MUET 2000
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES IN POPULAR MUSIC
Tuesday / Thursday: 9:30-10:50am, MUS 321

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
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.

ASSIGNMENTS
(Note: All assignments other than Reading Reflections are due at 11:59PM on Thursday of the specified week. Late assignments will be deducted 5% for each day beyond the deadline.)

Introductory Assignment - Personal Playlist (Week 3) - Description on page 7

Signature Assignments
1. Concert Promotion (Week 5) - Description on page 8
   Primary objective: Communication
2. Ethics in Popular Music (Week 8) - Description on page 9
   Primary objective: Personal Responsibility
3. Let’s Talk Global Pop (Week 11) - Description on page 11
   Primary objective: Social Responsibility
4. Music Video Analysis (Week 15) - Description on page 13
   Primary objective: Critical Thinking

Evaluation
- Reading Reflections – 15 points per week (x 13 = 195 points total)
- Personal Playlist Assignment – 150 points
- Signature Assignments
  - Concert Promotion – 100 points
  - Ethics in Popular Music – 200
- Let’s Talk Global Pop – 150
- Music Video Analysis – 200
- Because I’m nice (and I like round numbers) – 5 points
- TOTAL: 1000 points

**Weekly Reading Reflections**
- Due **5pm every Wednesday** for full credit
- May be submitted 5pm Wednesday - 9am Thursday for a maximum of 10 points
- May be submitted 9am Thursday - 11:59pm Sunday for a maximum of 5 points
- May **not** be submitted after 11:59pm Sunday
- Extra credit awarded for particularly insightful responses or for extra responses replying to your classmates’ ideas.

**Attendance Policy**
Our time spent together in class is the basis of this course, and therefore attendance is mandatory. Each unexcused absence will result in a **40-point penalty** (4% of your final grade). Any (non-emergency) absence that has not received prior approval by the professor is counted as unexcused. Any student who accrues five unexcused absences will be asked to withdraw from the course.

**Golden Ticket Policy**
Each student begins the class with three “golden tickets.” Each ticket may be used entirely at the student’s discretion for either 1) a 5-day extension on an assignment or 2) an unexcused absence without penalty, with no questions asked.

**Core Objectives** (Component Area 1: Languages, Philosophy & Culture)
**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 words, 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.

COURSE OUTLINE

### PART I: THINKING GLOBALLY ABOUT POPULAR CULTURE

#### Week 1
**January 15 & 17**
**Defining “Popular Culture”**
- Reading: Storey (2015) – “What is Popular Culture?”

#### Week 2
**January 22 & 25**
**Redefining “Global” and “Local”**
- Genres: Cuban Son, Turkish Fusion and Rap, Mbube A cappella
- Reading: Connell and Gibson (2002): “Music and Place”

#### Week 3
**January 29 & 31**
**Rethinking “Place” in the Era of Globalization**
- Genres: Soukous, Zouk, Rai, Bhangra, Salsa, Reggae
- Reading: Appadurai (1990): “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Economy”

### PART II: INDUSTRY, PRODUCTION, TECHNOLOGY, AND MEANING

#### Week 4
**February 5 & 7**
**Globalized Music & The Culture Industry**
- Genres: Bollywood, K-pop
- Podcast: Radiolab: “K-paparazzi”

#### Week 5
**February 12 & 14**
**Creative and Social Interventions through Technology**
- Genres: Hip-hop, Electronic Dance Music
- Reading: “Why We Really Really Really like Repetition in Music”

#### Week 6
**February 19 & 21**
**“The Medium is the Message”**
- Genres: Reggae, Vocaloid

### PART III: POPULAR MUSIC AND IDENTITY

#### Week 7
**February 26 & 28**
**Ethnic and National Identity**
- Genres: Europop, Taraf, Gypsy Brass, Flamenco
- Reading: “The Eurovision Song Contest, Explained for Americans”
- Documentary: *Whose is this Song?* (2003)

#### Week 8
**March 5 & 7**
**The Black Atlantic as Popular Music Nexus**
- Genres: Afro-beat, Highlife, Hiplife, Palm-Wine, Jazz
Podcast: *Rough Translation*: “Brazil in Black and White”  

March 11-15  
**SPRING BREAK (woohoo)**

**Week 9**  
March 19 & 21  
*Race in American Popular Music*  
Reading: Feld (1996): “Pygmy POP”  
Genres: Gospel, Blues, Hip-hop

**Week 10**  
March 26 & 28  
*Representation, Exploitation, Appropriation*  
Reading: Bryson (1996): “Anything but Heavy Metal”

**Week 11**  
April 2 & 4  
*Popular Music and Social Protest*  
Genres: Folk Revival, Nueva Cancion, Punk  
Podcast: Invisibilia: “The Callout”

**PART IV: MEMORY, DISSERT, AND MEANING IN POPULAR MUSIC**

**Week 12**  
April 9 & 11  
*Indigenous Popular Music*  
Genres: Pow-wow, Joik  
Reading: *Taiwan Today* (2018): “Tribal Melodies”  
Documentary: *Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World*

**Week 13**  
April 16 & 18  
*Popular Music in Exile*  
Genres: Cambodian Psychedelic Rock, Tehrangeles, Vietnamese Cabaret  
Podcast: Invisibilia: “The Other Real World”  
Documentary: *Don’t Think I’ve Forgotten: Cambodia’s Lost Rock and Roll*

**Week 14**  
April 23 & 25  
*Popular Music and Religion*  
Genres: Soul, Gospel, Sufi Rock, Christian Hardcore  
Documentary: *Taqwacore: The Birth of Punk Islam*

**Week 15**  
April 30 & May 2  
*Final Week*  
Topics TBD

**STUDENT RESOURCES AND POLICIES**

**Writing Lab**  
Strong writing skills are an important asset in academic and professional life in every field. During class, we will work to improve student writing skills through instructor feedback and group workshops. However, many students will benefit from intensive focus on writing skills that we will not have time to provide during class. I encourage all students who wish to further develop their writing skills to work with the UNT Writing Lab.  
[http://writinglab.unt.edu/](http://writinglab.unt.edu/)

**Student Counseling and Testing Services**
It is important to us for students to excel academically, but it is far more important that you maintain your physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Students face many demands and responsibilities from their academic and personal lives and sometimes the stresses or anxieties can be overwhelming if not dealt with. As your instructor, I am happy to be a part of your support network, and am always open to talk if you have issues you would like to discuss. Additionally, UNT provides its students many resources for mental and emotional health. [http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-testing-services](http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-testing-services)

**Office of Disability Accommodation**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at [http://www.unt.edu/oda](http://www.unt.edu/oda). You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

**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, 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.

**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 classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

LINK: Student Code of Conduct - [https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct](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](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.

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

2018-2019 Semester Academic Schedule (with Add/Drop Dates)

Academic Calendar at a Glance, 2018-2019
[https://www.unt.edu/catalogs/2018-19/calendar](https://www.unt.edu/catalogs/2018-19/calendar)

Final Exam Schedule
[https://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule/spring](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 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 being doing so.

LINK: [http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap](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 Blackboard/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.

Link: [http://ferpa.unt.edu/](http://ferpa.unt.edu/)
ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

(Note: ALL submitted written assignments should adhere to the “FORMATTING GUIDELINES” posted on Canvas. Assignments that do not will lose points.)

Assignment #1
My Personal Playlist

Your assignment is to compile a “Personal Playlist” of FIVE songs. Each song should mean something special to you or say something about you. You are entirely free to decide which criteria to use when choosing songs. For example, you may choose to include a particular song because:

- The song expresses something about your ideas or personality
- The song stimulates a strong emotional response
- The song is associated with certain memories – special events or periods in your life
- The song is associated with certain people – friends, family, community, etc.
- You just like the way it sounds!

For each song, you will write 2 paragraphs:

In the first paragraph, describe to the reader what this song means in your life. Is there something that hits you about the words? The singer’s voice? The guitar solo? Do you listen to it while working out? Do you listen to it with friends? Is it a song from your childhood? Is it a song for Sunday barbecues with the family? Is it a song you listen to only when you’re happy? Only when you’re sad? Do you think your life or personality might be different in any way if you had never heard this song?

In the second paragraph, think about what your relationship with this song might say more broadly about YOU. In this paragraph, think about our in-class discussions about identity, self, taste, subculture, and other related issues. Do you think you might have a different relationship with this song if you had different life experience? If you had different friends? Do you think other people may have a similar relationship with this particular song, or do you feel that you hear/experience the song in a way that is unique to you?

After all five songs, write a 2-3 paragraph conclusion describing what you might have learned about yourself and your tastes from making the playlist. Was there any connection between the songs? Perhaps they all have similar sounds or instruments. Perhaps they are all from completely different styles, but expressed similar ideas or values. And if they were all completely different, how does each one describe a different aspect of your personality, experience, and tastes?

A GOOD (high-scoring) paper will demonstrate a serious attempt by the writer to bridge sensory experiences with life experiences. Students should reflect on how their tastes, ideas, and perspectives relate to their socioeconomic conditions, social background, cultural upbringing, and formative memories. Students should also be willing to engage critically with the media products with which they interact on a daily basis. A paper that simply lists songs and provides basic Wikipedia-esque information about them will not receive a high grade. Papers should demonstrate thoughtful reflection and presentation; they need not be in formal academic prose, but should maintain correct grammar and usage and communicate ideas clearly.
Grading Criteria:

A: Student’s work fulfills expectations well. Analysis is detailed and demonstrates introspective and insightful thinking. Presentation is clear; writing is well-structured and contains few mechanical errors.

B: Student’s work meets expectations. Work reflects an attempt at analysis, but lacks depth. Presentation is adequate; writing may contain some distracting errors.

C: Student’s work falls short of expectations. The basic parameters of the assignment are met, but there is little evidence of analysis or introspection. Writing contains multiple distracting errors.

D: Students work fails to meet expectations. Work may fail to conform to the required parameters, or show a clear lack of effort or understanding of the assignment. Writing contains multiple distracting errors.

Assignment #2
Concert Promotion

A popular music band/performer from outside the US (or Canada, the UK or Australia) is coming to perform here in Texas, and YOU are in charge of promoting their concert!

Your assignment is to write a press release, which should be at least 1.5 pages long (without images). Think of it as a short article that could appear in a newspaper, magazine, or blog, that must provide the following information:

1. Background information about the performers.
2. What makes these performers special artistically?
3. Why are these performers significant in their home country/culture?
4. Include a few eye-catching images that convey something significant about the performers or their culture.

What makes a GREAT paper?

1. Professional presentation: The language used may be colloquial, but it should not be sloppy.
2. Cultural awareness: The challenge here is to present a group that is worthy of attention because they are culturally different, but to present those differences in a way that is not ignorant or demeaning.
3. Engaging: This write-up should entice people who have never heard of the performers to want to come and see the concert!

There are several ways to do this – you might try to use familiar artists or genres as a frame of reference:

“Come listen to the Cambodian Katy Perry!”
“It’s punk rock – but in KILTS!”
You may refer to the performer(s) social or cultural importance in their home country:
   “She’s the queen of Azerbaijani Reggae!”
   “Hear the song that defined the Arab Spring!”

You might describe the unfamiliar sounds or sights that audiences can experience:
   “You’ve heard accordion before – but never like this!”
   “Experience the face-melting power of Malaysian death metal!”

Core Objective: *Communication*

    In this assignment, you must present an unfamiliar audience with an informative and enticing description of a foreign musical artist. To accomplish this, you must carefully consider which information to include, and how best to convey it creatively. Projects will be assessed based on their effectiveness at conveying a clear and enticing idea of what potential audiences can expect at this imagined concert, AND why it is culturally, socially, or musically significant. You will demonstrate your competence in communication by choosing your words carefully and being conscious of how to introduce new cultures and ideas to a wide audience.

Students who receive an A or B on the assignment (80% or higher) are considered to have successfully met this core objective.

Grading Criteria:

A: Student’s work fulfills expectations well. Content is effectively organized and thoroughly developed. Presentation and writing demonstrate effort to engage with cultural or artistic discourses. Writing is well-structured and contains few errors.

B: Student’s work meets expectations. Content is well-organized, but not necessarily fully developed. Writing does not engage deeply with cultural or artistic discourses. Writing may contain some distracting errors.

C: Student’s work falls short of expectations. Content is poorly organized and not well-developed, and does not attempt to engage with cultural or artistic discourses. Writing contains multiple distracting errors.

D: Students work fails to meet expectations. Work may fail to conform to the required parameters, or show a clear lack of effort or understanding of the assignment. Writing contains multiple distracting errors.

Assignment #3
Ethics in Popular Music

For this assignment, you will choose one song, music video, album, or artist that you believe presents a significant ethical problem. This problem should be chosen from one of the following three categories:
1. **Message**: This song or artist spreads a message that you believe is detrimental to society. The message might encourage negative attitudes or behavior, or in some other way be a negative influence on listeners.

2. **Misrepresentation**: The song (including video, if applicable) depicts a certain group in a manner that is uninformed, reductive, stereotypical, or otherwise inappropriate.

3. **Exploitation**: The process of making the cultural product in question involves the exploitation of some of the persons involved, usually in service of a profit-centered business model.

This paper (3-4 pages) should contain the following sections:

1. **Introduction / Background Information**
   Provide background information about your topic and state clearly what ethical problem you will be discussing. You should contextualize the discussion by describing the performers' audience and level of influence. How many people listen to these songs/watch these videos? What kind of demographics are they from? Use statistics to support your statements – you may find them in newspaper/magazine articles, Billboard charts, and even YouTube/Spotify data.

2. **Analysis of Ethical Problem**
   This is the main section of the essay. In this section, you will discuss what problem you feel the song/video/album in question presents. Focus on ONE problem – a single song might promote illicit drug use, violence against kittens, AND jaywalking, but for this assignment you will just choose one issue to discuss in depth.

   One way you can strengthen this section is by providing outside evidence that the problem you are discussing is significant. For example, if an artist from Wisconsin is encouraging illegal drug use, you might look for statistics from a reputable source about drug-related deaths or crimes. If a song promotes negative stereotypes against a particular group, you might find current news stories indicated that the group faces real instances of discrimination or persecution.

   Another way to strengthen this section is by thinking about what opposing viewpoints might exist. Where are some areas in which someone else might disagree with you? What arguments might they make, and how would you respond to them?

3. **What should I do about it?**
   This will be your concluding section. It should demonstrate some serious thought about how you should handle the problem discussed. One of the questions you should contend with is whether or not it is acceptable to listen to or watch the media in question. Why or why not?

   Another possibility is to think of ways you could address this problem if you had to take some steps within the UNT community. Could you organize an event or group on campus to deal with it in some way? Be imaginative!

   You should not simply write about things that other people could do to make the problem go away. Example: that song is offensive; the singer should not perform it anymore. The key here is
to think about your personal responsibility as a consumer of popular media and member of a society that is shaped by popular media.

4. References Cited

You must include a list of references cited in your project, presented in a standardized format (Chicago author-year citation preferred, but MLA or other common styles are also acceptable).

Core Objective: Personal Responsibility

This assignment requires students to reflect on the ethical debates that characterize popular music and its production and consumption. Successful completion of the assignment requires students to describe an ethical issue, analyze its relationship with popular media, and suggest possible solutions.

Students who receive an A or B on the assignment (80% or higher) are considered to have successfully met this core objective.

Grading Criteria:

A: Student’s work fulfills expectations well. Analysis of ethical problem demonstrates depth of thought. Analysis uses supporting evidence or engages with divergent viewpoints. Student skillfully suggests possible solutions and considers their impact and potential consequences.

B: Student’s work meets expectations. Student adequately describes and analyzes an ethical issue. Student suggests possible solutions and considers their impact and potential consequences.

C: Student’s work falls short of expectations. Student’s analysis lacks depth or supporting evidence. Possible solutions are not clearly defined or are poorly justified and not thoroughly considered.

D: Students work fails to meet expectations. Work may fail to conform to the required parameters, or show a clear lack of effort or understanding of the assignment.

Assignment #4

Let’s Talk Global Pop

For this assignment, you will select a song or music video that relates to a current social issue. The song does not necessarily need to comment specifically on the issue in question, but you should be able to describe the connection clearly. (For example: if the issue you choose to talk about is female objectification in popular music, the song might not mention the issue directly, but might serve as an example or counter-example.) You will then listen to the song with one or more friends and interview them about their thoughts or reactions to it.

Interview guidelines and tips:
1. Try to interview people with whom you have not discussed this song/subject before.
2. If possible, try to interview someone from a different generation or social background.
3. Ask questions that help you discover their perspectives on the song, rather than asking them to respond to yours. For example:

**BAD question:** This song is all about X – what do you think about X?
**GOOD question:** What do you think this song is about?

**BAD question:** I was really blown away by this one part! What did you think about it?
**GOOD question:** Were there any moments or lines that stood out to you? Why?

4. After you feel your interviewees have said everything they want to say, then share your own ideas and engage in a dialogue about the media.
5. Take notes during the conversation so that you can write about it later. If your friend(s) give you permission, you may also choose to record the conversation, so you can directly quote their ideas or reactions in your paper.

The completed assignment will consist of two parts. Each part should be a minimum of 1 double-spaced page.

**Part I** will be your own thoughts about the song or video, written BEFORE you conduct the interview. In Part I, you will describe the song or video and its relevance to the social issue you have chosen to discuss. Does the song have a positive/negative message? Something in between? Does it bring public awareness to something important? Does it challenge listeners/viewers to think about an issue through new perspectives? Does it creatively use artistic elements to make a statement in a way that would not be possible or effective through other means? At the end of part I, write down a few questions that are specific to this song that you would like to ask your interviewees (e.g. “What do you think is being referred to in this verse?”).

**Part II** will be written AFTER you conduct the interview. How did your interviewees’ reactions or interpretations differ from yours? Were there things you thought were important that they did not, or vice versa? Were there things they noticed that you did not, or vice versa? Did their observations chance your own feelings about the media? For all of these questions, also reflect on how differences or similarities in your social and cultural backgrounds might have affected your different or similar reactions to the media. If possible, include a few quotes from the interview that reveal their thoughts or perspectives.

**Core Objective: Social Responsibility**

This assignment requires students with multiple perspectives on a popular media product. They must engage critically with popular media as it relates to current social discourses, and then engage with other people who might interpret or react to that media in different ways than they do. By successfully completing this assignment, students will demonstrate that they have gained a broader perspective on global popular media production and deeper understanding of social discourse, and that they have taken the effort to engage their peers in discussions of these issues.
Students who receive an A or B on the assignment (80% or higher) are considered to have successfully met this core objective.

Grading Criteria

A: Student’s work fulfills expectations well. In part 1, student presents a clear connection between popular media and current social discourse. In part 2, student demonstrates depth in engaging with other perspectives.

B: Student’s work meets expectations. In part 1, student adequately presents a connection between popular media and current social discourse. In part 2, they attempt to seriously engage with other perspectives, but their analysis may lack depth.

C: Student’s work does not meet expectations. Connections between popular media and current social discourse are unclear in Part 1, and Part 2 does not seriously engage with multiple perspectives.

D: Students work fails to meet expectations. Work may fail to conform to the required parameters, or show a clear lack of effort or understanding of the assignment.

Assignment #5
Music Video Analysis

For this assignment, you are to write a 4-5 page analysis of a single music video. Your goal is not simply to describe the video, but to make a coherent and well-supported analytical argument. The main requirements are that your argument:

1. Engages in a discussion of how the music video relates to broader cultural or social issues
2. Is supported by evidence in the music video

For example, you might choose to say:

- This video represents the tension between traditional and popular cultural attitudes and practices in _____ culture.
- This video makes _________ statement about a current debate occurring in _____ society.
- This video demonstrates / challenges / subverts expectations of gender / sexuality / race / ethnicity in _______ country.
- This video represents an artistic / social / cultural / ideological confluence between _____ and ________.
- This video invokes ideas, sounds, symbols, or fashions in order to create or enforce a sense of identity for ________ group.

These are just a few examples, but you may think of many others! Of course, you may contact me if you have any questions.
To support your argument, you may refer to any information contained in the music video:

- The **musical sounds** themselves (e.g. instrumental or vocal styles, musical structure, etc.)
- The **lyrical content** of the song (if applicable)
- Any **visual elements** within the music video – why have particular images, scenes, colors, etc. been chosen to convey a particular message or identity?
- Dance **choreography**, style, or gesture – what messages are bodies sending that may enforce or differ from messages sent from other elements of the video?
- The “**narrative**” or “story” of the video
- Anything else you can think of!

In addition to citing information from the music video, you should include background research that tells the reader about the cultural or social issues that you will be discussing, and supports your claims about the music video. This can include specific articles about the band/performer/artist, but should also include deeper academic research. For example:

- You may refer to an article describing the history of the musical genre, and some of the stylistic or cultural debates occurring within that genre.
- If you are talking about how a popular music performer incorporates traditional instruments or styles, you should refer to an article providing some background information about those traditions
- If you are discussing the way the music video engages with a political debate or social issue, you should refer to at least one academic article that describes that issue from a larger perspective.

Suggested paper outline:

1. **Introduction**
   Introduce the music video and state your argument or thesis.

2. **Background Information**
   Provide relevant background information, drawing from your research. This can include historical information about the performer, genre, the performers’ place of origin (country or city). It should also present a big picture view of any political debates, social issues, or other cultural discourses in which you plan to engage.

3. **Analysis**
   This will be the largest section of your paper. You will choose a few elements of the music video and describe how each one relates to your central argument. Be detailed and descriptive!

4. **Conclusion**
   Here is where you bring all the pieces together. Restate your thesis and give the reader a sense of how all the ideas that you described in previous sections fit together. This is also your chance to include your personal perspective and reactions to the issues discussed.

5. **References Cited**
   You must include a list of references cited in your project, presented in a standardized format (Chicago author-year citation preferred, but MLA or other common styles are also acceptable).
KEY TO AN ‘A’ ON THIS PAPER – Just ask yourself:
1. Does my paper have a clear argument?
2. Does my paper engage with multiple aspects of the music video? (e.g. visual, musical, lyrical, etc.)

Core Objective: **Critical Thinking**

This assignment will require students to develop an academic argument and support it with evidence drawn from media analysis as well as background research. Successful completion of the assignment will require research skills, logical organization, and analytical thinking.

Students who receive an A or B on the assignment (80% or higher) are considered to have successfully met this core objective.

Grading Criteria:
A: Student's work exceeds expectations. Student's argument is clearly defined and strongly defended using detailed analysis of multiple aspects of the music video. Student's conclusion demonstrates nuanced consideration of context and of potential implications.

B: Student's work meets expectations. Student's argument is present and defended using analysis of multiple aspects of the music video. Student's conclusion demonstrates some consideration of context and of potential implications.

C: Student's work falls short of expectations. Student's argument is not clearly defined or defended; analysis lacks rigor or clarity. Student's conclusion reveals little consideration of context or of potential implications.

D: Students work fails to meet expectations. Work may fail to conform to the required parameters, or show a clear lack of effort or understanding of the assignment.