

# Rhodes College Digital Archives - DLynx

## ENGL 151-13, First Year Writing Seminar: Twentieth Century American Music and Politics, Fall 2011

Item Type	Syllabus
Authors	Blankenship, Carole C.
Publisher	Memphis, Tenn. : Rhodes College
Rights	Rhodes College owns the rights to the archival digital objects in this collection. Objects are made available for educational use only and may not be used for any non-educational or commercial purpose. Approved educational uses include private research and scholarship, teaching, and student projects. For additional information please contact <a href="mailto:archives@rhodes.edu">archives@rhodes.edu</a> . Fees may apply.
Download date	2026-03-16 17:26:47
Link to Item	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10267/15291">http://hdl.handle.net/10267/15291</a>

# COURSE SYLLABUS

## Twentieth-Century American Music and Politics

FYWS 151

CRN 12730

Fall 2011

MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m.  
100 HASSELL HALL

**Instructor:** Dr. Carole Blankenship

**Office:** 203 Hassell

**Office hours:** 8:30-9:30 Tuesdays, 9-10 Thursdays, 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 affect 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

Jonathan Bellman, *A Short Guide to Writing about Music*, 2007.

Kyle Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century*, 1997.

Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman, *American Popular Music; From Minstrelsy to MP3*, third edition.  
*Rhodes Guide to Effective Paper Writing*.

### Additional Texts in Barret Library

Diane Hacker, *A Writer' s Reference*.

Arthur M. Meltzer., ed., *Democracy and the Arts*.

### Additional Texts on Moodle

## Music 151: 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 and will not be accepted via e-mail.

**15%** Participation – Students are required to actively participate in class discussions and workshops. Students who are **absent more than four 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, outlines, etc.**
- **10%** Essay 2 (**1500 words**)
- **10%** Essay 3 (**1500 words**)
- **10%** 2 live performances of Twentieth-century music with critical essays (**700-800 words**)

**Choose from:**

**October 10, 7:30 p.m., Evergreen Church**

**American Music Recital, Rhodes Faculty and Friends**

**October 28, 8:00 p.m., The Warehouse, 36 East GE Patterson Avenue**

**Bobby Rush in Concert with the Bo-Keys**

**November 6, 3:30 p.m., Evergreen Church**

**Concert of 21<sup>st</sup> century American music, Rhodes Chorale and Memphis Symphony**

**November 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 20 7:30 p.m., McCoy Theatre, Rhodes College**

***Urinetown* by Mark Hollmann**

Each essay is due one week after the performance is attended.

- **5%** response essay to Springfield lecture, (**300-500 words**).
- November 2, 7:30 p.m., Evergreen Church**
- The Springfield Music Lecture; Jennifer Higdon, composer**
- **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 11, 5:30 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.

**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 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.

- 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.

### **Music 151: Course Schedule (subject to change)**

<b>Aug 24</b>	Introduction
<b>Aug 26</b>	The beginning of the century <i>American Popular Music; From Minstrelsy to MP3</i> . Chapter 1 and Chapter 2
<b>Aug 29</b>	Essay Writing, Writing about Music, Choosing a topic <i>A Short Guide to Writing about Music</i> . pp. 1–10, and 72-82.
<b>Aug 31</b>	Early 20 <sup>th</sup> -century “ Art Music” Gann, <i>American Music in the Twentieth Century</i> . Prelude and Chapter 1 <b>Topic for first essay due in class</b>
<b>Sept 2</b>	Lawrence Kramer, “ Music and the Politics of Memory,” <i>Journal of the Society for American Music</i> <b>Footnote assignment due</b>
<b>Sept 5</b>	<b>Labor Day Holiday</b>
<b>Sept 7</b>	<b>Outline for first essay due in class</b> R. Serge Denisoff, “ Songs of Persuasion and Their Entrepreneurs,” <i>Sing a Song of Social Significance</i> , pp. vii-x, 1-18.
<b>Sept 9</b>	<i>A Short Guide to Writing about Music</i> . pp. 83-104.
<b>Sept 12</b>	<b>First draft of essay due in class; Workshop in class</b>
<b>Sept 14</b>	The 1920’ s, Henry Cowell and Ruth Crawford Seeger Gann, Chapter 2 <b>Final draft of first essay due in class</b>

- Sept 16** Early Blues and Jazz  
Starr, Chapters 4 and 5
- Sept 19** Stanley Crouch, “Blues to be Constitutional,” from *Democracy and the Arts*.
- Sept 21** The Great Depression, Federal Music Project, Federal Theatre Project  
Gann, Chapter 3  
**Topic for Second Essay due in class**
- Sept 23** *A Short Guide to Writing about Music*. pp. 21-39.  
Continue discussion of Gann, Chapter 3
- Sept 26** Secondary Sources through Barret Library  
**Meet for class in Barret 128**
- Sept 28** Swing and Country & Western  
Readings: Starr, Chapter 6  
**Outline and introductory paragraph for Second Essay due in class**
- Sept 30** Lieberman, “‘This Machine Kills Fascists’: Communism, Antifascism, and People’s Music during WWII,” in *My Song is My Weapon*, pp. 50-83.
- Oct 3** **First draft of Second Essay due in class: Workshop in class**
- Oct 5** Experimentalism  
Gann: Chap. 4, page 76-83, Chap.5, pgs. 102-111
- Oct 7** Experimentalism Gann: Chap. 6  
**Approved research topic due on or before October 7**
- Oct 10** Sarah McCall, *The Musical Fallout of Political Activism*, Chapter IV.  
Bring two questions about this reading to class for discussion.  
**7:30 p.m., American Music Recital, Rhodes Faculty and Friends, Evergreen Church**
- Oct 12** **Final draft of Second Essay due in class**  
Portia K. Maultsby, “The Impact of Gospel Music on the Secular Music Industry,”  
*We’ ll Understand it Better By and By*, ed. Bernice Johnson Reagon.
- Oct 14** Starr, Chapter 7  
**Topic of Third Essay due in class**
- Oct 19** John Cage and Christian Wolff  
Gann, Chapter 6, pp. 127-140 and pp. 148-151
- Oct 21** View Video on Moodle: *I have nothing to say and I am saying it*.  
Discuss in class
- Oct 24** **No Class**
- Oct 26** Evidence-what counts as evidence?  
Writing a research essay
- Oct 28** The 1960’ s  
Starr, Chapter 9  
**Outline of Third Essay due in class**

- Oct 31** 1968  
Starr, Chapter 10  
**250 word abstract and bibliography of research essay due in class**
- Nov 2** View Video on Moodle: *The U.S. vs. John Lennon*,  
Discuss in class
- Nov 2** **7:30 p.m. Evergreen Church, Springfield Lecture**
- Nov 4** **Presentation of research topics**  
(2-3 minutes) description and research methods  
**Outline of research essay due in class**
- Nov 7** **First draft of Third Essay due in class: Workshop in class**
- Nov 9** Rodnitsky, *Minstrels of the Dawn*, “ Bob Dylan: Beyond Left and Right.”
- Nov 11** “ The Revolution will not be televised,” Starr, Chapter 11  
*Outsider’ s Music*, Starr, Chapter 12  
**7:30 p.m., Urinetown by Mark Hollmann (runs through Nov. 20)**  
**McCoy Theatre, Rhodes College**
- Nov 14** *Stax* and Memphis 1970’ s  
**Final draft of Third Essay due in class**
- Nov 16** Minimalism  
Gann, Chapter 8, pp. 184-208
- Nov 18** Gann, Chapter 9, pp. 229-233, *Nixon in China* by John Adams  
Starr, Chapter 13
- Nov 21** **First draft of research essay due in class: Workshop on research essay**
- Nov 28** Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Classical composers  
Gann, Chapter 11
- Nov 30** William Banfield, “ Black Artistic Invisibility: A Black Composer Talking ‘ Bout Taking Care of Black Folk.” *Journal of Black Studies*. JStor.
- Dec 2** 1990’ s  
Starr, Chapter 14 and Chapter 15
- Dec 5** Terri M. Adams and Douglas B. Fuller, “ The Words Have Changed But the Ideology Remains the Same: Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music,” *Journal of Black Studies*, JStor , pp. 938-957.
- Dec 7** Closing discussion
- 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.*