

# MUET 2000: Global Pop: Music, Media, and Society

SPRING 2026

## Instructor

Dr. Vivek Virani  
(pronouns: he/him/his)

## Email

[Vivek.Virani@unt.edu](mailto:Vivek.Virani@unt.edu)

## Class Time

Tuesday & Thursday  
9:30-10:50 am

MUS 321

## Office Hours

Tuesday 1:30-  
3:30pm

MUS 146

(Or via Zoom,  
by appointment)

## Teaching Associate

Salvador Hernandez

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## Course Overview

This course uses popular media as a window into discourses about society, culture, and identity happening in the United States and other parts of the world. Each week, we will discuss a specific theme and examine songs, genres, and artists from around the world that demonstrate how people from different cultures use popular media to engage with that concept within their society. Broader questions addressed in the course include:

- How does popular music function as a space for collaborative dialogue about a society's cultural, moral, and artistic values?
- How do artistic or creative goals interact with commercial goal and industrial models of production and distribution?
- How can technology reshape creative process and human relationships?
- How does popular music transcend, reinforce, or negotiate popular conceptions of nation, gender/sexuality, ethnicity/race, and class in the era of globalization?

**Students do not require any formal training or background in music to participate fully in this course.**

## Evaluation

Your final grade in the course will be assessed based on the following:

- **Written Assignments – 150 points**
  1. Personal Playlist – 50
  2. Ethics in Popular Music – 100
- **Main Project – Analyzing Popular Culture – 175 points**
  1. Proposal (“Pop Culture Hot Take”) – 15
  2. Interview – 30
  3. Academic Sources – 50 (25 each)
  4. ChatGPT Comparison/Reflection – 10
  5. Final Submission – 70
- **Quizzes - 120 points\***
  1. Midterm Quiz – 60
  2. Final Quiz – 60
- **In-Class Participation – up to 420 points\***
  1. iClicker Participation – 130 (10 points per week)
  2. Written + Discussion Participation – 260 (20 points per week)
- **TOTAL - 865 points**

\* Point values of quizzes may change slightly depending on material covered. Participation points may vary, as iClicker and written responses will not both be given every class period.

## Core Objectives

*Critical Thinking:* Students will engage critically with popular music and other cultural products and behaviors. They will analyze musical examples in relation to broader social and cultural processes, and understand the role that popular media – and our participation in it – play in global discourses of nation, race, ethnicity, gender, and identity.

*Social Responsibility:* Students will develop broader cultural horizons through exposure to diverse sounds, societies, and ideologies. They will explore the many social, cultural, ideological, and political discourses surrounding the transition to globalized mass media in many parts of the world, and will engage in discussions of these issues with their peers.

*Personal Responsibility:* Students will develop an awareness of the ethical issues surrounding the production, marketing, and consumption of popular music. They should develop sensitivity to the role of popular music in large-scale public debates about cultural and social values, and also about the issues of representation, exploitation, and oppression that may underlie popular music's production or message. They will also be encouraged to reflect on the ethical dimensions of their own participation in popular culture.

*Communication:* The core assignments will challenge students to use multiple forms of media to communicate social, cultural, and artistic ideas to different types of audiences. Students must demonstrate a mastery of precise and nuanced English at a level appropriate for academic discourse, in assignments as well as class discussions.

## Evaluation

### Attendance and Participation

***Attendance is required in this course.***

Students are expected to attend class sessions regularly, to come prepared and participate actively in all activities. Your presence in every class session is essential to your success in this course. **Any student who accrues 5 unexcused absences will be asked to withdraw from the course.** In case of a foreseeable absence, students should notify the instructor as soon as possible to arrange a way to make up for content or activities missed during a class session. In addition, *consistent* lateness, inattentiveness, or lack of participation may result in a grade penalty.

“How do I know if an absence counts as **excused**?”

- Was it a valid academic event? Did I inform the instructor/TA ahead of time?
- Was it a medical issue? (Documentation required for more than 2 consecutive absences or for frequent medical absences)
- Was it an emergency situation?

### *Participation*

Students will earn up to 30 points per week for participation. Up to 5 points per class session will be earned through be through student responses to iClicker questions asked during class. 10 points per class session will be earned through students' written responses to in-class prompts and vocal participation in class discussions.

Written responses must be signed and submitted by the end of class each period. Students may gain extra credit for particularly thoughtful responses or contributions to verbal discussions. Students may lose partial or all credit for erroneous or perfunctory written responses. Students may gain extra credit for particularly thoughtful responses or contributions to verbal discussions. Participation points may also be deducted for consistent lateness, leaving class early without communicating with TA, or inappropriate use of electronics during class.

In most circumstances, participation points may not be made up in case of absences.

*Note: If you have difficulty logging into iClicker during any class period, alert the TA **before leaving the classroom** to ensure you do not lose participation credit. Students with accommodations confirmed by ODA may use laptops for written responses, but are still responsible for submitting their responses to the TA by the end of the class period for full participation points. Students are expected to only use laptops for class participation. Students with disability accommodations related to attendance should contact instructor to discuss alternatives for participation points in the case of excused absences.*

### *Required Readings*

All required readings will be made available on Canvas. Students are responsible for completing each week's assigned reading before Tuesday's class. **In-class writing prompts may draw from assigned readings.**

### *Required Technology*

Students are required to have access to any technology needed to regularly access email and Canvas outside of class periods and to access iClicker during class periods. Students are responsible for regularly checking their UNT email and Canvas inbox for messages from the instructor or TAs.

### *Late Submission Policy*

Written assignments are due at 11:59PM on Thursday of the specified week. Late assignments will be deducted 10% for each day beyond the deadline. Assignments will NOT be accepted once a week after the deadline has passed.

### *Preparedness Checklist – (i.e. how to earn an 'A' in Global Pop)*

Every week, ask yourself the following questions:

- Did I do the weekly reading before class?
- Am I coming to class with a paper and pen/pencil for note-taking (to keep with me) and written responses (to turn in)?
- Do I have any major assignments due in the next few weeks? Have I read the instructions thoroughly?

- Have I reviewed last week’s notes in preparation for the next quiz?
- If I missed class – did I get notes from a friend/classmate?

## Course Outline

<i>Week 1</i> January 13 & 15	<b>Defining “Popular Culture”</b> Reading: Storey (2015) – “What is Popular Culture?”
<i>Week 2</i> January 20 & 22	<b>Rethinking “Place” in a Global Era</b> Genres: Cuban Son, Reading: <i>The World</i> - “Four Musicians Grapple with the Same Question: What is Home?” Documentary Films: <i>Buena Vista Social Club</i> (1996), <i>Graceland: The African Concert</i> (1987)
<i>Week 3</i> January 27 & 29	<b>Caribbean Currents, Global Flows</b> Genres: Soca, Calypso, Steel Pan, Reggae Reading: Connell and Gibson (2002): “Music and Place” Documentary Films: <i>Salsa in Japan</i> (2003); <i>Marley</i> (2012)
	<b>Assignment Due: Personal Playlist</b>
<i>Week 4</i> February 3 & 5	<b>The Black Atlantic and African Popular Music</b> Genres: Afrobeat/s, Juju, Highlife/Hiplife, Kuduro Reading:
<i>Week 5</i> February 10 & 12	<b>The Culture Industry: Dream Factories</b> Genres: Bollywood Reading: Rao (2023): “How Millennial Women are Setting the Agenda for Bollywood”
<i>Week 6</i> February 17 & 19	<b>The Culture Industry: Pop Idols &amp;</b> Genres: J-Pop, K-pop Reading: Elfving-Hwang (2018) – “K-pop Idols, Artificial Beauty, and Affective Fan Relationships in South Korea” Documentary Films: <i>9 Muses of Star Empire</i> (2012), <i>Tokyo Idols</i> (2017)
	<b>Assignment Due: Ethics in Popular Music</b>
<i>Week 7</i> February 24 & 26	<b>Technology and Creativity</b> Genres: Global Hip-Hop, Reggaeton, EDM Videos: Vox: “Why We Really Really Really like Repetition in Music” (2017) and “How this Legendary Hip-hop Producer Humanized a Machine (2017)”

Documentary Films: *Hip-Hop Evolution* (2016), *Sukiyaki and Chips* (1995),  
*How Clubbing Changed the World* (2012)

**Week 8** Introduction to Identity in Popular Culture

March 3 & 5

**QUIZ #1**

**Assignment Due: Analyzing Popular Culture (Proposal)**

**March 9-13: SPRING BREAK**

(woohoo!)

**Week 9** Orientalism: Theorizing “Others”

March 17 & 19

Genres: Tarab, Arabesque, Anatolian Rock, Persian Pop

Listening: Podcast *Rough Translation*: “So Long, Black Pete” (2020)

Documentary Films: *Reel Bad Arabs* (2006), *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* (2005)

**Week 10** Cultural Representation and Appropriation

March 24 & 26

Genres: Global Electronica, Blackface Minstrelsy, Cuban Son

Reading: *Harper’s Bazaar* – “Cultural Appropriation vs. Cultural Appreciation” (2021).

**Assignment Due: Ethics in Global Popular Music**

**Week 11** Nationalism in Popular Music

March 31 &

April 2

Genres: Europop, Taraf, Flamenco, Mariachi, Ranchera, Muziki wa Injili

Reading: *Buzzfeed*: “The Eurovision Song Contest, Explained for Americans” (2017)

Documentary Films: *Whose is this Song?* (2003)

**Assignment Due: Analyzing Popular Culture (Research Source #1)**

**Week 12** Popular Music as Political Protest

April 7 & 9

Genres: American Protest Song, Nueva Cancion

Podcast: *Invisibilia* – “The Other Real World” (2018)

Documentary Films: *Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer* (2013), *Women Art Revolution* (2010), *Gandhi* (1984)

**Week 13** Popular Music as Political Protest

April 14 & 16

Genres: Feminist Punk, Indigenous Rap

Podcast: *Invisibilia* – “The Other Real World” (2018)

Documentary Films: *Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer* (2013), *Women Art Revolution* (2010), *Gandhi* (1984)

**Assignment Due: Analyzing Popular Culture (Research Source #2)**

*Week 14*

April 21 & 23

**Popular Music in Exile**

Genres: Wassoulou, Cambodian Psychedelic Rock

Documentary Films: *Mali Blues* (2016), *They Will Have to Kill Us First* (2015), *Don't Think I've Forgotten: Cambodia's Lost Rock and Roll* (2014)

**Assignment Due: Analyzing Popular Culture (ChatGPT Reflection)**

*Week 15*

April 28 & 30

**Catch-up and Student-Chosen Topics**

**Assignment Due: Analyzing Popular Culture (Final Submission)**

FINAL QUIZ

Thursday, May 7 – 8am-9:30am

## Policies and Resources

### Note on Texas SBI7

Texas Senate Bill 17, the recent law that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations regarding academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics such as race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion

### 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>

### Rules of Engagement

Freedom of expression is fundamental to the project of critical inquiry and the goal of university learning and teaching. In discussion and group-work settings, however, students must be mindful to practice that freedom in ways that maintain a respectful, professional, and open environment for their peers. General guidelines to maintain this environment include:

- Use of cruel or disparaging language toward any classmate, or disparaging remarks toward persons or groups on the basis of race, nationality, skin color, religion, age, sex, sexuality, gender identity/expression, disability, veteran status or any other category protected by federal law will not be tolerated.
- When opinions differ, use your critical thinking and reasoning skills to comment on and critique other people's ideas, rather than attacking individuals.
- Defend your position with rigor; have you proofread and verified your sources of information?
- Always consider how your own views, interpretations, and emotional responses might be different if you approached an issue with different life experiences.

### Academic Integrity

Students caught committing academic fraud, plagiarism, or other forms of cheating as detailed in the UNT Academic Integrity policy will receive a **failing grade for the course**. 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 the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations. 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](#)

### *Note on Generative AI Usage*

Generative AI tools such as LLMs (e.g. ChatGPT, Copilot) have become widely used in many industries. Reliance on these tool for academic research is risky, as they rarely guarantee verifiable, traceable information. Furthermore, any use of these tools to generate text or ideas that are submitted as if they are the product of a student's original thinking is a clear violation of Academic Integrity Policy.

Certain assignments may specifically allow, encourage, or even require the use of LLMs. Any uses of LLMs not specifically approved by the instructor will be considered cheating and (depending on the severity of the infraction) result in a grade of '0' for the assignment. If a student plans to use LLMs (such as Grammarly or ChatGPT) for grammatical or stylistic editing, they are required to submit A) their original text (as it was entered into the LLM) in addition to any LLM output, and B) an indication of changes/revisions they made to the LLM output before submitting their final version.

### Changes to Syllabus

Course content may be changed at any time during the semester based on instructor discretion, including in response to student performance or interests. No changes will be made that might impact evaluation/grading without consultation with the class.

## Access to Information – Eagle Connect

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at [my.unt.edu](http://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.

[eagleconnect.unt.edu/](http://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.

*Note: Students with accommodations letters are responsible for contacting their instructor to discuss which accommodations are relevant to this course, and how specific accommodations may be met within the parameters of the course.*

[disability.unt.edu](http://disability.unt.edu). (Phone: (940) 565-4323)

## Health and Safety Information

Students can access information about health and safety at: <https://music.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness>

## Counseling and Testing

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor for students in need. Please visit the Center's website for further information:

<http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>

<https://disparities.unt.edu/mental-health-resources>

## 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 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total hours registered. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

Students holding music scholarships must maintain a minimum 2.5 overall cumulative GPA and 3.0 cumulative GPA in music courses.

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 that you to schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

### 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. See Academic Calendar (listed above) for additional add/drop Information.

<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-academic-calendar.html>