

General Education Foundations of Arts and Humanities (AH) Course Information Sheet

Please submit this sheet for each proposed course along with 1) a syllabus describing the key components of the course that will be taught regardless of the instructor and 2) assignment guidelines.

Department, Course Number, and Title Musicology 98T: "The History of the Concept Album"

The aim of the GE AH course offerings is:

To provide students with the perspectives and intellectual skills necessary to comprehend and think critically about our situation in the world as human beings. In particular, these courses provide students with the basic means to appreciate and evaluate the ongoing efforts of humans to explain, translate, and transform our diverse experiences of the world through such media as language, literature, philosophical systems, images, sounds, and performances. These courses will introduce students to the historical development and fundamental intellectual and ethical issues associated with the arts and humanities and may also investigate the complex relations between artistic and humanistic expression and other facets of society and culture.

General Education AH Student Goals: Courses fulfilling the GE AH will provide a minimum of five units and should align with some (not necessarily all) of the following four general goals:

1. Students will gain knowledge in the Arts and Humanities.
2. Students will engage in complex analysis and reasoning.
3. Students will demonstrate media and information literacy.
4. Students will communicate effectively.

General Education AH Student Learning Outcomes: Each course should have student learning outcomes listed in the syllabus. These outcomes may be tied to a specific discipline but should be associated with the four broad categories listed above (please see **Appendix I: Arts and Humanities Learning Outcomes** for a sample list of possible learning outcomes supporting each goal).

General Guidelines for GE AH Courses:

- **Introductory Courses:** An "introductory" class offered for GE by a department or an IDP should introduce students to the discipline's methodologies or "ways of knowing."
- **Upper Division Courses:** Most GE Courses are lower division courses in order to be accessible to any student, including first-year students. While GE courses may be upper division, they should have no prerequisites and students should be able to take them and understand the material with the background expected from all UCLA students.
- **Writing Assignments:** GE courses within the Arts & Humanities foundations should contain a significant writing component.
- **Unit guidelines:** GE courses within Arts and Humanities are all at least 5-units.

Please indicate the area/s which you believe this course should satisfy. Please note, while you can request review for multiple subcategories across Foundation Areas, GEs are not typically approved for more than 2 subcategories.

- ☐ Literary Cultural Analysis
- ☐ Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis
- ☒ Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice.

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

The focus of the course will be on analyzing and then interpreting certain musical recordings as primary texts that are informed by contemporaneous technologies and aesthetic values; indeed, students will see how concept albums borrow from both visual and performing idioms to create a unified listening experience. In examining recordings in this way, students will explore how writers can encode these canonical "texts" with certain cultural values that tend to exclude other perspectives; special attention will thus be paid to how race and gender function in popular music historiography.

Indicate when the department anticipates offering this course in 2019-21 and give anticipated enrollment:

2019-20 ☐ Fall: Enrollment _____
☐ Winter: Enrollment _____
☐ Spring: Enrollment _____
☐ Summer: Enrollment _____

2020-21 ☐ Fall: Enrollment _____
☒ Winter: Enrollment 16
☐ Spring: Enrollment _____
☐ Summer: Enrollment _____

Please provide information on estimated weekly hours for the class.

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

Activity	Number of hours per week
Lecture	3
Discussion Section	
Labs	
Experiential (Community-engagement, internships, other)	
Field Trips	
A) TOTAL student contact per week	3

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

Activity	Number of hours per week
General Review and Preparation	1
Reading	3
Group Projects	2
Preparation for Quizzes & Exams	
Information Literacy Exercises	
Written Assignments	4
Research Activity	2
B) TOTAL Out-of-class time per week	12

GRAND TOTAL (A) + (B) must equal at least 15 hours/week: 15 (hours)

Please present a concise explanation for the following:

Which of the four student learning goals listed on page 1 are you addressing in your course?

1. Students will gain knowledge in the Arts and Humanities
2. Students will engage in complex analysis and reasoning
3. Students will communicate effectively

For each course goal listed above, what are the student learning outcomes you will list in your syllabus? In addition, what types of assignments will be given to determine whether students achieve the learning outcomes? (Please provide a sample assignment, term paper/exam, essay prompt, or other form of assessment)

1. Students will be able to articulate a historical narrative of concept albums and how that narrative is shaped by cultural concerns;
2. Students will learn how a musical recording functions as a rich text that encompasses musical, visual, and technological aspects;
3. Students will contribute to academic discourse by writing about recordings from the stance of a musicologist, presenting research in both written and oral forms.

Numerous writing assignments will be given to meet these goals, but the most representative is the final research project, which requires students to use tools and strategies from class to analyze a recording of their choice from three different perspectives—material, lyrical, and musical. This research will then be presented as a research paper and as a shortened oral presentation, each of which have discrete types of assessment and feedback. The assignment is scaffolded over the term and is detailed in the attached syllabus.

What class activities (e.g. homework, papers, blog posts, projects, etc.) will involve writing? How will the writing be evaluated?

Most class assignments will require writing, but they will be composed and evaluated in distinct ways depending on the learning outcome. For instance, one component of the class is a weekly journal, for which students will write about that week's recordings informally; here they will not be evaluated on the quality of their prose, but based on how effectively they demonstrate active listening, a skill that will be taught in class. Other assignments are meant to model on disciplinary writing and will be evaluated based on those metrics: how clearly the student's argument is made and organized, along with the extent to which that argument is supported with musical and extra-musical evidence. Each formal writing assignment looks at a specific aspect of a recording; by gathering skills by writing about these over the term, students will be able to use my feedback from prior assignments and journaling to synthesize new knowledge and writing strategies in order to write about an album of their choosing from Appendix II.

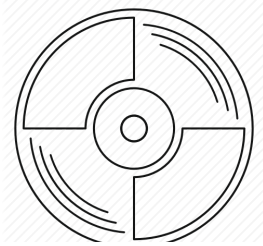
If the course is an upper division course (100-199), please discuss how the course will be accessible to all UCLA students, including first-years?

APPENDIX I

Student Learning Goals with Nested Learning Outcomes for
All General Education (GE) Foundations in Arts and Humanities (AH) Courses

Course Goals (1-4) and samples of possible Student Learning Outcomes (a, b, c, etc.) for all “GE AH” courses:

- 1. Students will gain knowledge in the Arts and Humanities.**
 - a. Students will recognize the varying historical, social, political, and economic conditions that shape human action.
 - b. Students will identify how individuals relate to or diverge from particular social norms through the creation of artistic and expressive forms.
 - c. Students will examine “texts” in any language or structure, and/or art forms in one or more media.
 - d. Students will account for how different worldviews and challenges are expressed in the arts and humanities as a product of interaction among diverse groups.
 - 2. Students will engage in complex analysis and reasoning.**
 - a. Students will analyze works in the context of an aesthetic movement, critical theory, philosophy, rhetoric, or languages/linguistics.
 - b. Students will articulate perspectives and priorities found in expressive forms.
 - c. Students will describe how insight can inform constructive change and ethical action.
 - d. Students will develop and evaluate an argument informed by evidence.
 - 3. Students will demonstrate media and information literacy.**
 - a. Students will locate appropriate resources to support an argument.
 - b. Students will evaluate resources for their reliability and significance.
 - c. Students will use resources effectively and ethically.
 - 4. Students will communicate effectively.**
 - a. Students will make arguments and express perspectives through a wide range of media or performance (i.e. written, digital, storytelling, visual arts).
 - b. Students will learn how to collaborate with others to express perspectives in diverse media.
 - c. Students will tailor communication to their perspective audiences.
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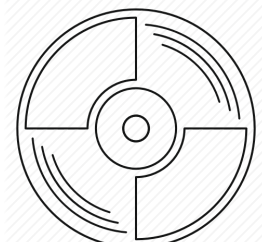


The History of the Concept Album

Musicology 98T (Winter 2021)

*Pending GE credit for Arts and Humanities, Visual
& Performing Arts Analysis and Practice*

5 Credits, Letter Grading



Instructor: Alex Hallenbeck, ahallenbeck@g.ucla.edu

Course Description:

In a stunning reversal, 2019 was the first year that vinyl sales overcame those of CDs since the 1980s. Even in the age of music streaming that downplays album-based listening, there clearly remains a committed group of listeners who prefer owning physical albums replete with cover art, lyrics, and other inserts such as stickers and posters. The resurgence of long-playing records (LPs) shows the need for a historical account of the “album” as a medium that developed out of new playback technologies in the first half of the twentieth century and quickly intersected with cultural values (“aesthetics”) and new modes of production in the recording studio.

This course aims to provide the history of a particularly exalted type of recording—the concept album—to illustrate how musical artists have borrowed from concert music and theater to create a unified listening experience for the consumer using a combination of lyrics, sounds, production techniques, and extramusical materials. Standard narratives of the concept album detail paradigmatic examples from the 1960s and ‘70s that are interpreted as “singular statements” by (let’s face it) white men often working in the rock idiom. This seminar will challenge this canon by juxtaposing these classic concept albums with those created in other musical genres such as pop, folk, soul, and hip hop. To accomplish this, the focus of each week’s seminar will be on the recordings themselves, which range provocatively from Bing Crosby to Nine Inch Nails to Janelle Monáe. Readings assigned are chosen from disparate areas (musicology, philosophy, criticism, press interviews) and will give background on the recordings. Through active listening, students will be introduced to methods of musical analysis and how to write about popular music in a critical fashion from different analytic standpoints. *No formal training in music is required to take this class.*

Learning Goals:

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Articulate a cogent historical narrative of concept albums over the twentieth century and how that narrative is shaped by technological and aesthetic concerns;
2. Synthesize various writerly perspectives to better understand the nature of artistic canons, why they might be problematic, and how they can be challenged;
3. Demonstrate “active listening” skills, which will be used to analyze and write about musical recordings from three distinct perspectives: material, lyrical and musical;
4. Understand how this type of musical recording functions as a rich text that encompasses musical *and* visual aspects, and how these are mediated by contemporaneous technology;
5. Contribute to academic discourse by writing about concept albums from the stance of a musicologist, presenting research both in written and oral forms

Grading Components:

- Participation: 20%**
- Weekly Journaling: 20% [400-500 words/album]**
- Material Analysis Assignment: 10% [2 pages]**
- Lyrical Analysis Assignment: 10% [3 pages]**
- Musical Analysis Assignment: 10% [3 pages]**
- Final Paper Self-Evaluated Rough Draft: 5% [4-5 pages]**
- Final Paper: 15% [7-8 pages]**
- In-Class Presentation: 10% [ca. 9-10 minutes]**

Participation: [20%]

The focus of this course will be on the musical recordings themselves, supplemented with readings to help guide your listening. I have mostly limited you to 40-100 minutes of listening each week, which usually means two separate LPs or one double album. We will spend a substantial portion of early class periods talking about “active listening” strategies, but I expect you to listen to each recording more than once, wearing headphones (AirPods count!), without any distractions. For some of you, this might be quite a change in your listening habits. I recommend—but do not require—keeping a notebook handy to jot down any thoughts you have while listening, making sure to note the track and time stamp, as this will help you with your weekly journal and to better participate in class discussions. Some of the readings assigned will be easy to digest and others will be more difficult; for the latter, I do not expect you to understand them fully, but I *do* expect you to grapple with the text as much as you can, directing the class to certain passages you found especially illuminating or confusing—this still counts as participation!

At the beginning of each class there will be a Google Doc to fill out digitally for attendance purposes. The quarter is short, so any unexcused absence will result in losing a partial letter grade in this category (i.e., from an A to A-). “Participation” is also more than just showing up for class—it requires that you demonstrate your engagement with the listening and readings. You can do this by reflecting upon course materials during class discussions or within small groups, which I will take note of. There will also be free-write activities that take place in class, which I will collect only to confirm that you participated and so I can track your progress. Your participation grade will also be determined by your engagement with other in-class activities, such as peer review during Week 10; I will similarly be collecting copies of this peer review sheet to confirm your involvement. Any missing in-class materials will result in a deduction of a partial letter grade in this category; if you are absent from class for any reason you will be responsible for making up these missed activities in consultation with me.

This course is designed to be an open seminar; I promise to make it a safe place to exchange ideas, opinions, and disagreements. For those of you who are more introverted and might be uncomfortable sharing ideas in class, please talk to me privately and we can work on developing these skills.

Weekly Journaling: [20%]

As the primary “text” in this class is a musical recording, you will be keeping a weekly journal that is composed of your responses to *each* recording, except those that are being analyzed for writing assignments (*Blue* and *The Fragile*). Your journal aims to answer some basic questions about what you are hearing to aid you in your later writing assignments: Do you find the recording at hand to be a concept album? What’s the concept? What evidence do you have to support your assertion (lyrical, musical, extramusical, etc.)? There is not necessarily a right or wrong answer here; one could argue at length about the “concept-ness” of some of the albums assigned. I am fine with you arguing that one of the assigned recordings is *not* a concept album, as long as you defend your reasoning! The journal will be graded on the strength of the evidence you provide to assert your claim, whatever it may be.

The purpose of this assignment is to get you thinking and listening to music intently so you can get accustomed to describing what you hear in words. Responses should be around 400-500 words for each album. Note that for these journals I am *not* grading based on your quality of prose or organization, but the ideas and evidence you provide—as such, feel free to use bullet points or any other organizational structure that helps get your ideas across easily; major writing assignments will provide you an opportunity to submit prose that is more polished (see below). Brief feedback will be given on your journals every week, and grades will be: A (excellent engagement with album); B (some engagement); C (minimal, surface-level engagement); or F (did not complete). Journals will be due electronically or in print at the beginning of each class period, starting Week 2 and ending Week 9.

Four Writing Assignments: [see Appendix I for details and grading criteria]

The first three writing assignments will require you to write about a musical recording from different disciplinary approaches: material, lyrical, and musical. For each of these you will be randomly assigned to work with another student in the class to write an analysis of a particular album from one of these perspectives. In your final paper, you alone will provide an analysis of a non-canonical concept album from a list provided to you that encompasses each of these three analytical modes (see Appendix II).

- 1) Material Analysis Assignment (10%). Due Week 5; feedback received Week 6
- 2) Lyrical Analysis Assignment of *Blue* (10%). Due Week 7; feedback received Week 8
- 3) Musical Analysis Assignment of *The Fragile* (10%). Due Week 9; feedback received Week 10
- 4) Final Paper: Analysis of a Concept Album (15%). Due Finals Week [TBD].
Rough Draft (5%) due Week 10

Presentation: [10%] [see Appendix I for grading criteria and evaluation sheet]

You will be responsible for a 9-10 minute presentation on your final research project during Finals Week, depending on course enrollment. This will include an oral presentation supplemented with a PowerPoint or the equivalent. These will be graded based on the clarity of your ideas and your unique insight into your topic. I will dedicate a portion of a class period prior to this week to help you develop your presentations and to demonstrate myself what a good presentation entails. In addition, each student will be required to evaluate one presentation in lieu of a Q&A session due to time constraints, which will be distributed in class.

Policies:

Email Policy: Please email me with questions or concerns that you feel cannot be answered in class or office hours. All emails will be returned within 24 hours (and usually sooner); however, I am not compelled to respond outside of regular business hours (9-5), Monday through Friday. *I will not respond to emails asking about information that is available in this syllabus.*

Late Work: You are responsible for getting me your materials by the date and time indicated on this syllabus. Late work will only be accepted in case of personal or family emergency, and only upon submission of documentation and a written request for late submission. Similarly, if you miss a seminar that includes an in-class writing or peer-review exercise, you will not receive credit for those assignments without sufficient documentation. Late assignments will be subject to a penalty of one full letter grade per 24 hours after the due date.

Course Materials:

All readings will be uploaded to CCLE in advance. All music will be available on YouTube or Spotify.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism (whether accidental or intentional) is a serious breach of intellectual integrity. Please refer to UCLA's website for questions about citation and plagiarism: <https://guides.library.ucla.edu/citing/plagiarism>. Format and citation options for both the humanities and social sciences are available online. The preferred format for this class is Chicago: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>. We will cover this citation system in class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability that requires special accommodations around assignments or in the classroom, you must be registered with the UCLA Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Also, please speak to the instructor during the first week of class. If you have not yet registered with UCLA OSD, please contact them as soon as possible (<http://www.osd.ucla.edu>).

Inclusivity Statement: I understand that our students represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects and cherishes diversity. While working together to build this community I ask all students to:

- share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other
- value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature

Course Schedule:

*note that readings and listenings are to be done *in advance* of the week they are listed under*

Week 1: Introduction: Canons, Concepts, and Albums as Fetishized Objects

In Class: Introduction to musical terminology with in-class group exercises; discussion of what an album is and how artists might construct concepts in them

Read:

- David Buckley, "[Album](#)," in *Grove Music Online*, 2001.
- Carys Wyn Jones, *The Rock Canon: Canonical Values in the Reception of Rock Albums* (2008): Excerpts from Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-11; 21-30; 42-45).
- Evan Eisenberg, *The Recording Angel: Music, Records, and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa* (2005): Chapter 1 (pp. 1-8)

Week 2: Concept Album Predecessors in the 1940s & '50s: 78s and LPs

In Class: Micro-teaching on twentieth-century recording and playback technologies; cast albums (*Oklahoma!* and *South Pacific*); Chicago citational practices

Read:

- Fiona Sturges, "[The Return of Concept Album](#)," *The Independent UK*, 2009.
- Todd Decker, "Fancy Meeting You Here: Pioneers of the Concept Album," *Daedalus* (2013): 98-108.

Listen:

- Woody Guthrie, *Dust Bowl Ballads* (1940)
- Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney, *Fancy Meeting You Here* (1958)

Week 3: The Aesthetics of Rock: Ontology and Production in the 1960s

In Class: Defining "rock"; discussion of how rock tracks are cut by listening to *Pet Sounds* outtakes and alternate cuts; group activity examining liner notes of *Pet Sounds*

Read: Theodore Gracyk, *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock* (1996): Preface, pp. 1-21 & 37-67.

Listen: The Beach Boys, *Pet Sounds* (1966 [2001 reissue]); listen to both mono and stereo versions of the original 13 tracks

Week 4: Paradigmatic Concept Albums

In Class: Discussion of musical elements in *Sgt. Pepper* and construction of "unity"; how musicologists write about concept albums; concept album materiality and affordances discussion using physical copies of this week's LPs

Read:

- Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 5, *Music in the Late Twentieth Century* (2010): pp. 316-333.
- Alan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text: Developing a Musicology of Rock* (2001): excerpts from Chapter 3 (pp. 64-75; 90-98)

Listen:

- The Beatles, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band* (1967)
- Pink Floyd, *The Dark Side of the Moon* (1973)

Week 5: Rock Operas and Theatricality

In Class: Discussion of staged concept albums; visual examples from Pink Floyd and Genesis concerts; class reflection on material analysis assignment

Read:

- Neil Slaven, *Electric Don Quixote: The Definitive Story of Frank Zappa* (2003): pp. 271-76.
- John Swenson, "[Frank Zappa: The Myth of Joe's Garage](#)," *Rolling Stone*, 1979.
- David Nicholls, "Virtual Opera, or Opera between the Ears," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* (2004): 100-142 (skim pp. 105-129)

Listen: Frank Zappa, *Joe's Garage* (1979), follow along with libretto

DUE: Material Analysis paper by beginning of class via Turn-It-In

Week 6: The Concept Album in Motown and Funk; Black Authenticity

In Class: Viewing excerpts from *George Clinton: The Mothership Connection* 1976 live concert; discussion of Afrofuturism; introduction to lyrical analysis assignment with in-class group exercises

Read:

- Ben Edmonds, *What's Going On?: Marvin Gaye and the Last Days of the Motown Sound* (2001): excerpts from Chapter 5 & 7 (pp. 114-25 & 153-81).
- Kurt Bauer, "[The Mothership Connection: Mythscape and Unity in the Music of Parliament](#)," *Folklore Forum*, 2012.

Listen:

- Marvin Gaye, *What's Going On* (1971)
- Parliament, *Mothership Connection* (1975)

Week 7: Where Are the Women? Poptimism vs. Rockism in Music Criticism

In Class: Discussions of how gender functions in the rock canon; in-class reading of excerpts from Jones's book on this topic; class reflection on lyrical analysis assignment

Read:

- Anna Leszkiewicz, "[Women Don't Make Concept Albums: How BBC Four's When Pop Went Epic Erases Popular Music's Diverse History](#)," *New Statesman America*, 2016.
- Kelefa Sanneh, "[The Rap Against Rockism](#)," *The New York Times*, 2004.
- Robert Loss, "[No Apologies: A Critique of the Rockist v. Poptimist Paradigm](#)," *Pop Matters*, 2015.

Listen:

- Joni Mitchell, *Blue* (1971)
- Carole King, *Tapestry* (1971)

DUE: Lyric Analysis paper by beginning of class via Turn-It-In

Week 8: Contemporary Hip Hop

In Class: Discussion of how "the album" functions in hip hop; introduction to musical analysis assignment with in-class examples and exercises

Read: Del F. Cowie, "[Kendrick Lamar: Good Kid, M.A.A.D. City](#)," *Exclaim!*, 2012.

Listen: Kendrick Lamar, *Good Kid, M.A.A.D. City* (2012)

Watch: Janelle Monáe, *Dirty Computer* (2018)

DUE: Choose final project album and sign up on spreadsheet (if you haven't already)

Week 9: Concept Album Revenants in the Rock Idiom

In Class: Class reflection on musical analysis assignment; strategies and expectations for final paper

Read:

- Jonathan Gold, "[Nine Inch Nails: Love it to Death](#)," *Rolling Stone*, 1994.

Listen:

- Nine Inch Nails, *The Fragile* (1999)

DUE: Musical Analysis paper by beginning of class via Turn-It-In

Week 10: Merits of Popular Music Canons

In Class: Peer review workshop and Rough Draft self-evaluation; expectations for presentation; final thoughts on the values of canons and how a class on concept albums can address this

- Carys Wyn Jones, *The Rock Canon* (2008): Chapter 6 (pp. 119-40)

DUE: Rough draft at the beginning of class, two copies in print

Finals Week: Presentations

In Class: Each student will present, and each student will fill out one evaluation form

DUE: Final Paper via Turn-It-In, exact date TBD.

Appendix I: Writing Assignment Descriptions and Rubrics

Material Analysis Assignment (10%):

In today's age of music streaming most albums are only experienced with our ears, but throughout the twentieth century recordings were often packaged with extra-musical, material items that the consumer could physically touch, such as album artwork, liner notes, lyrics, and gatefolds—some LPs would even include other items such as stickers and posters. This assignment requires you and your assigned partner to go on a scavenger hunt to find an old LP in Los Angeles. Then, you will closely scrutinize it and provide a detailed description of its material elements the same way an art historian would examine a piece of art. This search will replicate the experience of listeners in the rock era, as you will go into a record store or thrift store and flip through LPs until something catches your eye and *appears* to be a concept album. You are *not* required to purchase your album, though it might make it easier to analyze, and many used LPs will cost very little money. If you do buy your album, bring it into seminar to show the class!

Steps:

1. Start by going out to a record store, thrift store, or even your parents' record collections. Find an LP from the 1960s or '70s that stands out for its material qualities (art work, inserts, gatefold, etc.). It's fine if you aren't sure how much of a concept album your LP is—but it should not be a live album or a compilation. Goodwill and Amoeba Records might be good places to start, but you should be able to find cheap LPs in a variety of locations across LA.
2. Either at the store or at home (depending on whether or not you purchase the album), take notes on your LP, being as detailed in your description as possible: What is included in your album? What material is it made out of? How is the condition of it? How would you describe the colors and fonts used? What are the measurements of the items included? What type of artistic tradition is the cover art borrowing from? These might seem like pedantic descriptions, and they are—this is exactly the point of the assignment! I want you to point out the “obvious” in as much detail as allowed by the page length.
3. In a 2-page paper, use your notes to first provide a detailed overview of your album and what physical components are included.
4. Then, answer the question of what can be *done* with these material items. What would a listener want these for, and why would the artist in question design the album in this way and include these specific materials?

To help you with this assignment, I will bring in physical LPs of *Sgt. Pepper's* and *The Dark Side of the Moon* during Week 4 for all of us to examine together.

Grading criteria [20 total points]:

- Detailed description of materials ____/8 points
- Insight into use of materials ____/8 points
- Clarity of descriptions and prose; organization ____/2 points
- Writerly conventions (grammar, syntax, etc.) ____/2 points

Lyrical Analysis Assignment (10%):

For those who write about recordings of popular music, interpreting song lyrics is the most common way to argue that an album revolves around a certain concept. Like other close-reading exercises you have probably done before in English classes, this assignment asks you to take Joni Mitchell's lyrics from *Blue* and provide a cogent argument, supported with textual evidence, as to what the overall theme of the album is and how individual songs' lyrics contribute to this. You will also have to explain how the music helps support the meaning behind the lyrics. In class prior to this assignment's due date we will do lyrical analyses together so you can be familiarized with this analytic approach.

Steps:

1. Listen to the album and follow along with the lyrics, taking preliminary notes on what you think each song means.
2. Pick three of the ten tracks on the album that you think deal with a common theme.
3. Print off the lyrics for these songs and annotate them as you would any poem in an English course, paying attention to word choice and poetic devices (simile, metaphor, repetition, etc.). The annotated song lyrics will need to be included as an appendix to your paper.
4. Write a 3-page paper using these lyrics as "evidence" for your own argument as to what the concept of the album is.
5. Lastly, you will need to move beyond the lyrics and incorporate some discussion into your paper of how the meaning behind these lyrics is supported with music and/or sound.

Grading criteria [20 total points]:

Lyrical Analysis Paper	5- Superior	4- Competent	3- Acceptable	2- Insufficient
Song Choice and Concept Argument	Reason for choosing your three songs and the concept they represent is clear and amply supported with textual and music evidence	Reason for choosing songs and argument for overall concept is stated and supported with some evidence	Reason for choosing songs can only be inferred; argument for concept is weak and/or surface-level	No clear reasoning for song choice. Argument for the concept represented is not given and/or not backed up with enough evidence
Analysis of Lyrics	Paper indicates superior insight into the meaning of the three songs' lyrics; annotations show a deep engagement with poetic devices	Paper indicates good insight into the meaning of the songs' lyrics; annotations show engagement with poetic devices	Paper indicates an attempt at discussing the meaning of the songs, but some ideas lacked clarity and analysis was focused only on surface-level observations	Paper does not include a thorough analysis of the lyrics and what they mean; annotations are sparse
Musical Evidence	The music's relationship to the lyrics and the concept you argue for is thoroughly analyzed and supported with specific examples	Your paper provides some examples as to how the lyrics and concept are supported with music	Your paper shows that you considered the relationship of lyrics and music but not enough musical examples are provided and those that are focus on basic observations	Your paper provides insufficient evidence as to how the meaning behind the lyrics is supported musically
Conventions and Organization	Your paper is neatly organized, beginning with an argument about the concept of the album which is then amply supported by lyrical and musical evidence in body paragraphs. Few distracting errors in prose	Paper is organized logically, though some elements require further attention for clarity. Some distracting errors	Your paper includes an argument but it is not organized in a clear fashion. Errors in prose distract the reader	Your paper suffers from a lack of organization and/or clarity. Many errors in prose hinder readability

Musical Analysis Assignment (10%):

Of all of the albums assigned, *The Fragile* is one of the most musically dense. This album is long and not organized according to a broader narrative like other concept albums we have covered this term, yet many of the tracks share *musical* similarities that guide the listener into conceiving the recording as a cohesive object and not merely a collection of discrete tracks. This assignment asks you to discuss some strategies that are used to unify the album, thinking about how each track segues into the next and how musical ideas recur across the album. Prior to this due date, I will provide substantial examples of how this might be done and how you might provide your “data” in the form of a chart. Unlike your previous writing assignment, I am *not* looking for an argument as to what the concept of this album is, but how music (or sound) is used as a connective device across its long duration.

Steps:

1. Listen to the entire album by yourself, jotting down any sonic consistencies you hear between tracks with a timestamp. (An example to get started: where do you hear an acoustic piano?)
2. With your partner, construct a chart that shows how *each track* segues into the next. Is there an abrupt shift in tempo or sound that indicates a break in the listening experience, or is there some connective device being used to transition between tracks? Describe what you hear. This chart will need to be attached to your final paper.
3. In your chart, use your examination of song transitions to point out how the album’s tracks are organized. Where would you say are the major breaks in the album for the listener? Are there separate sections of the album? How many? Which tracks blend together? There is not a right or wrong answer here!
4. Lastly, take one musical element (timbre, specific or distinctive instruments and sounds, recurring rhythms, etc.—we’ll cover all of these in class) and track its occurrence (or better yet, its development) over the album. Does the repetition of this musical element match the way the album is organized from Step 3, above?
5. With your partner, write a 3-page paper that makes an argument as to how *The Fragile* uses track segues and recurring musical ideas to create a unified listening experience. You will draw on only *some* of the “evidence” provided in your chart—whatever allows you to support your argument most effectively.

Note: This assignment, like the album itself, is going to be challenging—don’t fear, it’s supposed to be! I will demonstrate how you might approach this type of analysis numerous times in class before this assignment.

Grading criteria [20 total points]:

Musical Analysis Paper	5- Superior	4- Competent	3- Acceptable	2- Insufficient
Main Argument (overview of track transitions, structure of album, and musical elements)	Strong and unique argument for how this album is musically unified	Argument for unity is strong but could use more depth and detail	Argument is weak and relies on superficial observations	No clear argument as to how the album is unified musically and how the tracks transition
Musical Analysis	Paper clearly identifies and describes track transitions and a recurring musical element; body of paper is rich in musical description	Paper sufficiently explores track transitions and a recurring musical element but musical description could be more detailed and narrated more effectively	A recurring musical element and track transitions are only analyzed at a surface level; musical description in body paragraphs merely restates what is provided in chart	Paper does not include description of a recurring musical element and/or how tracks transition
Chart of Musical Evidence	Chart provided at end of paper is easy to understand and includes a succinct description of track transitions, the organization of the album, and recurring musical element through numerous tracks	Chart provided at end of paper is mostly clear but recurring musical element is only traced through two or three tracks; nature of track transitions could be detailed more clearly	Chart provided is difficult to read and only provides two instances of your chosen musical element; description of track transition is unclear and/or not detailed sufficiently	Chart is missing or does not provide sufficient musical evidence
Conventions and Organization	Paper is organized effectively, beginning with an argument about musical connections across the album which is then further detailed in body paragraphs with musical evidence. Few distracting errors in prose	Paper is organized logically, though some elements require further thought for clarity. Some distracting errors	Your paper includes an argument about musical unity but it is not organized in a clear fashion. Errors in prose distract the reader	Your paper suffers from a lack of organization and/or clarity. Many errors in prose hinder readability

Final Paper (5% self-evaluated rough draft; 15% final paper)

The idea of the final paper is for you to draw on what you have learned from your previous writing assignments and to synthesize these three analytical modes (lyrical, material, musical)—along with anything pertinent you’ve learned in class—to provide an in-depth, unique analysis of a concept album on your own. Because part of the goal of this seminar is to challenge the typical canon of concept albums, you are required to pick an album that is not normally represented in this corpus. To aid you with this, I have compiled a list of acceptable albums in Appendix II; there should be something for everyone no matter what your musical interests are, but feel free to reach out to me and I can help you choose one based on your musical interests. Earlier in the term I will provide access to an online spreadsheet where students can sign up for an album as I am allowing only one student per album—so sign up early!

Steps:

1. Earlier in the term I suggest you listen to a variety of these available albums, even if passively (while driving, at the gym, and so forth). Wikipedia also provides a good overview of each of these albums and will give you some background information about them.
2. Pick an album from the list and sign up for it on the Google Spreadsheet before Week 8’s class.
3. Take detailed notes on the album, analyzing its lyrics, music, and materials.
Note on your material analysis here: this might be more challenging than when you did your Material Analysis Assignment; not all of the albums assigned are LPs, and some might not have material inserts at all! This does not preclude a material analysis, though, as you can still talk about the medium’s “affordances,” a concept we will have discussed in class. For example, if the album was primarily (or only) released on Spotify, that changes the listening experience (no material items, a small image of the album art, etc.). CDs can be analyzed similarly. All albums that were released in physical copies will be available at the UCLA Music Library, SRLE, or can be requested through Interlibrary Loan. I will explain in class how to search for these items and request them.
4. Using your detailed notes, craft a 7-8 page paper that has a unique thesis statement about the concept you are asserting and the evidence you will provide. This evidence will need to be drawn from all three modes of analysis, and some of it has to be provided in the form of a chart at the end of your paper—though how you construct this chart and what exactly it includes is up to you. I recommend drawing on concepts and readings discussed in class; outside readings that provide context are acceptable as long as they are cited and *do not* provide an analysis of the album themselves—that’s your job!

Rough Draft (5%): You will have a rough draft (4-5 pages) due on Week 10 in class where you will have a peer review session so you have some feedback to incorporate into your final draft. After this, you will fill out a self-evaluation form (see below) and give yourself a grade with justification. You will then present a version of your paper during Finals Week and turn in the final version through TurnItIn soon after (exact date TBD).

Sample Rough Draft Self-Evaluation Form:

Basic Checklist:

- ___ At least four pages w/o bibliography
- ___ Copy of paper for peer evaluator
- ___ Uploaded on Turn It In

Thesis:

-Write your thesis, either in your own words or straight from your paper:

-Is your thesis sufficiently focused for 7- or 8-page term paper? Does it present an argument that is not obvious? Does it provide a *how* component (how you will be “proving” it, and what specific evidence will be involved)?

Strengths: What are you most proud of in your draft? What went well?

Weaknesses: Given a couple more days to work on your rough draft, what would you focus your efforts on? What are you struggling with?

Revisions: Have you been able to incorporate any of my feedback from your earlier writing assignments into this rough draft? How?

Lyrical and Material Analysis: Do you provide rich, descriptive accounts of the material and lyrical elements in your chosen album?

Musical Analysis and Evidence: Have you discussed some musical elements from your album in detail? Have you started compiling some of this information into a visual format, such as a chart?

Based on the above considerations, give yourself a numerical grade out of 100 points:

GRADE: _____/100

Why is this an appropriate grade for your rough draft?

Final Paper grading criteria [30 total points]:

Final Paper	5- Superior	4- Competent	3- Acceptable	2- Insufficient
Main Argument (thesis and overall supporting evidence)	Provides a strong and unique argument about the concept of your album and <i>how</i> it is unified	Provides a strong argument for the concept of the album and how it is constituted, though thesis could be more unique and/or supported	Argument for the concept of the album is provided but <i>how</i> you claim it is constituted is not supported enough. Thesis needs work	No clear argument as to what the concept of your album is and how the concept is created
Musical Analysis	Paper takes a unique musical element and fully explores its use over the album; body of paper is rich in musical description	Paper sufficiently explores a recurring musical element but musical description could be more detailed	A recurring musical element is only analyzed at a surface level; musical description in body paragraphs restates what is provided in the chart	Paper does not include description of a recurring musical element
Lyrical Analysis	Paper indicates superior insight into the meaning of three or more tracks on the album and how they revolve around a certain concept	Paper indicates good insight into the meaning of lyrics in three or more tracks and how they revolve around a concept	Paper indicates an attempt at discussing the meaning of two or more tracks but analysis remains superficial	Paper does not include a thorough analysis of lyrics and what they mean; much more depth of analysis is required
Material Analysis	Paper includes a thorough, detailed examination of the material qualities of the album and/or the affordances they provide for the listener and the overall concept you are arguing for	Paper includes an examination of the material qualities of the album but the affordances they provide for the listener and the overall concept deserve more attention	Paper includes some superficial examination of the material qualities of the album but a discussion of the affordances they provide is lacking	Paper does not suitably examine the material aspects of the recording and how they shape the listening experience
Evidence Supplied	Numerous types of evidence to support your argument for the concept of the album is drawn on in a clear, focused way. Concepts and/or literature from class are used effectively. Chart provided at the end of the paper is well-organized and provides a wealth of information that is condensed and narrated in the body of your paper	Your argument is supported by various types of evidence but is lacking in certain respects. Concepts and/or literature from class are discussed but are not effectively tied to your own analyses. The chart provided is informative but could use more detail and/or clarity	Argument for the concept of the album is not fully substantiated; concepts and/or literature from class may or may not be present and do not add to your own analyses. Chart provided is incomplete and is difficult to read	Argument for concept is not corroborated with sufficient evidence. Concepts and/or literature from class are not used. Chart is missing or does not provide sufficient evidence for your claims
Conventions and Organization	Paper is well-organized, beginning with some context about the album, a unique thesis statement, and then body paragraphs that supply varied types of evidence to support your overall claim. Few distracting errors in prose	Paper is organized logically, though body paragraphs could be organized more effectively. Some distracting errors	Your paper provides context, a thesis, and some evidence, though it suffers from a lack of organization. Numerous distracting errors	Your paper suffers from a lack of organization and/or clarity. Many errors in prose hinder readability

Final Presentation (10%):

Grading Criteria: [20 points total]

- Main argument of concept and supporting evidence ____/8 points
- Clarity of both analysis and presentation ____/4 points
- Use of PowerPoint to supplement argument ____/4 points
- Length of presentation ____/2 points
- Use of (brief) musical examples ____/2 points

For **feedback**, you will receive a grade based on the above rubric, along with my own written commentary explaining my assessment, and then one evaluation sheet from a student in the class.

Sample Peer Evaluation Sheet:

***Each** student will be randomly assigned to fill this sheet out for **one** other student presentation*

Please send this completed form to me and I will forward it with my feedback to the presenter

Presenter: _____

Student providing feedback: _____

In your own words, what is the topic of this presentation?

Was this topic sufficiently focused for a 9 or 10-minute presentation?

Were the material, lyrical, and musical components of the presenter's concept album covered in a clear fashion? Which of these segments was most convincing? The least?

Did the PowerPoint supplement, but not detract from, the presentation? Was there a balance of text and media? What would you change about the PowerPoint or presentation itself to make it more effective?

What were the overall strengths and weaknesses of this presentation? How could they improve? Be kind :)

Appendix II: Concept Album Options for Final Paper (one per person)

- Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970)
- Arcade Fire, *The Suburbs* (2010)
- Bon Iver, *For Emma, Forever Ago* (2007)
- Booker T. and the M.G.s, *McLemore Avenue* (1970)
- Beyoncé, *Lemonade* (2016)
- Björk, *Biophilia* (2011)
- Carly Simon, *Letters Never Sent* (1994)
- Childish Gambino, *Because the Internet* (2013)
- Daft Punk, *Discovery* (2001)
- Donald Fagen, *Kamakiriad* (1993)
- Dream Theater, *Metropolis Pt. 2: Scenes From a Memory* (1999)
- Drive-By Truckers, *Southern Rock Opera* (2001)
- Erykah Badu, *New Amerykah Part One (4th World War)* (2008)
- Foxygen, *...And Star Power* (2014)
- Frank Ocean, *Blonde* (2016)
- Frank Sinatra, *Watertown* (1970)
- Green Day, *American Idiot* (2004)
- Janelle Monáe, *Metropolis* (2007)
- Jay Z, *American Gangster* (2007)
- Johnny Cash, *The Rambler* (1977)
- Kanye West, *Yeezus* (2013)
- Kate Bush, *50 Words for Snow* (2011)
- Kendrick Lamar, *To Pimp A Butterfly* (2015)
- Kraftwerk, *Computer World* (1981)
- Lauryn Hill, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* (1998)
- Madonna, *Madame X* (2019)
- Marilyn Manson, *Antichrist Superstar* (1996)
- Muse, *Drones* (2015)
- My Chemical Romance, *The Black Parade* (2006)
- Nat King Cole, *Wild is Love* (1960)
- Neutral Milk Hotel, *In the Aeroplane Over the Sea* (1998)
- Nine Inch Nails, *The Downward Spiral* (1994)
- Outkast, *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below* (2003)
- Paul Oakenfold, *Goa Mix* (1994)
- Prince, *Love Symbol* (1992)
- Queen, *Queen II* (1974)
- Randy Newman, *Good Old Boys* (1974)
- Spock's Beard, *Snow* (2002)
- The Smashing Pumpkins, *Machina/The Machines of God* (2000)
- Titus Andronicus, *The Most Lamentable Tragedy* (2015)
- Tori Amos, *Strange Little Girls* (2001)
- Tyler, the Creator, *Wolf* (2013)
- Willie Nelson, *Red Headed Stranger* (1975)
- Utopia, *Deface the Music* (1980)
- XTC, *Skylarking* (1986)

The History of the Concept Album: Required Readings and Recordings

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- Nicholls, David. "Virtual Opera, or Opera between the Ears." *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 129, no. 1 (2004): 100-142.
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- Pink Floyd. *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Harvest, 1973.
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New Course Proposal

Musicology 98T

The History of the Concept Album

Course Number Musicology 98T

Title The History of the Concept Album

Short Title HIST CONCEPT ALBUM

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. Requisite: satisfaction of Entry-Level Writing requirement. Freshmen/sophomores preferred. This course examines the history of the concept album from the 1940s to today, illustrating how artists have been influenced by technological, aesthetic, and various musical traditions to create a unified listening experience for the consumer.

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

Syllabus File [Syllabus Hallenbeck.pdf](#) was previously uploaded. You may view the file by clicking on the file name.

Supplemental Information Instructor (Alexander Hallenbeck) UID: 404741609
Professor Mitchell Morris is the faculty mentor for this course. UID: 602745910
Approved by the Collegium of University Teaching Fellows Faculty Advisory Committee on April 13, 2020

Grading Structure Participation 20%
Weekly Journaling 20%
Presentation 10%
Material Analysis Assignment (10%)
Lyrical Analysis Assignment (10%)
Musical Analysis Assignment (10%)
Final Paper (5% self-evaluated rough draft; 15% final paper)

Effective Date Winter 2021

Discontinue Date Summer 1 2021

<u>Instructor</u>	Name	Title
	Aleander Hallenbeck	Teaching Fellow

Quarters Taught ☐ Fall ☒ Winter ☐ Spring ☐ Summer

Department Musicology

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Routing Help

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Changes: Short Title

Comments: added short title. Discontinue date 211.

Role: L&S FEC Coordinator - Corrado, Leah Marcos (lcorrado@college.ucla.edu) - 310/825-1021

Status: Approved on 8/28/2020 2:14:11 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: No changes. Approved on behalf of Jeff Lewis, Chr, College FEC, per e-mail 8/21/2020

Role: CUTF Coordinator - Fedyna, Alison (afedyna@teaching.ucla.edu) - 310/825-9149

Status: Approved on 8/27/2020 2:35:47 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

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

Role: Initiator/Submitter - Fedyna, Alison (afedyna@teaching.ucla.edu) - 310/825-9149

Status: Submitted on 8/27/2020 2:35:13 PM

Comments: Initiated a New Course Proposal

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