

Survey of African American Music

MUS 240

Spring 2023

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

BMS Website

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 in-person, through the course management system SpeleLearn ([Canvas](#)). 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](http://blackmusicscholar.com), <http://blackmusicscholar.com> and other Internet-based technologies (i.e., Office 365, Google Apps, Virtual Meetings). Course activities will consist of 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)

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 stsservicesdesk@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 spring 2022 semester. 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 Optional.

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 Student Health Services (SHS). Once SHS has cleared the student to return to campus, the Office of Undergraduate Studies will send an excused absence.

Assignments/Activities

Written Assignments

Basic rules of grammar, structure and citation will be enforced as necessary for all written assignments. Follow the rubrics provided in Canvas: [post rubric](#), and [artist paper rubric](#).

Critical Web Essay (Artist Paper)

Students will be required to write a web essay of 2000 word essay on the artist of their choice with approval from the professor.

Group Decades Presentation

Students will be required to work in groups to do research to be presented in class. 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 BMS.

Assessments

There will be assessments given in this course, including the midterm, final exam, lesson 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:

- Attendance 10%
- Quizzes 10%
- Midterm 15%
- Final Exam 20%
- Artist Project 20%
- Posts/Group Assignments 25%

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%

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.

MUS 240 A Survey of African American Music

Date	In- Class	Readings	Assignments	Tests on Canvas
Jan 18	First Class			
Jan 20	Elementor		Concert Report	
Jan 23	Groups Assigned	Read 4 posts		
AFRICAN / FOLK MUSIC				
Jan 25	Elementor Training Rubrics		Watch Elementor Training Videos	
Jan 27	Group Work No Class	Decades Research	Create a BMS page for your group	
Jan 30	Folk	Instruments Videos Folk Posts		
Feb 1	Folk	Instruments Videos Folk Posts		
Feb 3	No Class		POST 1	Terms/Listening Quiz
NEGRO SPIRITUALS/ JUBILEE QUARTETS				
Feb 6	Spirituals	Posts, PowerPoint, Videos	<i>Submit Artist</i>	
Feb 8	Spirituals			
Feb 10	Spirituals			Listening Quiz
BLUES				
Feb 13	Blues	Posts, PowerPoint, Videos	<i>Artist Bibliography 6 scholarly sources</i>	
Feb 15	Blues			
Feb 17	Blues		POST 2	Listening Quiz
RAGTIME / TRAD JAZZ				
Feb 20	Ragtime	Posts, PowerPoint, Videos		
Feb 22	Jazz Origins			
Feb 24	Jazz			Listening Quiz
		JAZZ		
Feb 27	Jazz	Posts, PowerPoint, Videos		
Mar 1	Jazz			
R&B and SOUL				
Mar 3	R&B		POST 3	Listening Quiz

Mar 6	R&B	Posts, PowerPoint, Videos		
Mar 8	Soul			
Mar 10				MIDTERM EXAM
Mar 13	SPRING BREAK			
Mar 15				
Mar 17				
GOSPEL				
Mar 20	No Class	Posts, PowerPoint, Videos		
Mar 22				
Mar 24			<i>Artist Project Outline Due</i>	Listening Quiz
BROADWAY and CLASSICAL MUSIC				
Mar 27		Posts, PowerPoint, Videos		
Mar 29				
Mar 31			POST 4	Listening Quiz
FUNK & DISCO				
April 3		Posts, PowerPoint, Videos		
April 5				
April 7	GOOD FRIDAY			
HIP - HOP				
April 10		Posts, PowerPoint, Videos		
April 12				
April 14			POST 5	Listening Quiz
Current Trends in Music				
April 17		Posts, PowerPoint, Videos		
April 19				
April 21	Research Day			
Student Decades Group Presentations				
April 24	Presentations			
April 26	Presentations			
April 28	Presentations			
May 1	Presentations		<i>Artist Project Due</i>	
May 3	Last Day of Classes	Final Exam Review		
May 8	8am FINAL EXAM			FINAL EXAM