

Introduction to Popular Music Studies – MIT 2159B – Winter 2023

1. Instructor: Matt Stahl (mstahl@uwo.ca), FNB 4136

2. In-person, FNB 1220, Thursdays, 1:30-4:30

2b. Covid notice

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

3. Office hours: TBA

4. Mask required – it must cover your nose

Students will be expected to wear triple layer non-medical masks at all times in the classroom as per university policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons should seek accommodation through [Accessible Education](#).

5. Resources: Warner, *Buffy Sainte-Marie* (at bookstore). Other resources via Owl.

6. Course description and design

This course introduces students to the academic study of popular music, drawing on theoretical resources from communication and media studies and engaging critical popular music scholarship. No formal musical knowledge is required to take this course.

Topics addressed in this course include:

- Popular music and social power
- Popular music and cultural value
- Popular music and social identity
- Politics of popular music production
- Doing popular music studies

What this course is not:

This is not a course on the history of popular music, nor is it a course on music's digital mediation. This class will not focus on details about favorite music performers of the past and/or present, and it will not focus on social media, Spotify, or other technological infrastructures (though it will give you tools to help you understand the significance of the details that you know or discover).

6b. Expectations

- Print out readings and read them carefully, pen or pencil in hand, making marginal notes in preparation for class.
- Buy the book and read it carefully in preparation for February 9 class meeting.
- Be prepared to discuss the readings in class. The instructor will regularly call on students to think out loud about and/or answer questions on the readings.
- Be prepared to discuss course readings in small-group sessions during class time.
- Audio-visual material screened in class will be treated like readings: students will be expected to take notes on and to engage this material in class discussions, assignments, and exams.
- The use of laptops and other electronic devices is not permitted during class time.
- Attendance is mandatory: attendance will be taken every week; every undocumented absence will reduce a student’s final grade by 5%.
- Students are expected to obtain materials for missed classes from classmates.
- Paper documents distributed in class (e.g., assignment sheets, study guides) will be posted to Owl in the following 24 hours.

7. Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to recognize the academic study of popular music production and consumption, and to explain how it produces a different form of knowledge than that produced by journalists, fans, and others outside the academy. Students will be able to analyze the social relations and cultural concepts of popular music and other popular culture phenomena. In particular, students will be able to understand and explain popular music and popular culture as rooted in social institutions that can be compared to other social institutions—in other words, to *do* popular music studies. The analytical and interpretive skills developed in this course will be useful in other courses as well as in understanding various social and cultural forms students encounter in and out of university.

8. SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, REQUIRED READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

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|--------------------------|--|--|
| Week 1 Jan. 12 | Introduction to Course READ: Cheng: “Prelude” and excerpt from “Misjudgments of Humanity” | Essay 1 assigned, due by midnight Weds, Jan. 18 |
| Week 2 Jan. 19 | Apprentice Girl / Riot Grrrl READ (2): Monnot, “The Female Pop Singer and the Apprentice Girl”; Hanna, “On Not Playing Dead” | |
| Week 3 Jan. 26 | Popular Music and Voice READ (2): Couldry, “Voice as Value” (excerpt); Brackett, “Music” | <i>Rumble</i> (part 1) |

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| Week 4 | Popular Music and Indigeneity I | |
| Feb. 2 | READ: Woloshyn, “Welcome to the Tundra” | <i>Rumble</i> (part 2) |
| Week 5 | Popular Music and Indigeneity II | |
| Feb. 9 | READ: Warner, <i>Buffly Sainte-Marie</i> (whole book) | <i>Visit from Raj Singh</i> |
| Week 6 | Midterm I (in class) | (one page of notes permitted) |
| Feb. 16 | | |
| Feb. 23 | <i>No Class – Reading Week</i> | |
| Week 7 | Popular Music and Cultural Value I | |
| Mar. 2 | READ: Regev, “Producing Artistic Value” | <i>Hype</i> (part 1) |
| Week 8 | Social Contextualization of Symbolic Forms | |
| Mar. 9 | READ: Thompson, “The Social Contextualization of Symbolic Forms” | |
| Week 9 | Popular Music and Cultural Value I | |
| Mar. 16 | READ: Moore, “Alternative to What?” | <i>Hype</i> (part 2) |
| Week 10 | Midterm II (in class) | (one page of notes permitted) Essay 2 assigned, due by midnight Weds, Apr. 5 |
| Mar. 23 | | |
| Week 11 | Gender & Popular Music Production | |
| Mar. 30 | READ: Jones, “Music Industry as Workplace” | <i>Bad Reputation</i> |
| Week 12 | Strange Fruit: Voice and Cultural Power | |
| Apr. 6 | (No reading this week – work on your paper!) | <i>Strange Fruit</i> |

9. Evaluation

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| Essay 1 | (1-2 pages, due midnight, Weds, Jan. 18) | 10% |
| Quizzes | (best 5 out of 7 x 3% each) | 15% |
| Midterm 1 | (in class, Feb. 16) | 25% |
| Midterm 2 | (in class, Mar. 23) | 25% |
| Essay 2 | (5-6 pages, due midnight, Weds, Apr. 5) | 25% |
| | | 100% |

- Essays and exams will be marked according to MIT guidelines (summarized below and appended in full to this syllabus).
- Essays are to be submitted as Word documents via Owl – **note the date and time each essay is due!**
- Late essays will be penalized 10% per day.

- Essay format: double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, left-justified, with page numbers, letter size (*NOT* A4), no title page, no works cited page (for citation style see “Essay 1” assignment below)
- Use only student number on essays (and quizzes and exams)
- After a marked essay or exam is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their instructor; to ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days
- Students are required to pass both the essay and exam components to pass the course

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|----|----------|---|
| A+ | 90-100 | One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level |
| A | 80-89 | Superior work which is clearly above average |
| B | 70-79 | Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory |
| C | 60-69 | Competent work, meeting requirements |
| D | 50-59 | Fair work, minimally acceptable |
| F | below 50 | Fail |

10. Participation and engagement

(see “Expectations,” above)

11. Communication

Pay close attention to instructor’s announcements, emailed via Owl. Students should be checking the Owl site every 24-48 hrs.

12. Professionalism and privacy:

Western students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, the following expectations apply to this course:

- All course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission
- Permitted recordings are not to be distributed
- Students may be expected to take an academic integrity pledge before some assessments

13. How to be successful in this course

(see “Expectations,” above)

Essay 1, due midnight, Wednesday, January 18

In no less than one and no more than two double-spaced pages explain William Cheng's concept "musical mystique." Please be sure to do the following:

- Choose and explain a short quotation or two from Cheng that helps get your understanding across
- Illustrate your explanation by reference to one of Cheng's examples
- Briefly show how the musical mystique is at work in *either* Monnot's article or Hanna's chapter
 - It may help to think about this in this way: how might William Cheng explain an element of either Monnot's or Hanna's essays as an example of the musical mystique at work?
- You may address these prompts in the order that works best for you.

Do not put your name on your essay; put only your student number on your essay.

Format: double-spaced, 12 pt., Times New Roman font, left-justified text, standard margins. Do not include a title page. Do not include a works-cited page.

Citation style: parenthetical author, page number, e.g. (Cheng, 11).

Crucial citation rules for this class:

- Use brief, well-chosen, direct quotations from authors in the course essays (quotations will not be expected in exams)
- Cite in the above manner (author, p#)
- *Do not quote without citing*
 - This is plagiarism and carries heavy penalties, "[up to and including expulsion from the University](#)"
- *Do not cite without quoting*
 - In other words, do not give a citation if you have not directly quoted from the text and used quotation marks ("") to clearly indicate the author's words.

You are welcome to use the first person singular in all writing for this class.

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2023

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 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 required 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

Academic Accommodation

Students with disabilities work with [Accessible Education \(AE\)](#) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

Medical Consideration

Students who have medical grounds for academic consideration for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth **10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty (for FIMS students this is [Undergraduate Student Services](#)).

Students are required to provided

documentation in the form of a [Student Medical Certificate](#). It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if consideration is warranted.

For work worth less than 10% of the final grade, the instructor will consider requests for academic consideration on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or during office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

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 must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor.

If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire, or some other exceptional crisis, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request.

Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation. Students seeking additional bereavement leave should contact their Academic Counsellors with valid documentation.

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 Advisor. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). The gender-based violence and survivor support case managers are located in Thames Hall (3114-3127 office suite.) To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Health and Wellness](#) for a complete list of supports.

SUPPORT SERVICES - LINKS

[FIMS UGSS](#): *academic advising; career services*

[Psychological Services](#): *Information about accessing mental health supports*

[Medical Services](#): *Student health related services*

[Office of the Registrar](#): *Financial Information, Timetable, Exam Schedules, Academic Calendar Information*

[Academic Support and Engagement](#): *Central Academic Supports, including Writing Centre, Learning Development, Transition and Leadership Supports, and Careers and Experience*

[Accessible Education](#): *Assessment and recommendations for students with disabilities*

[Accessibility Information](#): *Information to help support barrier free access, including floor plans, accessible washroom locations, service disruptions etc.*

[Indigenous Student Services](#): *Includes information about financial support, indigenous self-identification, orientation, and tutor support*

[Western International](#): *Information and support for international students and students seeking to go on exchange*

FIMS Grading Policy

FIMS Undergraduate programs now have the following class average policy:

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%.

Second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2025, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%. The third year required (MIT 3100) is expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

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

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.