvis and the Roots of Rock n’ Roll

Reading Assignment for Next Class:

View No Direction Home

April 16: Discuss Bob Dylan

Reading Assignment for Next Class:
Jimi Hendrix (forthcoming)

April 23: Reuben Jackson

- April 30—ART FEST (forthcoming)

- Wednesday May 2nd, Lit Fest at Writers’ House

- The last day of our class is Monday, May 7. Our exam date is Friday, May 18 1:30-3:00. That means you have an entire week to get into the studio and cut your record. We will decide the schedule for the last weeks of class once the semester gets going. Remember to continue doing your Keystone work.