

Course Syllabus for **GEO 2426 (section 3764)**
Pop Music and Culture: A Geographic Perspective
SPRING 2005, University of Florida
Instructor: Dr. T.J. Fik
Location: E119 CSE
Time: Tuesday (periods 5-6: 11:45AM - 1:40PM)
Thursday (period 6: 12:50PM - 1:40PM)

GEO 2426 -- Pop Music & Culture

Course Description

GEO 2426 is a course that highlights the geographic origins and diffusion of “pop music”, focusing on historical underpinnings and the dynamics of popular music in American culture. The course will provide an overview of American roots music and various regional styles. Emphasis is placed on analyzing music innovation, trends, and movements in relation to social and geopolitical change and the musical expressions and sounds of people and places.

Discussions and Power Point presentations will (a) trace the roots and lineage of various music styles (or genres); (b) identify pioneering artists, trend-setting regions and cities; and (c) describe the diffusion of musical ideas across regions and geographic boundaries. The course will examine the importance of music and lyrics as modes of expression and the role of artists as agents of change. More importantly, the course will examine the broader social, economic, and cultural implications of the evolution of pop music and alternative counter-culture music scenes. Emphasis will be placed on the evolution of popular music and the emergence, development, and proliferation of various hybrid forms of music. For example, the course will examine the influence of folk, rockabilly, bluegrass, country and western swing, blues, boogie-woogie, and rhythm & blues (R&B) in the creation of “rock ‘n roll”. The course will highlight the importance of black music and the contribution of black artists (with emphasis on Delta and Chicago blues, Piedmont and country blues, R&B, soul, funk, big-city jazz, jump blues, reggae, and Gospel). Discussions will also focus on the disco-dance phenomenon, the new age and world music scenes, heavy metal, punk and post-punk movements, cross-over artists, folk-rock and blues-rock revivals, the Latin influence, corporate rock, new wave, British-based goth and glam, American shock-rock, rap and hip-hop, techno and dance, etc.

In addition, the course will examine the restructuring and organization of the music industry in spatial and economic terms. Discussions will include an analysis of the impact of technology, the effects of competition, the role of radio and television (and later video), the Internet and digital music (file-sharing, MP3s), the rise of independent artists and labels (“indies”), and the manufacturing and marketing of commercial artists. Moreover, the course will explore the influence of demographics, the growth of niche markets, the birth and evolution of the performing artist, the overt and covert commercialization of pop music, the ever-important impact of the counter-culture and underground music scenes, and the rise of artists to pop icon status. Artist profiles and music documentaries will also be presented.

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:05 – 5:30PM (3137 Turlington Hall)

Course Requirements

Students are expected to write a series of three reaction papers (of approximately 2-3 pages each) to analyze and discuss material and ideas presented in lecture or in response to pop music and culture events or phenomenon. Students must also complete a final term project on a related topic of their choice (with permission from the instructor) – an artist profile, overview of a music genre, or book review. Students are also expected to attend class on a regular basis and participate in classroom discussions.

Course grades are based on a 100-point system:	points
Three reaction papers (10 points each)	30
Classroom Participation and Attendance	20
Term project (due date: TBA)	50

Note: Poor attendance may result in a “0” for the classroom participation component!
Attendance sheets will be circulated from time to time (to monitor attendance).
No “incompletes” will be given out for any reason.

Instructor Bio

Timothy J. Fik is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Florida (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences). He earned a Master of Arts in Economic Geography (1986) from the State University of New York at Buffalo and a Ph.D. in Geography & Regional Development from the University of Arizona (1989). Author of several books and numerous journal articles, his research interests include regional analysis, globalization, geo-statistics and quantitative methods, spatial price competition, real estate modeling and market-area analysis, economic development, interaction and flow models, recreational boating characterization and coastal resource management, and musicology. Dr. Fik is also an accomplished writer, musician, and producer, with 25 years experience as a part-time professional musician.

Note: No textbooks are required for this course.

Recommended Reading List...

"*The Sounds of People and Places*" (paperback edition), George C. Carney (editor), Rowman & Littlefield (1994);

"*Mapping the Beat: Popular Music and Contemporary Theory*" (paperback edition), Thomas Swiss (editor), Blackwell (1998);

"*What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture*" (paperback edition), Mark Anthony Neal, Routledge (1998).

- "*Global Pop: World Music, World Markets*" (paperback edition), Timothy Taylor, Routledge (1997);
- "*Popular Music of the Non-Western World*" (paperback edition), Peter Manuel, Oxford University Press (1990);
- "*Generation Ecstasy*" (paperback edition), Simon Reynolds, Routledge (1999);
- "*Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern Dream of Freedom*" (paperback edition), Peter Guralnick, Back Bay Books (1999);
- "*Fast Food, Stock Cars, and Rock-n-Roll*" (paperback edition), George Carney (editor), Rowman & Littlefield (1995);
- "*Reggae Routes: The Story of Jamaican Music*" (paperback edition), Kevin O'Brien Chang and Wayne Chen, Temple (1998);
- "*Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place*" (paperback edition), George Lipsitz, Verso (1997);
- "*Interpreting Popular Music*" (paperback edition), David Brackett, Univ. of Calif. Press (2000);
- "*Lost Highways: Journeys and Arrivals of American Musicians*" (paperback edition), Peter Guralnick, Back Bay (1999);
- "*Hot Stuff: A Brief History of Disco*" (paperback edition), John-Manuel Andriote, Harper Collins (2001);
- "*Hip Hop America*" (paperback edition), Nelson George, Penguin (1998);
- "*The Music of Black Americans*" (3rd edition), Eileen Southern, Norton (1997);
- "*The Death of Rhythm & Blues*", Nelson George, Plume/Penguin (1988);
- "*The Devil's Music: A History of the Blues*", Giles Oakley, Da Capo Press (1997);
- "*The Power of Black Music*", Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., Oxford University Press (1995);
- Kong, L. (1995) "Popular Music in Geographical Analysis," *Progress in Human Geography* 19 (2): 183-198.
- Leyshon, A. (2001) "Time-Space (and digital) Compression: Software Formats, Musical Networks, and the Reorganization of the Music Industry," *Environment & Planning A* 33 (1): 49-77.
- Nash, P.H. and G.O. Carney (1996) "The Seven Themes of Music Geography," *Canadian Geography* 40 (1): 69-74.
- Sadler, D. (1997) "The Global Music Business as an Information Industry: Reinterpreting Economies of Culture," *Environment & Planning A* 29 (11): 1919-1936.
- Scott, A.J. (1999) "The US Recorded Music Industry: On the Relations Between Organization, Location, and Creativity in the Cultural Economy," *Environment & Planning A* 31 (4): 1965-1984.

Submission requirements for GEO 2426: Pop Music & Culture

- Three Reaction Papers (approx. 2-3 pages each)
- Term Project (Artist Profile, Overview of Music Genre, or Book Review, etc)

Reaction papers – short essays written in response to topics, subjects, or debates brought up in lecture or class discussion, articles you have read, or documentaries you have watched, etc. For example, students from past semesters have written reaction papers with the following titles:

- **Pop Music: the “Counter-Culture” goes Mainstream**
- **“Emo” rock and “Indies”**
- **Philadelphia Soul and the Neo-Soul Movement**
- **Video killed the radio star / Internet killed the video star**
- **MP3s and file sharing--the controversy continues**
- **Ten Things I Dislike about Pop Music and Pop Culture**
- **Explicit Lyrics and Censorship**
- **The Death and Rebirth of Rock ‘n Roll**
- **Pop Music and the Corporate Influence: Pros and Cons**
- **New Punk/Old Punk ... same old punk?**
- **Pop Stars: made, bought, and sold**
- **American Idol – True Talent or All Hype**
- **Lip Syncing and Pop Music**
- **Anyone Can Be a Star in the Age of Digital Music**

Due Dates: TBA

Term Projects

Artist profile – an overview of an artist or group (highlighting their material, contribution(s) to a music genre, major influences and musical lineage, links to particular regional styles, etc)... format: paper and/or power-point presentation, with CDs, music files, photos, poster, etc. Past examples include:

- **Bob Dylan... in the footsteps of Woody Guthrie (from the Dust Bowl to NYC)**
- **Michael Jackson – from Motown to the World**
- **The Orlando-Based Boy Band Phenomenon**
- **Dave Matthews Band: uncharted musical territories**
- **The Dixie Chicks: Country-Fried Controversy**
- **Bob Marley: Reggae music’s spiritual leader**
- **The British Invasion**
- **90’s Seattle-based Grunge**
- **The Origins and Evolution of Techno**
- **Hip-Hop: The Message and the Messengers (Old school, New school, East coast, West coast, Native Tongues, and Bling-Bling).**

Note: An overview of a music genre or a book review is also acceptable. Examples..

- **From Kentucky Bluegrass to Newgrass**
- **R&B: The Southern Gospel Influence**
- **Sweet Soul Music: R&B and the Southern Dream of Freedom (book review)**
- **Generation Ecstasy and the Origins of Techno Dance**

DUE Date: TBA

Term Projects/Papers: Requirements

- 1. Topics must be related to popular music and pop culture and have a significant geo-historical, regional, socio-political/economic, and/or cultural component.**
- 2. Permission to pursue a given topic must be obtained from the instructor.**
- 3. Term projects/papers must be turned in on or before the due date (TBA) by 4:55PM... no exceptions.**
- 4. Failure to turn in a final project by that due date will result in the loss of 10 points for each day the project is late... no exceptions.**
- 5. Students may choose one of two final project options:**

- Option 1. Power point presentation (submitted on CD or 3.5" diskette) – must be the content equivalent of a 20-25 page term paper; or**
Option 2. Term Paper (approx. 20-25 pages of text) with an attached bibliography or reference list--hard copy only!

**Note: Term papers may not be submitted on disk or CD.
Term papers/projects may not be submitted via e-mail.**

- 6. To repeat, term papers/projects will not be accepted via e-mail!**

Note: submission of a burnt CD, poster/picture board, or video to supplement the power point presentation or term paper is optional (but highly recommended).

GEO 2426: Pop Music & Culture – A Geographic Perspective

Tentative schedule and list of topics...

- Course Syllabus, outline, course overview
- **“Pop”** – Definitions and Interpretations
- **Rap Music & Hip Hop Culture** (late 70’s to present)
- The **“50’s Era”** and the birth of **“Rock ‘n Roll”** - the Golden Age (Memphis as hub); 50’s rock ‘n roll documentary (**video**);
- **“the Blues”** and **Rhythm & Blues** (roots and evolution) - regional styles and pioneering artists: Delta Blues, boogie-woogie and barrel-house piano, Piedmont and country blues, electric and urban blues, Texas blues, the music of Chicago, Kansas City, and St. Louis, and its link to Ragtime, swing, and Jazz.
- **“Bluesland”** music documentary (**video**)
- the music of New Orleans (R&B, cajun, zydeco, Caribbean/island, Dixieland Jazz)
- **Western Swing** (Texas-Oklahoma origins)
- **Kentucky Bluegrass** (east and central Kentucky); **“Newgrass”**
- **Country Music** (overview): roots country – hillbilly, mountain, and “old-timey” music; Nashville vs. outlaw country; “new country”
- **American Folk** music (from the Dust Bowl to New York City)
- **British Invasion, blues revival, and 60’s psychedelic rock**; **“Britain Invades America, America Strikes Back”** (**video**); Waves of the British Invasion
- **“doo-wop”** and **early vocal groups**
- **Soul Music** (Motown, Memphis, and the Sound of Philadelphia) - **“Soul Music”** (**video**); its southern Gospel connection; **Neo-soul**
- **the 1970’s**: American music: West coast, Midwest, and New York; FM radio; corporate and arena rock; easy-listening/soft rock; disco; bubble-gum and 70’s teen idols; early metal; the 70’s in retrospect
- **Punk rock and Post-Punk (from Detroit and New York to London... and back again)**
- **The 1980’s** – a recap (from **Hair Bands** to **New Wave**)
- **Ska and Reggae** (the island influence); Bob Marley documentary
- **Woodstock Generations** (’69, ’95, ’99) – My Generation(s) documentary/commentary (optional)
- **The 90’s and Grunge** - the “Seattle Sound”