

Survey of African American Music

MUS 240

Fall 2021

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Kevin Johnson

Office: Milligan 2303 / [Zoom](#)

Office Hours: MW 4-5pm or by appointment

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Course Description

This course is designed as a historical survey of selected styles of African American Music in the United States. Certain features of West African music will be identified and traced as they are retained in different styles of African American music. Emphasis will be placed on stylistic characteristics, performers and social influences of each style.

No prerequisites. Satisfies Fine Arts course requirement.

Learning Objectives

1. Expose students to the broad spectrum of African American music styles.
2. Encourage students to consider the role society and culture play in shaping attitudes toward African Americans.
3. Expose students to African American creativity in the face of adversity.
4. Develop musical listening skills.
5. Foster collaborative learning between students and the ability to present oneself in a poised, persuasive manner.
6. Develop technological skills in blogging, video creation and web design to communicate ideas.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. communicate proficiently about connections between music, history and culture through discussion, presentation and written responses.
2. accurately relate the emergence of styles and aesthetic ideals to historical and cultural developments within the African American community.
3. recognize and understand musical styles and genres through a prescribed listening regimen.

4. engage in research on a topic within the scope of the course and cogently present findings in the form of an innovative online presentation.
5. write meaningful analysis and commentary on African American music and its effect on its writers, listeners and marketers in the world.
6. use technology as a means of communicating ideas on the Internet.
7. express their beliefs about the African American creative enterprise as exemplified through music and other areas of student interest.

Course Materials

African American Music, An Introduction 2nd Edition (2015) ISBN 9780415881814

The Autobiography of Malcolm X. Ballantine Books. X, M., & Haley, A. (2010). ISBN 0345379756

Prerequisite Information

None

Expectations

Students are expected to:

- use their Spelman College email address when emailing the Instructor and fellow students.
- review the how to get started information located in the course content area.
- introduce themselves to the class during the first week by posting a self-introduction video.
- interact online with instructor and peers.
- review and follow the course calendar.
- submit assignments by the corresponding deadline.

The instructor will:

- respond to discussion boards, blogs, and journal postings within 7 days
- respond to [emails/messages] within 1 day
- grade assignments within 7 days of the assignment deadline

Course Structure

This course will be delivered **partially online**, through the course management system SpeleLearn (Moodle). Log-in to your [SpeleLearn \(Moodle\)](#) account from the [MySpelman Portal](#) (my.spelman.edu) to access the course materials, activities, assessments, and resources.

Throughout the semester, you will participate in a blend of individual and group activities accessed thru SpeleLearn (Moodle). [The SpeleLearn \(Moodle\)](#) course will house links to [Zoom](#), [Flipgrid](#), [Black Music Scholar](#) and other Internet-based technologies (i.e., Office 365, Google Apps, Virtual Meetings). Course activities will consist reading book chapters, viewing points presentations, viewing videos, listening to music, discussion forums, online quizzes and tests, and group assignments.

Technology Requirements

- A wired Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection is desirable with Bandwidth of 512Kbps for connecting to [SpeleLearn \(Moodle\)](#) course management system is recommended).
- [System Requirements](#) (Click to view)
- WebCam with microphone

Technology Service Desk

Contact the Spelman Technology Services (STS) Service Desk for technology related questions or issues by phone at (404) 270-5400 or via email at stservicedesk@spelman.edu

IT professionals staff the Service Desk Monday through Friday from 8 AM through 11 PM; Saturday, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM, and Sunday, 1:00 PM -4:00 PM. Service Desk staff provide phone support for College enterprise applications, including the MySpelman portal, [SpeleLearn \(Moodle\)](#) Learning Management System, and Microsoft Office 365.

Netiquette & Discussion Expectations

Netiquette stands for network etiquette. In other words, it is the code of behavior when communicating online. In your online course, you will have many opportunities for social interaction. However, you will not always have the opportunity to observe facial expressions, body language and voice tone. Some general netiquette guidelines are:

1. **Be Brief:** Make sure your comments are concise. Don't stray from the discussion topic.
2. **Don't Shout!** TYPING IN ALL CAPS IS CONSIDERED SHOUTING ON THE INTERNET. If your goal is to emphasize a point, **bold** the word(s) that you want to stand out.
3. **Avoid Jokes and Sarcasm:** Humor frequently depends on facial cues or voice tones. Without face-to-face communications, your joke or sarcasm may be viewed as criticism.
4. **Respect Privacy:** Your class discussion board is open only to those enrolled in the class. Do not forward postings or comments from your classmates to others without permission.
5. **Check Your Tone:** Read your post a second time before pressing submit. Read your post again during the thirty minutes you are allowed to revise posts. This is your opportunity to *Re-do*. Remember that there's a person or a whole class at the receiving end of your post.
6. **Do Not Flame:** Do not start or participate in a "flame war" in the discussion forum. A flame war is when (usually 2-3) people have strong opposing opinions that turn negative. Debate is welcome and can stimulate great discussion but be polite in responding to others. When something goes wrong, ask for forgiveness.
7. **Use Correct Spelling and Grammar** when composing your message. Do not use acronyms that not everyone would understand and know. Your professor will decide on the use of acronyms and emoticons (symbols used to express emotion). Although very popular, the excessive use of acronyms and emoticons can make your message difficult to read.
Examples: BTW =by the way, :-)=smile, :-D=laughing, :(=frowning, sad – Also, don't use extra punctuation. (??????, !!!!!)
8. **Participate:** This is a shared learning environment. It is not enough to log in and read the discussion thread of others. For the maximum benefit to all, everyone must contribute.

9. **Your Password is Private:** Never give your password to another person. Please note that IT administrators will **never** ask you for this. This is not really a netiquette rule but very important to protecting your identity online.
10. **Report System Issues:** If for any reason you experience difficulty participating in the course, please call the MIT Help Desk at XXXX (XXX.XXX.XXXX). Others might be having the same problem. This helps the entire community.

For more information about netiquette, refer to the following:

- The Core Rules of Netiquette – <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Special Syllabus Statement on COVID-19

Spelman College recognizes that this is a difficult time which may be filled with uncertainty as we move forward with the 2021-2022 academic year. Your safety, health, and well-being, as well as that of our faculty and staff are our primary concern and we want to be able to support you in any way that we can. We ask that you adjust your behavior to keep yourself and others safe. The College has expectations that students, faculty and staff will act responsibly to mitigate risk to others.

Face Mask/Covering in the Classroom is Required.

In accordance with Spelman College and the Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC) Covid protocols, all vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals are required to wear face masks/covering in classrooms, laboratories, and other public space where in-person instruction occurs. Facemasks/coverings must cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the face. **Face shields do NOT replace mask wearing.**

Failure to comply with Spelman College protocols for face masks/coverings will constitute a violation of the Spelman College Code of Conduct. If you are not wearing a face covering, you will be asked to do so. Refusal to wear a face mask/covering will result in your being asked to leave the classroom. Please note that while exceptions for medical reasons will be accommodated to the best of the College's ability, the College cannot provide an accommodation that places others at risk; therefore, an accommodation to participate in class or related activities in person without a face covering will not be permitted.

Safe Behavior in the Classroom

Physical distancing of at least six feet, will be observed whenever possible.

Any student experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, with a suspected or positive diagnosis of COVID-19, or with known exposure to COVID-19 should not attend class or come to campus, if not a residential student. Students who are experiencing symptoms or believe they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should call Student Health Services or their health care provider for guidance. Any student with a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 or with known exposure to COVID-19 must report this fact to Student Health Services at 404-270-5249.

COVID-related class absences fall under the College's excused absence policy. Per the College's COVID protocols, a student who becomes ill or is required to quarantine during the semester should notify the Office of Undergraduate Studies for an excused absence.

*If you are offering alternative learning options for students who are ill but can still attend class, you may want to add an additional statement.

Discussion Forums

There will be six discussion forums for each student to participate in.

- Each student will respond to the weekly forums with a minimum 200-word response.
- The forum schedule can be found in the course outline.
- The instructor will direct the forums according to the studied music genre grading student participation using the forum rubric that can be found in Moodle.

Assignments/Activities

Written Assignments

Basic rules of grammar, structure and citation will be enforced as necessary for all written assignments.

Submit drafts of their writing in the discussion forms for peer review.

Final drafts will be posted online by student and graded by the professor using provided rubric.

Critical Web Essay

Students will be required to write a web essay of 2000 word essay choosing from a list of prompts offered by the professor. Topics offered in these prompts will range from a specific musical artist, song or genre and will require students to make connections between musical sound, culture and historical occurrences. Specific prompt choices will be available in the course on Moodle.

Group Hip Hop / Rap Presentation

Students will be required to work in groups to do research to be presented on Zoom. The topic will be within the scope of this class. It will be encouraged for students to choose topics within contemporary African American hip hop music culture; however, there is flexibility if the material has not already been covered in class. The student groups will choose a formal lecture/presentation style or an interactive lesson format. More details will be given in the project guidelines, which is posted on Moodle.

Assessments

There will be assessments given in this course, including the midterm, final exam, listening quizzes, and final artist paper based on materials and topics explored in class. Study guides will not be provided by the instructor, but there will be review in-class before all large assessments.

Grading Policies

The final grade for this course will be computed on the following basis:

- Writing Projects (Podcasts, Videos or Blogs) 25%

- Midterm 15%
- Final Exam 20%
- Listening Quizzes 15%
- Final Project 15%
- Discussion Forums 10%

Late work will be assigned a lower grade to be determined by instructor. Work must be turned in online by the stated deadline unless indicated otherwise. "Extra credit" will be provided at the discretion of the instructor.

Grading Scale is as follows:

Grade Ranges			
A	95% - 100%	C+	77% - 79%
A-	90% - 94%	C	73% - 76%
B+	87% - 89%	C-	70% - 72%
B	83% - 86%	D+	65% - 69%
B-	80% - 83%	D	60% - 64%
		F	< 59%

Course Schedule

Date	Learning Objectives (see above page 1)	Textbook Readings	Assignments	Assessments
August 18-20	LO 1,4		Orientation Chronological Listening	Entry Questionnaire
August 23-27	LO 1, 3, 4	AAM Chapter 2-3 How to Write a Post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms • Instruments • Genres 	Quiz 1
August 30-September 3	LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 6	AAM Chapter 1	African Roots	POST 1
September 6-10	LO 1, 2, 4, 6	AAM Chapter 4	Slavery Years	Listening Quiz 1 Post 2
September 13-17	LO 1, 2, 3, 4	AAM Chapter 5	1890s - 1900s	Artist Project Sources Due
September 20-24	LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 6	AAM Chapter 6-7	1910 - 1920s	Post 3
September 27 October 1		AAM Chapter 9	1930s	Midterm Exam
October 4-8	LO 1, 2, 4		Fall Break Video Concert Friday	Concert Report
October 11-15	LO 1, 2, 4, 6	AAM Chapter 10-11	1940s and 1950s	Listening Quiz 2 Post 4
October 18-22	LO 1, 2, 3, 6	AAM Chap. 12-14	1960s and 1970s	Post 5
October 25-29	LO 1, 2, 5	AAM Chap. 15-16	1980s	Listening Quiz 3 Artist Project Draft Due
November 1-5	LO 1, 2, 5, 6	AAM Chapter 17	1990s	Post 6
November 8-12	LO 2, 4, 5		2000s	Listening Quiz 4
November 15-19	LO 1, 2, 4, 5, 6		2010 and Beyond	Post 7
November 22	LO 1, 2, 4	Final Project Help	Thanksgiving Week	

November 29 December 1	LO 1, 2, 4, 6	Final Project Help	<i>Final Review Week</i>	Artist Project Due
December 6				FINAL EXAM Exit Questionnaire

Student Access Statement

Spelman College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, you should contact [Student Access Center \(SAC\)](#) as soon as possible. The Student Access Center works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission. Contact the Student Access Center at 404-270-5289 for additional information. The Student Access Center is located in MacVicar Hall, Room 106.

Academic Integrity Policy

At the heart of Spelman College's mission is academic excellence, along with the development of intellectual, ethical and leadership qualities. These goals can only flourish in an institutional environment where every member of the College affirms honesty, trust, and mutual respect. All members of the academic community of Spelman College are expected to understand and follow the basic standards of honesty and integrity, upholding a commitment to high ethical standards. Students are expected to read and abide by the Spelman College Code of Conduct (see the current Spelman College Student Handbook) and are expected to behave as mature and responsible members of the Spelman College academic community. Students are expected to follow ethical standards in their personal conduct and in their behavior towards other members of the community. They are expected to observe basic honesty in their work, words, ideas, and actions. Failure to do so is a violation of the Spelman College Academic Integrity Policy. Violators will be subject to the sanctions outlined in the Spelman College Bulletin.