

# Survey of African American Music

MUS 240

Fall 2023

## Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Kevin Johnson

Office: Milligan 2303

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

Burnim, Mellonee V., Portia K. Maultsby, and Mellonee V. (Mellonee Victoria) Burnim. *African American Music : an Introduction / Edited by Mellonee V. Burnim and Portia K. Maultsby*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

## 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.
- review and follow the course calendar.
- submit assignments by the corresponding deadline.

The instructor will:

- respond to [emails/messages] within 1 day

## 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](http://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> 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 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 [stsservicedesk@spelman.edu](mailto:stsservicedesk@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.

## 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 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 Canvas.

### *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:

- Lesson quizzes 20%
- Midterm 15%
- Final Exam 20%
- Special Artist Project 20%
- Post/Video 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.

COURSE OUTLINE		
Weeks	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS DUE DATES
Week 1	Introduction to African American Music and Recording Technology	A student post page to display your work on blackmusicscholar.com
Week 2	Celebrating 50 Years of Hip Hop	
Week 3	Celebrating 50 Years of Hip Hop	
Week 4	Celebrating 50 Years of Hip Hop	Hip Hop Video Project 1
Week 5	Hip Hop Artist and Cultural Impact	
Week 6	Midterm Review and Project Completions	Hip Hop Video Project 2   Midterm Exam
Week 7	James Brown Funk and Disco	JB/Funk Influence of Hip Hop Post
Week 8	Black Gospel Music	
Week 9	Rhythm and Blues	R&B or Gospel Video
Week 10	Jazz	
Week 11	Jazz	Jazz Video or Post

Week 12	Jubilee Quartets	
Week 13	Negro Spirituals	
Week 14	Black Folk Music	From Slavery to Jubilee Video
Week 15	Review and Recap	Artist Project   . Final Exam
<b>Course Outline Subject to Change if Necessary</b>		