

General Education Course Information Sheet
Please submit this sheet for each proposed course

Department & Course Number Music History 98T
 Course Title Popular Music Analysis Through Performance and Alternative Methods

1 Check the recommended GE foundation area(s) and subgroups(s) for this course

Foundations of the Arts and Humanities

- Literary and Cultural Analysis _____
- Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis _____
- Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice X

Foundations of Society and Culture

- Historical Analysis _____
- Social Analysis _____

Foundations of Scientific Inquiry

- Physical Science _____
With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more) _____
- Life Science _____
With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more) _____

2. Briefly describe the rationale for assignment to foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) chosen.

This course will analyze popular music using unconventional methods that *do not require music reading skills*. Through the seminar, students will learn about the aesthetic, historical and cultural significance of various musics. Moreover, they will acquire new ways to listen to *all* musics.

3. List faculty member(s) who will serve as instructor (give academic rank):

Marissa Steingold, teaching fellow and Robert Fink, Professor of Musicology (Faculty Mentor)

4. Indicate when do you anticipate teaching this course:

2014-2015	Winter	<u>X</u>	Spring	_____
	Enrollment	16	Enrollment	

GE Course Units 5

Please present concise arguments for the GE principles applicable to this course.

- General Knowledge Students will learn about the aesthetic, historical and cultural implications of various types of music.
- Integrative Learning We will be singing, playing composing and analyzing music together. In small groups, as a class and individually, students will exercise their creativity!
- Ethical Implications Traditional music analysis tends to privilege specific musics: ontological works that shift chords and scales. Other music (especially non-Germanic) are thus alienated. Using alternative analytical methods will reveal *other* musics' aims.
- Cultural Diversity The seminar will focus on a number of African-American musicians and styles,

including funk, Motown and rap.

❑ Critical Thinking

This course asks students to listen to musical recordings intensively. Listening for grooves, production values and spatialization will be a challenging but rewarding task. Additionally, students will formulate original analytical and cultural interpretations of popular music recordings, allowing them to draw their own conclusions.

❑ Rhetorical Effectiveness

❑ Problem-solving

Analysis requires constant problem-solving. The analyst asks, “What instruments do you hear, what production techniques are being employed, how is this recording spatialized and how does this fit into the composer or audience’s worldview??

❑ Library & Information Literacy

Students will conduct their own analytical projects, which will require substantial library research. I will devote class time to research resources and tactics.

(A) STUDENT CONTACT PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

1. Lecture:	<u>3</u>	(hours)
2. Discussion Section:	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
3. labs	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
4. Experiential (service learning, internships, other):	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
5. Field Trips:	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
6. Office Hours	<u>2</u>	(hours)
(A) TOTAL Student Contact Per Week	<u>5</u>	(HOURS)

(B) OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

1. General Review & Preparation:	<u>2</u>	(hours)
2. Reading—and listening	<u>2</u>	(hours)
3. Group Projects:	<u>3</u>	(hours)
4. Preparation for Quizzes & Exams:	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
5. Information Literacy Exercises:	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
6. Written Assignments:	<u>2</u>	(hours)
7. Research Activity:	<u>1</u>	(hours)
(B) TOTAL Out-of-class time per week	<u>10</u>	(HOURS)
GRAND TOTAL (A) + (B) must equal at least 15 hours/week	<u>15</u>	(HOURS)

Popular Music Analysis through alternative methods and Performance

Marissa Steingold, Musicology

It may be shocking to learn that the Beatles, one of the most successful groups in the history of rock 'n' roll, could not read musical scores—and were proud of this deficiency. In light of this information, perhaps analyzing popular music using tools *pop musicians probably don't even understand* is not the best course of action. Moreover, traditional musical analysis fails to analyze crucial information in pop recordings—such as timbre, volume, production, rhythm and historical context. In this seminar, we are going to analyze these aspects of popular recording using alternative methods. Rather than describe what we *see* on the written musical page, we will analyze what we *hear* in a recording. By applying new forms of analysis, performing and writing ourselves, we can gain new insights into popular music. Performing others' music is a form of analysis that reverse-engineers the piece. By shifting aspects of a performance (like changing the lyrics, vocal timbre or rhythms), we can learn even more about the original piece. So, get your voices and hands warmed up, because we are going to make some music!! **Note: no formal musical education or institutionally recognized talent is required for this class.**

We commence the class by asking, “What is the point of analysis, and is analyzing pop even worthwhile?” We will learn about production tools—from Auto-Tune to reverb—and analyze recordings for production values using “sound-box” analysis. After learning about groove music, we will write our own groove-based tunes in small groups and perform them in class. (Students are welcome to record their compositions *or* play them live.) Learning to air-drum James Brown’s 16 beat funk patterns will culminate in *recompositions* of James Brown’s “Cold-Blooded.” For this assignment, we will use Brown’s existing vocal rhythms to compose a *new* song with new lyrics. In our exploration of vocal timbre, we will try to emulate the sounds of Auto-Tune, Madonna *and* Billie Holiday. Toward the end of the quarter, we move to a form of cultural analysis known as “music geography” in order to study California surfer rock. Finally, we shift to individual projects of students’ choosing, where each member of the class picks a popular recording and analyzes it using one or more methods learned in class. (Students are also free to invent their own forms of analysis for this project.) The analyses will result in an in-class presentation and a 12-15 page paper, due at the end of the term.

Week 1: What is analysis?

What does it mean to analyze a piece of music? What are different methods of analysis? We will consider the following methods of analysis:

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| *Spatial | *Cultural | *Roman Numeral |
| *Timbral | *Rhythmic | *Aesthetic |

For this week's seminar, we will conduct a group in-class analysis of the Motown classics, "What Becomes of the Brokenhearted" and "You keep me hangin' on."

Readings: Philip Tagg, "Analyzing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice." *Popular Music*, Vol. 2 (1982) 37-67.

Richard Middleton, "Popular Music Analysis and Musicology: Bridging the Gap." *Popular Music*, Vol. 2 (1993) 177-190.

Listening: Jimmy Ruffin, "What Becomes of the Brokenhearted?" (1966)
The Supremes, "You keep me hangin' on" (1966)

Week 2: Tricks of the Trade: Production Tools

In Week 2, we will look at specific tricks of the trade, including the following production tools:

*Delay

*Compression

*Effects

*Reverb

*Distortion

Listening for these production techniques, we will discuss several famous recordings by Elvis Presley and John Lennon.

Reading: Albin Zak, *The Poetics of Rock*. "Sound as Form." Berkeley: U.C. Press, 2001, 48-96.

Peter Doyle, *Echo and Reverb: Fabricating Space in Popular Music*: Chapter 8. Middletown: Wesleyan Press, 2005, 178-212.

Listening: Elvis Presley, "Blue Moon" (1956) and "Baby, Let's Play House" (1955)

John Lennon, "Instant Karma" (1970)

Week 3: The Soundbox

"Soundbox" analysis *spatializes* musical recordings—or imagines them in a vessel of three or more dimensions. We will investigate this form of analysis and assess its usefulness.

Reading: Ruth Dockwray & Allan F. Moore, "Configuring the sound-box." *Popular Music*, Vol. 29/2 (2010), 181-197.

Listening: U2, "With or without you" (1987)

Analysis Final Project ideas due in class

Week 4: Groove Music and the fatalistic Blues Cycle

In the creation of contemporary pop and hip-hop, where writing, performance and recording are often accomplished simultaneously, *the groove usually comes first*. Groove-based music, which is oriented around grooves rather than shifting chord progressions, has therefore become increasingly common in the pop industry.

As a musical form, the blues is thought to be a “fatalistic cycle”—since its form is constantly repeating. Similarly, blues or blues-inspired lyrics express rather fatalistic sentiments, and the repetition in some groove-based music creates a *fatalistic loop*. Conversely, sacred gospel music seeks redemption. We will work with a particular repetitive groove, and together we will create an original song over that groove. As a break with blues tradition, we will experiment with uplifting, gospel-esque lyrics. **For homework, students will write their own soul compositions over the same groove.**

Reading: Judith Becker, *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotions and Trancing*. Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 2004, 87-107.

Jeff Greenwald, “Hip-Hop Drumming: The Rhyme may define, but the Groove makes you move.” *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Autumn, 2002), 259-271.

Listening: Martha and the Vandellas, “Nowhere to Run” (1965)

A Tribe Called Quest, *A Low End Theory* (1991)

Final Project outlines due in class

Week 5: Rhythm: James Brown and Latin rhythms

We will study 16 beat drum patterns in James Brown’s “Superbad” and clap them out ourselves. We’ll also learn about Latin *tresillo* patterns and explore two important grooves: swing and shuffle. **Next, we will sing/rap the James Brown song, “Cold blooded” and write new songs using the existing rhythms (in groups of two).** By altering the vocal timbre and message of the lyrics, how does this change the “work”?

Reading: Christopher Small, *Musicking*. Middleton: Wesleyan Press, 1998, 1-18.

David Brackett, “James Brown’s ‘Superbad’ and the Double-Voiced Utterance.” *Popular Music*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (October, 1992), 309-324.

Listening: James Brown, “Superbad” (1970) and “Cold-Blooded” (1974)

Week 4 groove assignments due in class.

Week 6: Timbre and Distortion

Timbre (pronounced “*Tamber*”) is the quality of sound. Though traditional classical analysis does not analyze timbre, pop analysts consider timbre an important aspect of music-making. Why do some instruments sound “metallic,” while others seem “woody” or “warm”? How does timbre affect perceptions of the instruments, singers and musical works? We will also look at a specific timbral quality: *distortion*. Though distortion seems cacophonous to many, rock musicians celebrate this phenomenon.

Reading: Hermann Helmholtz, *On the Sensations of Tone*, 1885, 28-33 (introduction).

Mark Ribot, “Earplugs.” 233-237.

Week 5 “Cold-Blooded” Assignment Due in Class

Week 7: Vocal timbre and Phrasing: Holliday and Holiday

In week 7, we will discuss Auto-Tune extensively. Is it vocal ‘cheating,’ why is it considered feminizing for rappers to use it, and does Auto-Tune turn the vocalist into a cyborg? As Baudrillard predicted, sometimes the real imitates the fake. To test out this theory, we will try to emulate the sound of Auto-Tune—*without using Auto-Tune*.

For this class, everyone will learn how to sing Billie Holiday’s version of “Lover Man” and Madonna’s “Holiday” in order to understand the subtleties of timbre and phrasing. Holliday is often touted as a “real” singer—euphemistically signaling *flawed* singing. On the other hand, Madonna achieves girlish perfection by speeding up her recording (an archaic form of “Auto-Tune” that increases pitch). Which recording to you prefer?

Reading: Donna Haraway, “Cyborg Manifesto.” 1991, 149-181.

Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulations*. 1981, 166-184.

Music listening: T-Pain, “Take Your Shirt Off” (2009)

Billie Holiday, “Lover Man” (1945)

Madonna, “Holiday” (1983)

Holiday/Holiday Assignment due in class

Week 8: Music Geography: 1960s Surfer Music

In Week 4, we will learn about the culturally-informed analysis known as “Music Geography,” where music is “spatialized” in terms of geography rather than the sound box. Musical styles may travel far and wide, but they often begin as a local response to a specific place and time. When we look at a piece of music, it can tell us something about the people who conceived it—and the people who consumed it. This lecture will lead to a discussion of 1960s surfer music.

- Reading: R.L. Rutsky, "Surfing the Other: Ideology on the Beach." *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (1999), 12-23.
- George O. Carney, "Cowabunga! Surfer rock and the five themes of geography." *Popular Music & Society*, 23:4 (1999), 3-29.
- Richard Aquila, "Images of the American West in Rock Music." *Western Historical Quarterly* (1980), 415-432.
- Listening: Dick Dale, "Miserlou" (1962)
- The Beach Boys, "Good Vibrations" (1966)

Rough Draft of Analysis Papers due

Weeks 9-10 Analysis Presentations

Each student will pick a recording (an individual song or album) to analyze, using one or more techniques learned in the class, such as rhythmic, music geography, sound-box and timbral. Students are also welcome to invent original forms of analysis for their projects.

Concentrate on aspects of the music that seem unusual or phenomenal to you. Next, read what other academics and music journalists have written about this work. What do you think?

All members of the class will present their findings in an in-class presentation and write a 12-15 page paper. Presentations will take place during weeks 9 and 10, and papers are due in week 10.

Grading Breakdown

Groove Assignment: 10%

"Cold-Blooded" Composition: 15%

Holliday/"Holiday" Assignment: 10%

Analysis Project & Paper: 50%

Participation: 15%



New Course Proposal

Music History 98T Popular Music Analysis through Alternative Methods and Performance

Course Number Music History 98T

Title Popular Music Analysis through Alternative Methods and Performance

Short Title POP MUSIC ANALYSIS

Units Fixed: 5

Grading Basis Letter grade only

Instructional Format Seminar - 3 hours per week

TIE Code SEMT - Seminar (Topical) [T]

GE Requirement Yes

Major or Minor Requirement No

Requisites Enforced: Satisfaction of entry-level Writing requirement. Freshmen and sophomores preferred.

Course Description Seminar, three hours. Enforced requisite: satisfaction of Entry-Level Writing requirement. Freshmen/sophomores preferred. Listening for timbre, volume, rhythm, groove, and Auto-Tune (production tools with crucial information), and cultural analysis of historical content and other crucial aspects of popular music that have been ignored by traditional analysts. Letter grading.

Justification Part of the series of seminars offered through the Collegium of University Teaching Fellows.

Syllabus File [Music History 98T syllabus.pdf](#) was previously uploaded. You may view the file by clicking on the file name.

Supplemental Information Professor Robert Fink is the faculty mentor for this seminar.

Grading Structure
Groove Assignment: 15%
"Superbad" Composition: 15%
Holliday/"Holiday" Assignment: 10%
Analysis Project & Paper: 50%
Participation: 10%

Effective Date Winter 2015

Discontinue Date Summer 1 2015

Instructor	Name	Title
	Marissa Steingold	Teaching Fellow

Quarters Taught Fall Winter Spring Summer

Department Musicology

Contact	Name	E-mail
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Routing Help

ROUTING STATUS

Role: Registrar's Office

Status: Processing Completed

Role: Registrar's Publications Office - Hennig, Leann Jean (LHENNIG@REGISTRAR.UCLA.EDU) - 56704

Status: Added to SRS on 7/31/2014 1:39:01 PM

Changes: Title, Description

Comments: Edited course description into official version; corrected title.

Role: Registrar's Scheduling Office - Thomson, Douglas N (DTHOMSON@REGISTRAR.UCLA.EDU) - 51441

Status: Added to SRS on 6/30/2014 2:09:20 PM

Changes: Short Title

Comments: No Comments

Role: FEC School Coordinator - Castillo, Myrna Dee Figurac (MCASTILLO@COLLEGE.UCLA.EDU) - 45040

Status: Returned for Additional Info on 6/12/2014 11:36:43 AM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: Routing to Doug Thomson in the Registrar's Office.

Role: FEC Chair or Designee - Upton, Dell (DUPTON@HUMNET.UCLA.EDU) - 68370

Status: Approved on 6/11/2014 1:43:35 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: No Comments

Role: FEC Chair or Designee - Castillo, Myrna Dee Figurac (MCASTILLO@COLLEGE.UCLA.EDU) - 45040

Status: Returned for Additional Info on 6/2/2014 4:07:22 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: Routing to Dell Upton for FEC approval.

Role: CUTF Coordinator - Gentile, Catherine (CGENTILE@OID.UCLA.EDU) - 68998

Status: Approved on 5/13/2014 4:01:47 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: on behalf of Professor Kathleen L. Komar, chair, CUTF Faculty Advisory Committee

Role: Initiator/Submitter - Gentile, Catherine (CGENTILE@OID.UCLA.EDU) - 68998

Status: Submitted on 5/13/2014 3:59:48 PM

Comments: Initiated a New Course Proposal

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