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## ENGL 151-08, First Year Writing Seminar: Twentieth Century American Music and Politics, Fall 2012

Item Type	Syllabus
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Publisher	Memphis, Tenn. : Rhodes College
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## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Twentieth-Century American Music and Politics

FYWS 151

CRN 13558

Fall 2012

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00 a.m.-9:15 a.m.  
100 HASSELL HALL

**Instructor:** Dr. Carole Blankenship

**Office:** 203 Hassell

**Office hours:** 9:00-10:00 a.m. Wednesdays/Fridays and by appointment

**Phone:** 843-3414 or 274-2195

**E-mail:** [Blankenship@rhodes.edu](mailto:Blankenship@rhodes.edu)

### Course Description and Objectives

This course will focus on the development of critical thinking and writing skills through the study of the American political culture and its effect on the music, composers, and entertainers of the twentieth century. The student will consider twentieth-century American music by analyzing and listening to political songs, music surrounding the wars, protest music, and music stemming from the civil rights movement as well as examine the contribution of the American taxpayer toward the development of art music. Students will be expected to express their own views both about the music being studied and the larger question of the role of music and art in democratic society.

### Required texts

- Bellman, Jonathan. *A Short Guide to Writing about Music*. New York: Pearson, 2007.
- Gann, Kyle. *American Music in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997.
- Starr, Larry and Waterman, Christopher. *American Popular Music; From Minstrelsy to MP3*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2010.
- *Rhodes Guide to Effective Paper Writing*.

### Additional Texts on Moodle

**The Writing Center** (Barret 122) is an excellent resource for all writers at Rhodes. A trained staff member will work with you one-on-one and provide assistance with style, organization, content, voice, grammar, and documentation standards. For more information, visit [www.rhodes.edu/writingcenter](http://www.rhodes.edu/writingcenter).

\*\*Each student in this course is required to make an appointment and meet with a staff member of the writing center once during the first two essay assignments. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a 5 point deduction from the final grade.

## FYWS 151-8: Grading Criteria

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Grades for assignments turned in one day late will be lowered by a full letter grade (e.g. A to B); assignments more than one day late, incomplete assignments, and illegible assignments will not be accepted. All written assignments must be printed in hard copy and e-mailed to me.

**15%** Participation – Students are required to actively participate in class discussions and workshops. Students who are **absent more than three (3) times will receive no credit** for participation.

**75%** Written Assignments – 6 Essays of varying lengths

- **10%** Essay 1 (**1000 words**) **Note calendar for due dates for topics, drafts, outlines, etc.**
- **15%** Essay 2 (**1500 words**)
- **15%** Essay 3 (**1500 words**)
- **5%** 2 live performances of Twentieth-century music with Critical Essays (**500 words**)  
**October 8, 7:30 p.m., Tuthill Performance Hall, American Music Recital**  
**November 9, 4:00 p.m., Tuthill Performance Hall, Songs of Paul Bowles**  
Each essay is due one week after the performance is attended.
- **30%** Research Essay, (**3000-3500 words**).

All assignments should be typed, twelve point font (Palatino or Times New Roman), double-spaced, and should have a cover page with the following: name, word count, date, and a meaningful title. Essays should have page numbers and be affixed with either a clip or staple. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a penalty on the essay's grade. Any use of sources must be cited using Chicago-style footnotes. See the Short Guide to Writing about Music, [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html), or you may ask the instructor. Class time will also be dedicated to discussion of good footnotes.

••Assignments should be sent via e-mail before class and turned in as hard copy at the beginning of class. See the course schedule for due dates.

The research paper will encompass a topic chosen by the student and approved by the professor. Example topics for research papers: "Political Texts in Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock*," "Gangsta Rap in Los Angeles in the early 1990's," "Government Funding for Composers in Tennessee from 1980 to 2000," etc... This paper will be written in stages: abstract and bibliography, outline, first draft, etc. See the schedule below for due dates.

**10%** Final Exam - Students will be given a take home exam that is to be completed and turned in by Saturday, December 13, 1:00 p.m.

► Course Grading Scale: A=93-100; B=83-87; C=73-77; D=64-67

E-mail: All e-mail correspondence will be sent to your Rhodes e-mail account which should be checked regularly. E-mails are not text messages. When writing me, your e-mails should be professional.

Laptops: The use of laptop computers or other screen-based devices is not permitted during lectures or discussions unless you have a medical reason. Please talk with me if a laptop is necessary.

- Enrollment in the class acknowledges the requirements stated in the syllabus.
- The honor code applies to all elements of the course.
- The signed honor pledge should be included on all work submitted.

## FYWS 151-8: Course Schedule (subject to change)

- Aug 28** The beginning of the century  
▪ Starr and Waterman, *American Popular Music; From Minstrelsy to MP3*. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.
- Aug 30** Essay Writing, Writing about Music, Choosing a topic  
▪ *A Short Guide to Writing about Music*. 1–10, and 72-82.  
▪ Guralnick, Peter. “Falling Into Place.” *The Oxford American Book of Great Music Writing*. Edited by Marc Smirnoff. Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press. 2008.
- Sept 4** Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century “Art Music”  
▪ Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century*. Prelude and Chapter 1  
▪ **Topic for first essay due in class**
- Sept 6**  
▪ Kramer, Lawrence. “Music and the Politics of Memory,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* Vol. 2, Issue 04, November 2008, 459-475.  
▪ **Footnote assignment due**
- Sept 11**  
▪ Denisoff, R. Serge. “Songs of Persuasion: A Sociological Analysis of Urban Propaganda Songs.” *The Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 79, No. 314 (Oct. - Dec., 1966), 581-589. **On JStor**  
▪ *A Short Guide to Writing about Music*. 83-104.
- Sept 13**  
▪ **First draft of essay due in class; Workshop in class**
- Sept 18** *The 1920’s, Henry Cowell and Ruth Crawford Seeger*  
▪ Gann, Chapter 2  
*Early Blues and Jazz*  
▪ Starr, Chapters 4 and 5
- Sept 20**  
▪ Crouch, Stanley, “Blues to be Constitutional” In *Democracy and the Arts*, 103-116. Edited by Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999. **On Moodle**  
▪ **Final draft of first essay due in class**
- Sept 25** *The Great Depression, Federal Music Project, Federal Theatre Project*  
▪ Gann, Chapter 3  
▪ **Topic for Second Essay due in class**
- Sept 27**  
▪ *A Short Guide to Writing about Music*. 21-39.  
Swing and Country & Western  
▪ Starr, Chapter 6
- Oct 2**  
▪ Lieberman, Robbie. *My Song is My Weapon*. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1995, 50-83. **On Moodle**  
▪ **Outline and introductory paragraph for Second Essay due in class**
- Oct 4**  
▪ Scruton, Roger. “Soul Music.” *The American; The Journal of the American Enterprise Institute*. February 2010. <http://www.american.com/archive/2010/february/soul-music/>
- Oct 8** **7:30 p.m., American Music Recital, Rhodes Faculty, Tuthill Performance Hall**
- Oct 9**  
▪ McCall, Sarah. *The Musical Fallout of Political Activism*, Chapter IV. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Texas, 1993. **On Moodle**  
▪ Bring two questions about this reading to class for discussion.
- Oct 11**  
▪ **First draft of Second Essay due in class: Workshop in class**  
Experimentalism  
▪ Gann: Chap. 4, 76-83, Chap.5, 102-111, Chap. 6.

- Oct 18**     ▪ Maultsby, Portia K. “The Impact of Gospel Music on the Secular Music Industry,” *We’ll Understand it Better By and By*, edited by Bernice Johnson Reagon. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992. **On Moodle**  
 ▪ **Approved research topic due on or before October 18**
- Oct 23**     ▪ **Final draft of Second Essay due in class, workshop in class**  
 ▪ John Cage and Christian Wolff, Gann, Chapter 6, 127-140 and 148-151
- Oct 25**     ▪ Starr, Chapter 7  
 ▪ *I have nothing to say and I am saying it*. Directed by Allen Miller. RM Associates, 1990. DVD. View Video **On Moodle**: Discuss in class  
 ▪ **Topic of Third Essay due in class**
- Oct 30**     ▪ *A Short Guide to Writing about Music*. 103-115.  
 ▪ Starr, Chapter 9, 237-267.  
 ▪ **250 word abstract and bibliography of research essay due in class**
- Nov 1**       ▪ Ross, Alex. *Listen to This*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Groux. 2010. 267-287. **On Moodle**  
 ▪ **Presentation of research topics**  
 (2-3 minutes) description and research methods  
 ▪ **Outline of research essay due in class**
- Nov 6**       ▪ *1968* Starr, Chapter 10  
**Election Day!** ▪ **First draft of Third Essay due in class: Workshop in class**
- Nov 8**       **No Class**
- Nov 9**       **4:00 p.m., Songs of Paul Bowles, Tuthill Performance Hall**
- Nov 13**     ▪ View Video **On Moodle**: *The U.S. vs. John Lennon*, Directed by David Leaf. Los Angeles, CA: Lionsgate Films, 2006. DVD. Discuss in class.  
 ▪ **Final draft of Third Essay due in class**
- Nov 15**     ▪ Bowman, Rob. *Soulsville, U.S.A. The Story of Stax Records*. New York: Schirmer Trade Books. 1997. 136-145. **On Moodle**  
 ▪ “The Revolution will not be televised,” Starr, Chapter 11.
- Nov 20**     ▪ *Outsider’s Music*, Starr, Chapter 12  
 ▪ **First draft of research essay due in class: Workshop on research essay**
- Nov 27**     ▪ *Minimalism*, Gann, Chapter 8, 184-208  
 ▪ Gann, Chapter 9, 229-233, *Nixon in China* by John Adams  
 ▪ **Second draft of research essay due in class**
- Nov 29**     ▪ *The 1980’s*, Starr, Chapter 13
- Dec 4**       ▪ Adams, Terri M. and Fuller, Douglas B. “The Words Have Changed But the Ideology Remains the Same: Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music” *Journal of Black Studies* Vol. 36, No. 6 (July 2006), 938-957. **On JStor**  
 ▪ Starr, Chapter 14
- Dec 10**     **5:00 p.m. Final draft of research essay due-203 Hassell**
- Dec 13**     **1:00 p.m. take home final exam due-203 Hassell**

*The schedule and procedures in the course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.*