

MUSC2117

Popular Music: Histories, Grooves, and Texts

Term 3, 2021



Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Dr Tony Lewis	a.d.lewis@unsw.edu.au	please contact by email to arrange a call	n/a	

School Contact Information

School of the Arts and Media

Room 312, Level 3, Robert Webster Building (G14)

Phone: (02) 9385 4856

Email: sam@unsw.edu.au

Website: www.arts.unsw.edu.au/sam

Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW Arts, Design and Architecture Kensington and Paddington campuses are built on Aboriginal Lands. We pay our respects to the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples who are the Custodians of these lands. We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities.



Image courtesy of the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous [UNSW's Indigenous strategy](#)

Course Details

Units of Credit 6

Summary of the Course

Most of us have experienced those magic moments when sounds and rhythms (grooves) move the body and set in motion interactions between musicians, dancers and audiences. But what do musicians do with their bodies, voices and instruments to get other bodies toe-tapping, dancing, or moshing? How do musicians and listeners become one, a communion, or a rite? We begin to answer these questions with the understanding that musical sound is a powerful force for social interaction (grooves, in a broader sense). At the same time, we address these questions with the understanding that here is no simple relationship between what musicians produce and the social and cultural meanings ascribed to their productions. Popular music may also be considered as a cultural text that is read, received, and interpreted by both individuals and groups.

This course covers a wide variety of popular musics, ranging from the locally produced to the latest global trends, through a survey of the historical and social development of key genres, such as, blues, country, reggae, rock and roll, Motown, soul, hard rock, disco, hardcore, metal, grunge, techno, rap and Latin forms. These genres are also considered from both aesthetic and textual perspectives.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Locate diverse genres of popular music within their historical and socio-cultural contexts.
2. Recognize diverse genres of popular music on basis of their aesthetic differences.
3. Critique popular music, in terms of sound, lyrics, iconography, and performative aspects, as social texts.

Teaching Strategies

Students attend weekly classes. Lectures are augmented with videos, film, slides, sound recordings, and powerpoint presentations. Tutorials involve discussions of readings, aural analysis of selected musical examples, demonstrations, and hands-on practical work. Set readings and listening requiring students responses will be directed towards historical, social, cultural, and aesthetic differences in the popular music genres studied. Students will work on group research projects and present their findings in poster presentations at a suitable location on the Kensington campus.

Assessment

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Course Learning Outcomes Assessed
1. Listening test	35%	Not Applicable	1, 2
2. Assignments	35%	Not Applicable	3
3. Group research, poster project	30%	26/11/2021 11:59 PM	1, 2, 3

Assessment 1: Listening test

Assessment length: 3 x 20 minutes tests

Submission notes: 3 x 20 minute tests will be conducted during tutorials, after every third week of classes (Weeks 3, 7 and 10).

The listening test is an essential component of assessment, for it helps gauge how well the student has assimilated musical styles and genres through the course of study and how well they can articulate their responses to popular music in precise and critical ways. It also tests their ability to penetrate the inner workings of musical style while also linking them to the contextual aspects of popular music production.

Marked listening tests with comments will be returned to students for review.

Additional details

Each test will each consist of four musical examples selected from a prescribed listening list; each prescribed listening list will be compiled from the lecture content of the preceding three weeks of lecture material.

Each example will be a short excerpt from a piece that has been studied and analysed in the lecture material. Each example will be played twice during the test.

Some of the examples will require responses to specific questions while some examples will require students to:

- identify the artist and title
- identify the popular music genre and give reasons for the choice
- write notes on the musical style of the example
- write notes on the historical, sociological and/or textual significance of the example

Listening Test Assessment Criteria:

- Correct identification of the artist and title

- Correct identification of the popular music genre and justification of your answer
- Appropriate description of the musical style of the example
- Explanation of the historical-sociological-textual significance of the example

Assessment 2: Assignments

Submission notes: These will be submitted at the ends of Weeks 5 and 9

Assignments will include key readings, concert reviews, and practical exercises, all of which are intended to foster critical thinking and listening to popular music.

Student assignments will be returned with comments and criticisms in a timely fashion. Feedback will also be provided through online discussion.

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Additional details

2 Tutorial Work

Description:

Important note – *some aspects of this assessment task may have to change in the context of Covid-19 related lockdowns or other restrictions. Any necessary changes will be identified and announced as early as possible, in order to minimise disruption.*

Students are asked to complete and submit two assignments during the term, based on tutorial work. These will be submitted at the ends of Weeks 5 and 9.

Examples of assignment projects include:

- A critical review (c.300 words) of a prescribed reading, or another relevant reading approved by the course convenor
- A critical review (c.300 words) of a nominated and relevant concert
- For musical practitioners, a sound recording of either their own version of a relevant song or instrumental, or of their own composition in a given style; recordings should be accompanied by a written report (c.300 words) on the particular musical properties of the chosen style, and how the recording addresses to them

Alternatively, students may discuss other creative ideas with the course convenor. All topics must first be discussed with, and approved by, your course convenor. *Do not proceed with the task until you have that*

approval.

Written work should be submitted as a pdf file. Recordings should be submitted in mp3 format.

Please also post your submissions in the relevant forum on Moodle, in order to stimulate constructive and critical discussion of them amongst the class.

Tutorial Work Assessment Criteria:

- Demonstrable engagement with the course content through the content of submissions
- Demonstration of clear understanding of key concepts from lectures and readings
- Ability to aurally and conceptually analyse the music being studied using key concepts from lectures and readings
- Capacity to engage with fellow students through constructive criticism and exchange of ideas, relevant to the study of popular music

Assessment 3: Group research, poster project

Due date: 26/11/2021 11:59 PM

This component of the assessment will require students to organize and work in small groups, including the conception and design of a research project, maintaining a journal of research processes and progress, and presenting findings in a research poster that will be displayed in a suitable venue on campus. In consultation with the course convenor, groups will decide on the tasks required for the research and individual contributions. These tasks and contributions will be clearly documented and used in the assessment process. Research topics are expected to relate to the concepts and issues presented in the course but may focus on popular music genres, artists, and events not covered in the course.

Student groups will be given feedback on each stage of the research project, that is, the basic conception and design of the research project and its execution during tutorials and on-line discussions.

Additional details

Important note – *some aspects of this assessment task may have to change in the context of Covid-19 related lockdowns or other restrictions. Any necessary changes will be identified and announced as early as possible, in order to minimise disruption.*

There will be a maximum of 3 people per group.

The research tasks and individual contributions will be clearly documented in the accompanying journal, and used in the assessment process.

Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Your topic of research should be based on one of the areas covered in the course but using different artists and musical examples from those included in the lectures. Topics or concepts beyond those covered in the course may be used with the approval of the course convenor.
- In consultation with the course convenor, each group will decide on the tasks required for the research and the individual contributions of each member of the group. These tasks and contributions should be clearly documented in your journal and will be used in the assessment process.
- You should thoroughly research your topic using both primary and secondary sources.
- Your project should have a clearly defined research question or problem. For instance, you might decide to select the general topic of heavy metal music but focus on the issue of gender, in particular, a specific female heavy metal band, which is normally atypical of the genre. The background of the band members could be investigated and the rationale behind their entry into what is normally a male musical domain, examined.
- Your project should refer to at least two specific musical examples to illustrate your arguments and conclusions. Provide online links to your examples.
- Include a complete reference list in your accompanying journal.

The aims of the research project are to develop skills in:

- Formulating a research question
- Developing an appropriate way to answer the research question
- Collecting, organising and analysing data
- Working collaboratively
- Effective public presentation of research findings

Project Assessment Criteria:

- Ability to formulate a research question (10%)
- Ability to collect relevant and quality data through primary sources and secondary sources (20%)
- Ability to identify appropriate concepts and tools and to apply them rigorously in analysing the data (20%)
- Ability to engage with the research topic and to explore its significance in terms of popular music (10%)
- Ability to effectively communicate the research problem and findings (20%)
- Ability to organise data clearly and concisely through visual means (20%)

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 13 September - 17 September	Lecture	introduction and Origins
	Tutorial	
Week 2: 20 September - 24 September	Lecture	Blues, Ragtime, Gospel
	Tutorial	
Week 3: 27 September - 1 October	Lecture	Jazz, R'n'B
	Tutorial	Includes Listening Test 1
Week 4: 4 October - 8 October	Lecture	Rock and Roll
	Tutorial	
Week 5: 11 October - 15 October	Lecture	Soul, Funk, Disco, Hip-Hop
	Tutorial	
Week 6: 18 October - 22 October	Lecture	Lecture? What lecture? This is flexi week. No tute either.
Week 7: 25 October - 29 October	Lecture	Psychedelia, Progressive Rock, Heavy Metal
	Tutorial	Includes Listening Test 2
Week 8: 1 November - 5 November	Lecture	Punk, Post-Punk, Electronic Dance Music
	Tutorial	
Week 9: 8 November - 12 November	Lecture	J-Pop, K-Pop / Women in Music (further examination)
	Tutorial	
Week 10: 15 November - 19 November	Lecture	Latin, Reggae / Australian Music
	Tutorial	Includes Listening Test 3

Resources

Prescribed Resources

A large number of resources are available through Leganto, on the Moodle site.

Recommended Resources

A large number of resources are available through Leganto, on the Moodle site.

Course Evaluation and Development

This course will be evaluated through myExperience questionnaire. Qualitative information will be used in discussion with academic colleagues, to consider any appropriate changes to content, delivery, and assessment. This course has not been taught for several years.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au. Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: Using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original information, structure and/or progression of ideas of the original without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: Working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student for the purpose of them plagiarising, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): Submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices

The [UNSW Academic Skills support](#) offers resources and individual consultations. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study. One of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library has [the ELISE tool](#) available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study. Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time
- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Academic Information

Due to evolving advice by NSW Health, students must check for updated information regarding online learning for all Arts, Design and Architecture courses this term (via Moodle or course information provided.)

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

Image Credit

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