

Western University Faculty of Information and Media Studies

MIT 2159B-001 INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR MUSIC STUDIES

Winter 2021

Online

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the impact of popular music as a vital part of media culture with topics such as the music business, music and gender, digital music, popular music on television, and music celebrities.

COURSE GOALS

- To appreciate and understand the complexity of institutions and actors that make up the field of popular music in the Anglo world
- To understand the how our lived lives impact and are impacted by the commercial/industrial production of music
- To develop the ability to discuss the history and development of popular music
- To appreciate the role that critical theory approaches can play in fostering a critical and potentially transformative engagement with the creations of popular music practitioners and industries
- To refine your ability to research and communicate ideas through formal and informal discussions and written assignments

COURSE LAYOUT

This course is an asynchronous reading/viewing course. There will be no real-time or recorded lectures. You will be expected to engage with the course content through readings and audio-visual material that is provided for you and through your own work to augment this content, and through informal written discussions in the online forums. You are encouraged to work independently at your own pace while at the same time ensuring that you meet all course deadlines.

The course does have a reserved time slot on Mondays, 15:30-16:30. In the unlikely event that it becomes necessary for us to utilize this time for some reason, I will give you ample advanced notice of when and for what purpose we will be using the time.

PREREQUISITES / ANTIREQUISITES

Please ensure that you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in this course. If not, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

COURSE MATERIALS

Course content will be made available through OWL.

CLASS POLICIES

Late Assignments and missed tests or exams.

If you do not submit an assignment or test on or before its due date ***you will receive a grade of zero.*** Exceptions will only be granted if accompanied by an official accommodation. Do not ask for special accommodations unless you can support these with documentation. Written assignments have a “window” and you can submit any time before or during this window, but not after. *There will thus be no need for you to use up a self-reported absences in this course, since they are only applicable for 48hrs.* Your window for writing quizzes is the entire duration of the section (two to three weeks) and for written work you have the entire duration leading up to and including the eighth day of the window to submit.

Back Up Your Work.

You are responsible for ensuring that all of your coursework is backed up. Services such as Dropbox or Google Drive are just a few “cloud storage” options. You can copy your data to a USB stick, burn a CD or DVD, email it to yourself, or even print it! “Computer issues” will not be accepted as a valid reason for missing any course assignments.

Office Hours

In light of COVID-19 physical distancing measures, and in keeping with health and safety recommendations, there will be no in-person office hours. Our primary mode of communication will be through email, OWL announcements, and in the OWL discussion forums. Should it become necessary for us to communicate in a more immediate and direct manner through video conferencing then I will work out arrangements with you individually and at my discretion.

Information Sharing

Students are not permitted to publicly share my lecture slides in any way. Do not upload them to publicly accessible online platforms. Do not post them on your social media pages/profiles. It is your prerogative whether or not you wish to share your study notes in similar fashion, but please do not upload my content.

Electronic Communication

1. Communicate with me *only* through your @uwo.ca email account. Do not use the OWL messaging system or your personal email.
2. Do not expect immediate responses to your emails.
3. Include a descriptive subject. Not “Course Question,” “Help,” etc. Include the course number and section.
4. Use a salutation: “Hello Professor,” “Hello Paul,” etc. are appropriate; “Hey,” “Wassup?,” and similar are not.

5. Use proper grammar, spelling, sentence and paragraph structure and punctuation. Use capital letters where conventionally appropriate (i.e. at the beginning of sentences), use spaces where conventional (i.e. after punctuation), do not use “text speak” (abbreviations, acronyms, etc.)
6. Be polite: say please and thank-you.
7. Sign off your email with your first and last name and student number.
8. Do not email with enquiries about a due date on that (potential) due date.
9. Do not email with questions about an assignment within the week that the assignment is due.
10. Do not email with enquiries of a technical nature. “This won't open on my laptop,” “I can't download...” are not problems that I can solve.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Quizzes (5 @ 10% each) (Jan. 29, Feb. 12, Mar. 5, Mar. 26, Apr. 9, see below)	50%
Written Assignment #1 (Feb. 22 – Mar. 1)	25%
Written Assignment #2 (Mar. 29 – Apr. 5)	25%
Written Assignment Discussion Forums	optional/ungraded

Students will receive graded work worth no less than 15% at least 3 days prior to the deadline for withdrawal without academic penalty. This year, the date by which students are to have received at least 15% of their grade in a second semester course is March 14, 2021. Students can find details about this academic policy here: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/evaluation_undergrad.pdf. Please note, students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the grades they have received in their courses.

Quizzes (x5, 10% each)

Quizzes will consist of 10 multiple choice questions drawn from material covered in each of the course sections indicated on the course schedule. The quizzes will open on the first day of each section at 12:05am and close at the last day of each section at 11:55pm. You may elect to take the quiz at any time during this period. They will be timed at 1.5 hours (except for those with accommodations for extra time). The quizzes are not proctored and you are encouraged to consult your readings, study guides, notes, and viewing material. The best practice is to have all of these items available to you in an organized fashion *before* you start the quiz. You can only submit each quiz once. Once the quiz is closed you will no longer be able to take it, so make sure you take it within the timeframe.

NOTE: If you require accommodations that allow you extra time for the tests, you must make sure to get these accommodations approved as soon as possible so that you can write the tests with the appropriate time extension. The tests will only be made available to you once I receive the accommodation notice. *DO NOT* write the "standard assessment" versions of the tests if you know that you will need accommodations.

Written Assignments (2 @ 25% each)

Assignments must be submitted to your OWL Dropbox in **PDF format** no later than **11:55pm** on the due dates indicated on the schedule.

Each student must write two 800 (minimum) / 1000-word (maximum) reflections on course concepts. The main purposes of this assignments are:

- a) To demonstrate to me that you are “doing the work” and becoming familiar with the concepts addressed in the readings. Are you engaging with the concepts in each section? Are you looking closely for definitions, explanations, and so forth?
- b) To show that you are able to “apply” or “translate” some of these concepts to the world around you. Do you recognize them at work in your experiences with entertainment?
- c) To demonstrate that you are able to write clearly with an eye to precision, clarity, and concision. Make sure that you are consulting all of the writing resources provided and following their direction.

Written Assignment #1 (February 22 – March 1) will draw from material covered in sections *one* and/or *two*.

Written Assignment #2 (March 29 – April 5) will draw from material covered in sections *three* and/or *four*.

In both cases the main body of your assignment should take ideas and concepts addressed in the readings and apply them to your own experiences with and observations on contemporary popular culture and music-related entertainment: you might find a specific concept interesting and elaborate on it; you may have a “real world” example that speaks to issues raised in the readings; you may have a personal experience that relates to the topic, and so forth.

The choice is yours how you engage with the material. Some potential ideas might be:

- You are a fan of a particular Musical Artist/Genre: how can you utilize concepts developed in the course readings and viewings to better understand this artist, their output, or the cultural and economic meanings that circulate in relation to the genre?
- You have spent time working in some capacity in the music industry: what perspectives are you able to develop based on what you have read and viewed in the course?
- As a fan of popular music you draw from a variety of media channels: what do the concepts and perspectives developed in the course readings and viewings reveal to you about your relationship to popular music as an audience member?
- These are JUST EXAMPLES it is up to each student to determine their own path in the assignments.

The assignment should include a *brief* summary of the main concepts and issues from the course readings/viewings that you have found interesting and useful in your writing. You are not expected to summarize or utilize all the ideas from all the resources. Choose a particular concept or area of interest from the readings and viewings and elaborate only on only that.

The written responses *do not require a thesis statement*. They should not be summaries of course readings. They are intended to be brief summaries of specific concepts followed by reflections on what you have learned from the material in that section. You must endeavour to make connections across the readings and audio-visual material. I cannot stress enough how crucial it is that you do everything possible to demonstrate that you are able to recognize concepts from the course reflected in the world around you: this is not a research paper, do not summarize entire articles or books. Tell me what YOU think and related your thoughts to the course readings explicitly.

The assignment should be free from errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and sentence and paragraph structure. I have included a “Writing Tips” document, along with other writing resources, in the

“Resources” section of the class website. Read these. There is no excuse for bad writing. You can Google all the proper rules for using punctuation marks. You can double-check proper spelling. You can search for help on run-on sentences. Use these resources; we can all become better writers.

In your assignment you are required to reference course readings and viewings. It is expected that you will include other scholarly and non-scholarly work that you have found useful. All references must be cited properly in the MLA style. *This includes all audio-visual material.* All sources and ideas referenced in the response must appear in the works cited, *this includes any A/V material.* If you are not familiar with MLA style, it is your responsibility to learn about it. You must include the word count at the bottom of the last page of writing (before the works cited). The works cited is not included in the word count.

A document indicating the proper format for your paper is included in the “resources” section of the class website.

The completed assignments must be in 12-point font, and double-spaced.

Assignments that do not include references that will not receive very good marks. Assignments that fail to reference course readings will also not do very well. If you do not include a works cited you will receive a zero.

Assignments must be submitted to your OWL Dropbox in **PDF format** before or during the window for submission, but not after.

Writing Discussion Forum (optional/ungraded)

There is a dedicated discussion forum for questions about the research paper. If you have a question about the assignments, chances are that someone else will too, so please post it in the forums. Please consult the Written Assignment Resources folder for answers before posting questions in the forum. If it is a question for me that is specific to your topic, please email. The sooner you can ask your question, the better it is for you. I will not answer substantive questions about the assignments within the week before the deadline.

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2021

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments, including take-home exams, in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. All papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment

for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- during exam periods,
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are NOT met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate or equivalent documentation, if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact the FIMS Undergraduate Student Services Office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration For Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#) and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

In the event of a Covid-19 resurgence, it is possible that different procedures may need to be put in place on short notice.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

Grading at FIMS

- Normally, first year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.
- Normally, second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%.
- Normally, third year required courses (MIT 3000, 3100) are expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwo.com/mentalhealth/>

SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

Office of the Registrar:

www.registrar.uwo.ca

Mental Health

Support:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Accessible Education:

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

Accessibility

Information:

www.accessibility.uwo.ca/

Writing Support

Centre:

<http://writing.uwo.ca/>

Learning Skills

Services:

<https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>

Academic Learning and Support for Online Learning:

<https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/types/academic-and-learning-support.html>

Indigenous Services:

<https://indigenous.uwo.ca/>

Western International:

<https://international.uwo.ca/>

Career Centre:

<http://careerexperience.uwo.ca/>

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar**. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.