

Course Syllabus

Please note that the information below is complete but subject to change prior to the first class meeting. If you have questions or concerns about the course, please send me an email.

Prof. Philip Auslander

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Office Hours

I expect to be in my office between classes: T, Th 2:00-3:15. If you wish to meet with me, please contact me ahead of time. Because my office is small, I prefer to meet outside, weather permitting. I am also happy to meet with you virtually during this time and I am available for virtual office hours if you wish to meet at a different time.

Prerequisite

ENGL 1102

Modality

This course is offered exclusively on an in-person basis.

Course Description

This course examines the relationships between music, community, and social justice. We will emphasize questions concerning race, gender, and representation. One focal idea of the course will be the music scene. Scenes are generally understood in terms of both geography and genre. The course will be a series of case studies looking at the development of popular music in the United States between about 1945 and about 1975 in specific places at specific times. Here is an outline:

1. The Central Ave. Scene: Rhythm and Blues in Los Angeles after World War II
2. Memphis and the Rise of Rockabilly in the mid-1950s
3. The Music of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-65 (we will also talk about the legacy of the movement in later Soul and Funk)

4. The Greenwich Village Folk Scene (New York City, early 1960s)

5. Countercultural San Francisco and Psychedelic Rock (second half of the 1960s)

Many of the issues and ideas we will entertain are still directly relevant today, and you will have opportunities to extend them to more recent development if you wish.

Learning Outcomes

- **Historical Analysis:** Students will study cultural texts and performances within historical frameworks to become familiar with the various forces that shape the production and dissemination of culture. They will learn to interpret history actively, rather than passively accepting archival information.
- **Interpretive Frameworks:** Students will become familiar with a variety of interpretive frameworks drawn from social, cultural, and aesthetic approaches and be able to apply such frameworks to cultural texts, as well as to their own observations.
- **Textual/Visual Analysis:** Students will learn to read, analyze, and interpret cultural texts and performances within the realm of popular music.

General Requirements

- **Preparation:** Course Reading, Listening, and Viewing
- **Attendance** at class sessions.
- **Active participation** in discussion and class activities. This course will be lecture-based, with substantial opportunity for in-class discussion and presentations.
- **Completion of Assignments** enumerated below

You are not permitted to use materials developed for other courses to fulfill these requirements.

Please note the grade penalties for not submitting required assignments by their deadlines described below under General Policies.

Conduct of Course

This course will be based in lecture and discussion of the materials before us. It is imperative that you stay up to date on the reading, listening, and viewing assignments so that we can devote our class time to discussion and analysis. You will also be asked to make an in-class presentations. .

Attendance Policy

- **Attendance requirement.** You may miss a total of three (3) classes over the course of the

semester without penalty. If at all possible, please contact the instructor when you know you will not be in class.

- **Reasons for absences.** The attendance policy does not make any distinction about the reasons for your absences. Absences for any illness are included in the three permitted. Only absences officially exempted by the Institute (e.g., due to participation in official GA Tech athletics, to religious observance, to personal or family crisis confirmed by documentation from the Dean of Students) will not be counted among your allotted absences. These exemptions are difficult to get.
- **Responsibility for missed work.** Students are responsible for finding out what they may have missed while absent from class and what policy the instructor has for making up missed work. However, if you are not present to participate in a group presentation, you will fail the course.
- **Absence penalties.** Each additional absence after the allotted number deducts one-half of a letter grade (5 pts) from your final grade. Please click [here](#) ([http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/.](http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/)) to see Georgia Tech's updated institutional attendance policy.

Communication is crucial. If you are unwell or face any situation that will keep you out of class for an amount of time greater than the three permitted absences, be certain to contact the Dean of Students as stated above. You should contact me as well so that we can start working out an arrangement, but your situation becomes "official" only when the Dean of Students contacts me.

Please note that Georgia Tech policy requires you to wait twenty minutes for the instructor to arrive before concluding that the class is not meeting (this policy is included here primarily for your information).

Information Related to Covid-19:

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Institute guidelines, information, and updates related to Covid-19. Find campus operational updates at <https://health.gatech.edu/coronavirus/institute-operations> (<https://health.gatech.edu/coronavirus/institute-operations>).

Deadline Extension Policy

I am happy to grant one 24- to 48-hour extension on an assignment this semester. If you wish to avail yourself of this option, you must contact me at least 24 hours before the assignment's deadline. Under no circumstances will I grant an extension after the original deadline. This opportunity applies to quizzes and work related to your final project. It does not apply to in-class presentations. If you

wish to reschedule your presentation, you can do so only by switching slots with other students. It also does not apply to Piazza posts, which must be completed in a timely fashion.

Readings

All course readings are available to you in .pdf form via the course's Canvas website (see Course Schedule below). Please have the relevant ones available during class meetings in case we need to consult them.

If you would like books that provide an overview of the subject, I recommend Ed Ward's *History of Rock & Roll* Vols. 1 and 2.

Grading

Please note: work that simply meets the requirements of the assignment will receive a grade of "C." Grades of "A" and "B" designate levels of distinction in quality and content of the work.

Three Quizzes @ 20 pts: 60 pts

In-Class Presentation: 30 pts

Participation on Piazza: 50 pts

Group Project (all members of each group receive the same grade): 60 pts

Final Grade Scale: To get a final grade of A, you must have earned at least a numerical grade of at least 180. For a B, you must have a numerical grade of at least 160; 140 for a C; 120 for a D. Please use these benchmarks to interpret your numerical grades.

The numerical grade generated by this calculation is subject to modification in either direction in light of attendance, class participation, and other indications of engagement with and commitment to the course (or lack thereof). Please note that I do not automatically round up numerical grades at any stage.

Required Work

More information and details on all assignments will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class. All deadlines are provided on the course schedule at the end of this syllabus. Policies regarding the submission of work appear below under General Policies.

In-Class Presentations

We will set up a regular schedule on the course calendar of 10-15 minute presentations based on the

materials and topics listed on the syllabus and other pages for the date you select. In all probability, you will need to do your presentation in partnership with another person, depending on class size. If so, both of you will receive the same grade.

Your assignment is to present a song or piece of music that is not already included in the course materials and that is directly relevant to the topics (and historical moment) scheduled for discussion on the day you present. It could be a song by an artist we are scheduled to discuss or a song by someone not included in the course who is significant. It can be a well-known song or an obscurity. You should be prepared to discuss the song, its style/genre, its content, and the artist in relation to the ideas of the course and the topics of the day you present. For example, there are a huge number of songs and artists pertaining to the topic of the New York Folk scene or the genre of the protest song. Finding materials along these lines not included in the course would not be difficult. If the song is short enough, you may play it in its entirety for the class. The total time you may devote to this is 5 minutes, balanced by 10 minutes of presentation. If you are working with another person, both should function equally as presenters. Please use a Powerpoint or other presentation. Please be certain you can access your presentation readily so as not to delay the class. Please embed any audio or video files so that you do not have to leave the presentation to play them.

If you are conversant with technical musical vocabulary and wish to discuss formal aspects of the music such as key, rhythm, tempo, chord progressions, time signatures, etc., please feel free to do so as long as you can explain the concepts to people in the class who are not familiar with them. If you are not conversant with this vocabulary, please do not repeat it from your research.

The idea of the presentation is to expand our knowledge base regarding the music and its social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Normally, I do not ask you to tell me in advance what you plan to do in your presentation; I'm happy to hear at the start of class. If you wish to consult with me in advance concerning your song choice or any other aspect of the presentation, you are always most welcome to do so.

Quizzes

There will be three 75-minute quizzes, one every five weeks of the semester, to be taken **online**. These quizzes will not be cumulative: each will address the course material since the previous quiz. I will post the quizzes on the dates indicated below and give you a window of a week in which to choose a time to take the quiz. The quiz will be set up so that you will have 75 minutes to complete it and only one try. These quizzes are closed book and governed by the Honor Code. If you do not complete the quiz during the allotted window, you will forfeit the points associated with it.

Most likely, all quizzes will have the same types of question: short-answer questions, basically terms or names that I will ask you to identify in two sentences, and two or three paragraph-answer questions that will ask you synthesize the material we've been discussing. Any changes of format or procedure will be announced. There is a possibility that I will want you to view a video or listen to a piece of music to address on the quiz. If so, I will give you extra time to access the media.

Group Project

You will do this assignment in partnership with two or three other students. All group participants will receive the same grade. You can either go into greater depth about a topic we discuss in class or carry ideas from the course into more recent contexts. We will talk, for example, about the (dismal) representation of female and African-American musicians on the San Francisco scene of the 1960s. The same issues have persisted: both punk and indie rock scenes have been critiqued for not being welcoming to women and people of color. On the other side of the coin, perhaps, the Riot Grrrl scene came into existence largely as a response to punk's failure to provide sufficient opportunities for women. In another vein, it is clear that both the Country and Soul genres have a better track record of female participation, while Country has an even worse record of Black participation than does Rock. These are just examples of topics you could pursue, provided for inspiration. There are many, many other kinds of possibilities.

We will begin serious work on the project around the middle of the term. The project will be preceded by a proposal (which will not be graded separately). Your project can assume a variety of forms. Although I am happy to receive traditional written papers, I encourage you to use alternate forms of communication, such as video, podcast, etc. You will be asked to identify the format of your project in the proposal.

Our last meeting will be devoted to informal sharing of your project. Each person or group will have a few minutes of class time to tell the class about your project.

Participation in Piazza

There is an online forum for this course on Piazza. The purpose of Piazza is to provide students with a virtual space outside the classroom in which to raise questions about course materials and discuss them. Participation in Piazza accounts for 25% of your grade for this course. This means that I expect you to post substantively to Piazza 12 times during the semester. Your post should either initiate or respond to a discussion of the course materials or a closely related topic. "Substantively" means a decent paragraph, not just a sentence or two. Please note that I will not be grading your individual posts, though I will respond to them selectively on Piazza. As long as you contribute substantively by

the stated deadlines, you will earn all of the points in this category. **Please note that I am not asking you to summarize course material or class discussion. I am asking you to respond to these, raise your own questions about them, and extend our classroom discussions.**

You will lose 4.2 points from your final grade for each posting deadline missed. If I feel that your contributions are not substantive enough to merit credit, I will contact you privately. You can access Piazza through Canvas; first, you have to sign up by following this [link](http://piazza.com/gatech/fall2022/lmc3263d) (<http://piazza.com/gatech/fall2022/lmc3263d>).

I have created 12 folders on Piazza, one for each post. Please place your post in the appropriate folder: the first in hw1, the second in hw2, etc.

The posting deadlines, listed on the syllabus, will generally be on Fridays at 11:59 PM with the expectation that you will discuss the preceding week's material (exceptions are noted on the course schedule). If you wish to make connections with earlier material or other stuff, that's good. However, your posts should always focus on the material since the previous posting deadline. **Please note that your last post, for 12/12, should be devoted to a reflection on what you're taking away from the course as a whole. By "reflection," I do not mean evaluation. Please be sure to fill out the online course evaluation form for that purpose.**

Recordings of Class Sessions and Required Permissions:

Classes may not be recorded by students without the express consent of the instructor unless it is pursuant to an accommodation granted by the Office of Disability services. Class recordings, lectures, presentations, and other materials posted on Canvas are for the sole purpose of educating the students currently enrolled in the course.

The Communication Center

Georgia Tech's Naugle CommLab is located in Clough Commons, Suite 447. It is an excellent resource for all students (undergraduate or graduate) who want help with a communication-related project, from their multimodal assignments for English 1101 and English 1102 to graduate school applications, from engineering and science reports to oral presentations, from storyboards for videos to poster designs, from grant proposals to job cover letters and resumes. The center itself is physically located in Clough; for the safety of our staff and students during this pandemic many of our consultations will be online (students who require an in-person consultation should email commlab@gatech.edu to schedule). The Center provides both synchronous and asynchronous consultations with peer (usually upper-division undergraduate) and professional (postdoctoral) consultants who are each uniquely qualified to provide students with feedback on their projects. For

more information or to make an appointment, please visit the Center's webpage at <http://commlab.gatech.edu>. Again, if you have any questions, please email us at commlab@gatech.edu.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology's commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in broader society

CARE Center, Counseling Center, Stamps Health Services, and the Student Center

These uncertain times can be difficult, and many students may need help in dealing with stress and mental health. The CARE Center and the Counseling Center, and Stamps Health Services will offer both in-person and virtual appointments. Face-to-face appointments will require wearing a face covering and social distancing, with exceptions for medical examinations. Student Center services and operations are available on the Student Center website. For more information on these and other student services, contact the Vice President and Dean of Students or the Division of Student Life.

Students With Disabilities

Any student who feels that he/she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see the instructor during office hours. Students with disabilities should also contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) to discuss reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / (404) 894-1664 (voice/TDD) or visit Suite 210 in the Smithgall Student Services Building. For more information visit the following website: <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>. [\(http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/\)](http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/)

Academic Honesty

All work you turn in for this class must be your own work, with all outside reference sources properly cited and acknowledged.

The "Student Conduct Code of the Rules and Regulations" (Georgia Institute of Technology General Catalog, Section XIX) states, "Academic misconduct is an act that does or could improperly distort student grades or other student academic records" and offers the following descriptive list:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or persons, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant;
- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any institute document relating to the academic status of the student.

The Code continues, “While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor.” Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/> or in the General Catalog to remember your primary commitment to academic honesty. Students who engage in academic dishonesty may receive a 0.0 on the assignment or fail the course. In addition, the instance will be reported to the Dean of Students who may take further action.

General Policies

Your work for this course is to be submitted via Canvas. Your work is due by the stated deadline; all grades and course communications will be posted on Canvas.

You are required to retain a copy of every assignment for the entire semester in case any problems should arise with Canvas. Please be vigilant about making certain that materials you posted actually appear. It is your responsibility to ensure that your material is present on Canvas at its deadline.

Canvas will accept your work after the posted deadline. However, you will lose 10% of the assignment’s point value for each hour or fractional hour past the deadline you submit it (this policy does not apply to Piazza posts). For example, if an assignment is worth 20 points and you pass it in within an hour after the deadline, I will deduct two points from your grade. If you pass it in an hour after that, I will deduct four points, etc. This policy applies to both group and individual assignments.

I strongly recommend that you post your work significantly ahead of all deadlines. Remember: Canvas’s clock is the only one that matters. Canvas is the final arbiter of when your work was submitted.

Please also make sure that the material you submit is what you want me to grade. Whatever is on the site at the deadline is what I will grade. I will not accept other versions past the deadline under any circumstance.

If you experience a legitimate problem with Canvas, please contact me by email immediately. Do not submit work by email unless I specifically ask you to do so.

I reserve the right to give extra assignments and quizzes, announced or unannounced and to make changes to this document.

Course Schedule

This schedule is an outline of the topics we will discuss and important dates. Most class sessions are represented by pages in the Pages section. Most of the session titles are links that you will lead you to that day's page. You will find the reading, listening, and viewing assignments to be completed for that day's meeting on these pages.

0. Introductory Matters.

8/23 Introduction to Course.

8/25 Read Bennett, [Music Scenes.](#)

1. Central Avenue Rhythm and Blues, Los Angeles

8/30 [The Transition from Big Band Swing and the Emergence of West Coast R&B.](#)

9/1 [Central Ave. R&B.](#)

9/2 Piazza Post 1 Due by 11:59 PM

9/6 [Rhythm and Blues Genres](#)

9/8 [R&B to R&R](#)

9/9 Piazza Post 2 Due by 11:59 PM. For this post, you may address any of the course material to this point that you did not discuss in your first post.

2. Memphis Rockabilly

9/13 [Cover Versions](#)

9/15 [Memphis, Sun Records, Rockabilly](#)

9/16 Piazza Post 3 Due by 11:59 PM. For this post, you may address any of the course material to this point that you did not discuss in previous posts.

9/20 [Rock and Roll Outside Memphis.](#)

9/22 Radio and Television in the 1950s

9/23 [First Quiz Posted.](#) Piazza Post 4 Due by 11:59 PM.

3. Music of the Civil Rights Movement

9/27 [Social Consciousness in American Popular Music](#)

9/29 [Music of the Civil Rights Movement.](#)

9/30 [First Quiz Due by 11:59 PM.](#) Piazza Post 5 Due by 11:59 PM.

10/4 [The SNCC Freedom Singers and "We Shall Overcome."](#)

10/6 [The Musical Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement in Soul and Funk.](#)

10/7 Piazza Post 6 Due by 11:59 PM

4. The Greenwich Village Folk Scene

10/11 [Urban Folk Music in the 1940s and 1950s.](#)

10/13 [Pop Music](#) and [Social Dance](#) in the Early 1960s.

10/18 [Fall Break!](#)

10/20 [The New York Folk Music Scene.](#) Proposal for Final Project Due by 11:59 PM.

10/21 [Second Quiz Posted.](#)

10/22 Piazza Post 7 Due by 11:59 PM

10/25 [The Politics of the New York Folk Music Scene](#)

10/27 [Bob Dylan](#)

10/28 [Second Quiz Due.](#)

10/28 Piazza Post 8 Due by 11:59 PM

11/1 [The British Invasion.](#)

11/3 [Folk Rock](#) and [Vietnam War Era "Protest Songs"](#)

11/4 Piazza Post Due 9 by 11:59 PM

5. The San Francisco Countercultural Scene

11/8 [The San Francisco Scene and Psychedelic Rock.](#)

11/10 [The Chambers Bros.](#)

11/15 [Underground FM Radio](#)

11/17 ["Women in Rock"](#)

11/18 Piazza Post 10 Due by 11:59 PM10

11/22 [The Blues in the 1960s: B. B. King.](#)

11/24 Thanksgiving!

11/29 [Racial Politics of the Blues in San Francisco: Janis Joplin. Third Quiz Posted.](#)

12/1 [Jimi Hendrix](#)

12/2 Piazza Post 11 Due by 11:59 PM

12/6 Project Presentations. [Third Quiz Due by 11:59 PM.](#)

12/12 [Completed Project](#) and [Final Piazza Post](#) (Course Reflection) Due by 11:59 PM.