MUMH 5440 Music in the United States Spring 2023
African American Music
Tuesday/Thursday 12:30pm-1:50pm MU290

Instructor Information:
Dr. Brian F. Wright
Email: brian.wright@unt.edu
Office Number: MU305
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 2:00pm-3:00pm, or by appointment

Course Description:
“Describing the African American influence on American music in all of its glory and variety is an intimidating—if not impossible—task. African American influences are so fundamental to American music that there would be no American music without them.”
-Steven Lewis, “Musical Crossroads”

MUMH 5440 investigates select topics in the history of music in the United States. This semester will be dedicated to exploring “African American Music,” broadly defined. Over the course of this class, we will listen to some of African American music’s most significant styles and learn about the musicians and composers responsible for shaping them. Embracing the inherent diversity and complexity of African American music, we will focus on both popular and classical repertoires, while also questioning whether it is necessary to separate them.

Taught in a hybrid format, this class alternates between lectures on key moments in African American music history and discussions dedicated to broader themes, such as:
- The competing approaches to defining and analyzing African American music
- African American music as an expression of cultural heritage, joy, and political resistance
- The dehumanization of African Americans under slavery and its ongoing repercussions
- The music industry’s impact on the marketing and consumption of African American music
- The significant roles that women have played in shaping African American musical and cultural movements
- Contemporary debates among cultural critics about which artists and styles should (and should not) be considered a part of African American music.

For their final project, students will create or greatly revise a Wikipedia article on a relevant topic, thereby further expanding the public’s knowledge of African American music.
Course Goals:
As long as you complete assigned readings, participate during class time, continually interact with your professor and classmates, and successfully complete your final assignment, by the end of the course you will have:
- Developed a broad familiarity with multiple styles of African American Music
- Gained an understanding of how African American artists have contributed to the development of American music writ large
- Cultivated your own scholarly position on key issues related to the study of African American music
- Contributed to the further recognition of African American music

Content Warning:
At various points in this class, we will be discussing difficult subjects. If you are worried that any specific lecture or discussion might prove to be too much of an emotional burden for you, please reach out to Dr. Wright to discuss potential alternatives.

Rules of Engagement:
Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Following UNT’s Center for Learning Experimentation, Application, and Research, here are some general guidelines we will adhere to in this class:
- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
- Use your critical thinking skills to challenge ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
Course Materials:

Our primary text this semester will be *Issues in African American Music: Power, Gender, Race, Representation*, edited by Portia K. Maultsby and Mellonee V. Burnim (New York: Routledge, 2017). I have arranged for the e-book version of the text to be freely available to all students through the UNT Library, via: https://discover.library.unt.edu/catalog/b5780066. All other readings will be uploaded as PDFs to our class’s Canvas page: https://unt.instructure.com/courses/82527.

Note that some of our assigned listening examples also require that students have access to Spotify. For information on how to subscribe to Spotify, see: https://www.spotify.com/us/student/.

Assignments:

1. **Weekly Response Papers** (14 in total, cumulatively worth 42% of final grade)
   a. For each unit, you will write an informal 300-500-word response related to a specific aspect of the week’s required readings. **Responses must be submitted before the class for which they are assigned.**

2. **Final Project** (cumulatively worth 38% of final grade)
   a. For your final project, each of you will contribute to the further public recognition of African American music by creating or expanding a Wikipedia article on a relevant, approved topic. We will complete this project in stages over the course of the semester, broken down into the following assignments:
      i. “Getting Started on Wikipedia” (worth 1% of final grade)
      ii. “Evaluate Wikipedia” (worth 1% of final grade)
      iii. “Choose Possible Topics” (worth 2% of final grade)
      iv. “Using the UNT Library to Find Sources” (worth 1% of final grade)
      v. “Using the Internet to Find Sources” (worth 1% of final grade)
      vi. “Starting You Bibliography” (worth 1% of final grade)
      vii. “Annotated Bibliography” (worth 4% of final grade)
      viii. “Start Drafting Your Contributions” (worth 1% of final grade)
      ix. “Individual Check-In with Dr. Wright” (worth 1% of final grade)
      x. “Rough Draft” (worth 8% of final grade)
      xi. “Peer Review Two Articles” (worth 2% of final grade)
      xii. “Continue Improving Your Article” (worth 1% of final grade)
      xiii. “Final Draft” (worth 3% of final grade)
      xiv. “In-Class Presentation” (worth 5% of final grade)
xv. “Move Your Work to Wikipedia” (worth 1% of final grade)

xvi. “Reflective essay” (worth 5% of final grade)

3. Participation (worth 20% of final grade)
   a. Your contributions during class time, as well as your demeanor, attendance, punctuality, attitude, and preparedness are all components of your participation grade.

Grade Breakdown:

   A: 89.5-100.0
   B: 79.5-89.4
   C: 69.5-79.4
   D: 63.5-69.4
   F: 0.0-63.4

Course Policies:

   Attendance
   Since MUMH 5440 focuses on in-class discussion and participation, attendance is crucial to your success in this course. Therefore, four unexcused absences will result in your final grade being dropped by 10%; six unexcused absences will result in an automatic failure for the course.

   If you cannot attend class, for whatever reason, please contact Dr. Wright via email. Your ability to make up (or be excused from) any work will take place on a case-by-case basis at the instructor’s discretion.

   PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE FEELING SICK. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and that of others in the community, is far more important.

   Late Work Policy
   Late work will not be accepted in this class without a legitimate excuse. If you must submit something late, please contact Dr. Wright as soon as possible. As with attendance, whether you will be able to submit (or be excused from) from late work will take place on a case-by-case basis at the instructor’s discretion.
**Plagiarism**

It is important to make it *absolutely clear* when you are using someone else’s idea(s). This is done through proper attribution and citation practices. Plagiarism occurs when you accidentally or purposefully do any of the following:

- Use someone else’s words either verbatim or nearly verbatim without attribution
- Use someone else’s evidence, line of thinking, or ideas without attribution
- Turn in someone else’s work as your own
- Turn in previously submitted work as new work without instructor approval

If you are unsure if something constitutes plagiarism, please consult Dr. Wright and/or the web resources linked to in Canvas. Penalties for plagiarism are detailed in the following section.

**University Policies:**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Academic Integrity), who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

See: Academic Integrity

LINK: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003
STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. 

See: Student Code of Conduct
Link: https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect.

See: Eagle Connect
LINK: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

ODA STATEMENT

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter. You can now request your Letters of Accommodation ONLINE and ODA will mail your Letters of Accommodation to your instructors. You may wish to begin a private discussion with your professors regarding your specific needs in a course. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access.

See: ODA
LINK: disability.unt.edu. (Phone: (940) 565-4323)

UNT Policy Statement on Diversity

UNT values diversity and individuality as part of advancing ideals of human worth, dignity and academic excellence. Diverse viewpoints enrich open discussion, foster the examination of values and exposure of biases, help educate people in rational conflict resolution and responsive leadership, and prepare us for the complexities of a pluralistic society. As such, UNT is committed to maintaining an open, welcoming atmosphere that attracts qualified students, staff, and faculty from all groups to support their success.
UNT does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status in its application and admission process, educational programs and activities, employment policies and use of university facilities.
See: Diversity and Inclusion
Link: https://idea.unt.edu/diversity-inclusion

Health and Safety Information
Students can access information about health and safety at:
https://music.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness

Registration Information for Students
See: Registration Information
Link: https://registrar.unt.edu/students

Academic Calendar, Spring 2023
See: Spring 2023 Academic Calendar
Link: https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-registration-guide

Final Exam Schedule, Spring 2023
See: Spring 2023 Final Exam Schedule
Link: https://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule/spring

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress
A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per term. Music scholarships require a 3.5 cumulative GPA. Students cannot exceed maximum timeframes established based on the published length of the graduate program. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended you schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college, an advisor in UNT-International or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course.
See: Financial Aid
LINK: http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap
RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS
Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university’s policy in accordance with those mandates.
See: FERPA
Link: http://ferpa.unt.edu/

COUNSELING AND TESTING
UNT’s Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor whose position includes 16 hours per week of dedicated service to students in the College of Music and the College of Visual Arts and Design. Please visit the Center’s website for further information:
See: Counseling and Testing
Link: http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services.

For more information on mental health issues, please visit:
See: Mental Health Issues
Link: https://speakout.unt.edu.

The counselor for music students is:
Myriam Reynolds
Chestnut Hall, Suite 311
(940) 565-2741
Myriam.reynolds@unt.edu

ADD/DROP POLICY
Please be reminded that dropping classes or failing to complete and pass registered hours may make you ineligible for financial aid. In addition, if you drop below half-time enrollment you may be required to begin paying back your student loans. After the 12th class day, students must first submit a completed “Request to Drop” form to the Registrar’s Office. The last day for a student to
drop a class in Spring 2023 is April 7. See Academic Calendar (listed above) for additional add/drop Information.

**STUDENT RESOURCES**
The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:
See: [Student Resources](https://success.unt.edu/aa-sa-resources)
(Note: A printer-friendly PDF version is available by clicking the green button on the home page)

**CARE TEAM**
The Care Team is a collaborative interdisciplinary committee of university officials that meets regularly to provide a response to student, staff, and faculty whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others.
See: [Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team)
## Course Schedule and Assignments

***Subject to Change***

### Unit 1: Introduction to Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>Introduction to Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/19</td>
<td>Discussion: Why Study African American Music?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response #1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Required Readings:

### Unit 2: Theorizing African American Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/24</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion: The Competing Definitions of “African American Music”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/26</td>
<td>Guest Speaker: Steven W. Lewis, Curator of Music and Performing Arts at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Required Readings:

### Complete the “Getting Started on Wikipedia” Assignment

(Due by 11:59pm on 1/21)

### Complete the “Evaluate Wikipedia” Assignment

(Due by 11:59pm on 1/28)
Unit 3: African American Music Under Chattel Slavery

Required Readings:

Recommended Listening:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/31</td>
<td>Lecture: Field Hollers, Work Songs, and Spirituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>Discussion: Music as Resistance from Enslavement, Music as a Tool of Enslavement Response #3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete the “Choose Possible Topics” Assignment (Due by 11:59pm on 2/4)

Unit 4: Minstrelsy and African American Music in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Required Reading:

Recommended Listening/Viewing:
Complete the “Using the UNT Library to Find Sources” Assignment  
(Due by 11:59pm on 2/11)

Unit 5: The “Race Records” Era

Required Readings:

Recommended Listening:

2/14 Lecture: Early Jazz, Blues, and Gospel

2/16 Discussion: The Music Industry, Race, and the Classification of Genre  
Response #5

Complete the “Using the Internet to Find Sources” Assignment  
(Due by 11:59pm on 2/18)

Unit 6: The Harlem and Chicago Renaissances

Required Readings:
# African American Music

**Tuesday/Thursday 12:30pm-1:50pm MU290**

**Recommended Listening:**
- Edmund Thornton Jenkins, “Charlestonia: Folk Rhapsody for Orchestra, No. 1” (1917)
- William Grant Still, *Darker America* (1924)
- William Grant Still, *Levee Land* (1926)
- James P. Johnson, *Yamekraw* (1927)
- Florence Price, *The Mississippi River* (1934)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/21</td>
<td>Lecture: African American Composers, the Harlem and Chicago Renaissances, and Racial Uplift Ideology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2/23   | Discussion: African American Women’s Contributions to the Musical Culture of the Harlem and Chicago Renaissances  
          | Response #6                                                        |

**Complete the “Starting Your Bibliography” Assignment**  
(Due by 11:59pm on 2/25)

**Unit 7: Jazz In and Out of the Mainstream**

**Required Material(s):**
- [To Be Determined]

**Recommended Listening:**
- “Best of Bebop” Spotify Playlist.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>Lecture: From Swing to Bebop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>EXTRA CREDIT: Tammy L. Kernodle Lecture, Choir Room, 4:00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3/2    | Guest Speaker: Tammy L. Kernodle, Distinguished Professor of Music, Miami University [In-Person]  
          | Response #7                                                        |

**Complete the “Annotated Bibliography” Assignment**  
(Due by 11:59pm on 3/4)
## Unit 8: Postwar Rhythm & Blues and Rock ‘n’ Roll

### Required Readings:

### Recommended Listening:

### 3/7 Lecture: African American Popular Music, 1945-1965

### 3/9 Discussion: “Black Roots, White Fruits”: Rock ‘n’ Roll and Appropriation

**Response #8**

**Complete the “Start Drafting Your Contributions” Assignment**
*(Due by 11:59pm on 3/10)*

### ***No Class on 3/14 or 3/16 (Spring Break)***

## Unit 9: Music of the Civil Rights Movement and Beyond

### Required Reading/Listening:

### Recommended Listening:

### 3/21 Lecture: Freedom Songs, Soul, and Early Funk

**Response #9**

### 3/23 Guest Speaker: Chuck Rainey, Acclaimed Session Bassist [Room TBD]
Unit 10: The African American Avant-Garde

Required Readings:

Recommended Listening:
- Ornette Coleman, *Free Jazz* (1961)
- Sun Ra, *Space is the Place* (1973)
- George Walker, Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (1975)
- Olly Wilson, *Sometimes for Tenor and Tape* (1977)
- Julius Eastman, *Gay Guerilla* (1979)

3/28 | Lecture: Free Jazz, Afrofuturism, and a New Wave of Classical Composers
3/30 | Discussion: African American Aesthetics in Avant-Garde Classical Music

**Response #10**

**Complete the “Rough Draft” Assignment**
(Deadline: 11:59pm on 4/1)

Unit 11: Popular Dance Musics: Funk and Beyond

Required Reading/Viewing:

Recommended Listening:
- *The Funk Box*, Hip-O Records, 2000

4/4 | Lecture: ‘70s Funk, Disco, and Early Electronic Dance Music
Complete the “Peer Review Two Articles” Assignment  
(Due by 11:59pm on 4/8)

Unit 12: Mainstream African American Pop in the 1980s

Required Readings:

Recommended Listening:

Complete the “Continue Improving Your Article” Assignment  
(Due by 11:59pm on 4/15)

Unit 13: Hip Hop

Required Readings:

Recommended Listening:


<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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| 4/20  | Discussion: Hip Hop as Cultural Expression  
Response #13 |

**Unit 14: Modern R&B**

**Required Reading/Viewing:**

- Janelle Monae, *Dirty Computer* [Emotion Picture], 2018

**Recommended Listening:**

- “Modern R&B,” Spotify Playlist

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>Lecture: R&amp;B in ‘90s: Male Vocal Groups, Neo Soul, and Girl Groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4/27  | Discussion: Beyoncé and Janelle Monáe: Black Feminist and Queer Expressions in Modern R&B  
Response #14 |

**Complete the “Final Draft” Assignment**  
(Due by 11:59pm on 4/30)
**Unit 15: Student Presentations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Presentation Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>In-Class Presentations I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/4</td>
<td>In-Class Presentations II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Complete the “Move Your Work to Wikipedia” and “Reflective Essay” Assignments**
(Due by 11:59pm on 5/9)