Field of Study Proposal

1. *Proposed field of study:* Visual and Performing Arts (FSVP)
2. *Course number:* MUS 122
3. *Course title:* America’s Music
4. *Catalog Description:* A topically-based survey of America’s music from that of Native Americans and European colonists to the diversity of the contemporary music scene.
5. *Course prerequisites:* None
6. *Number of credit hours:* 3
7. *Estimated enrollment:* 35
8. *How often and whom the course will be offered:* Each semester; Dr. Charles Hulin
9. *Staffing implications:* No additional staff required
10. *Adequacy of library, technology, and other resources:* Adequate
11. *Interschool implications:* The course will be of particular interest for American Studies students
12. *Contact persons:* Gene Anderson or Charles Hulin
America’s Music

Text: Richard Crawford, *An Introduction to America’s Music*
A few supplemental readings will be added later.

Each unit of this study will culminate in a performance project that will acquaint students with musical processes and guide them in exploring issues through creative means.

Tests will require that students apply and discuss concepts studied in response to listening to examples from an anthology included with the textbook.

Special guests may include other music faculty members to address areas of expertise, members of Eighth Blackbird to perform and discuss works, and adjunct faculty to perform student compositions.

1. Building a Musical Culture
This unit will explore the beginnings of “American” music, the transplantation of European musical cultures, and the establishment of musical institutions.

Featured Repertoire:
Chadwick *Symphonic Sketches*, Gottschalk “The Union”

Reading:
Ch. 1 “The First Song”: Native American Music
Ch. 3 From Ritual to Art: The Flowering of Sacred Music
Ch. 5 Performing “By Particular Desire”: Early Military, Concert, and Theater Music
Ch. 10 “Be It Ever So Humble”: Theater and Opera, 1800-1860
Ch. 12 Home Music Making and the Publishing Industry
Ch. 14 Of Yankee Doodle and Ophicleides: Bands and Orchestras, 1800 to the 1870s
Ch. 17 A New Orleans Original: Gottschalk of Louisiana
Ch. 18 Two Classic Bostonians: George W. Chadwick and Amy Beach

**Performance activity: New England Singing School Re-enactment**

Objectives:
Experience social dimension of music-making
Experience music as a participatory activity

Students will be introduced to rudimentary vocal technique and musical notation as described by William Billings. The class will learn and sing a simple canon.
2. Iconoclasts
This unit will explore the original voices, iconoclastic breakthroughs, and legacies of early 20th century composers.

Featured Repertoire:
Cowell “Tides of Manaunaun” and “Aeolian Harp”, Ives “The Housatonic at Stockbridge”

Reading:
Ch. 25 “To Stretch Our Ears”: The Music of Charles Ives
Ch. 28 “The Birthright of All of Us”: Classical Music, the Mass Media, and the Depression
Ch. 29 “All That Is Native and Fine”: American Folk Song and Its Collectors

Performance activity: Living Room Music or Music Walk

Objectives:
Explore the performer’s role in shaping an aleatoric work
Explore everyday sounds and actions as building blocks for musical performance

Groups will prepare the same Cage work in groups then perform and compare the different versions they create.

3. Jazz
This unit will explore the roots and development of jazz and its influence on other styles of music.

Featured Repertoire:
Joplin “Maple Leaf Rag”, Ellington “Old Man Blues” and “Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue”, Gershwin Porgy and Bess

Reading:
Ch. 26 “Come On and Hear”: The Early Twentieth Century
Ch. 27 Blues, Jazz, and a Rhapsody: The Jazz Age Dawns
Ch. 30 From New Orleans to Chicago: Jazz Goes National
Ch. 31 “Crescendo in Blue”: Ellington, Basie, and the Swing Band

Performance activity: Blues Improvisation

Objectives:
Explore improvisation within stylistic guidelines
Explore music as a vehicle for personal expression

Students will write original blues texts. Students will recite these texts as the class plays riffs, chords, and simple rhythms on pianos, guitars, and percussion instruments.
4. African American Experience
This unit will explore developments in music that highlight the African American experience.

Featured Repertoire:
Spiritual – “Go Down, Moses”, Bethune “The Storm”, Still First Symphony

Reading:
Ch. 6 Maintaining Oral Traditions: African Music in Early America
Ch. 11 Blacks, Whites, and the Minstrel Stage
Ch. 21 “Make a Noise!”: Slave Songs and Other Black Music to the 1880s

Performance activity: Strange Fruit Response

Objectives:
Explore through creative means individual and cultural positions regarding racism and violence

Students will contemplate and respond to Billie Holiday’s performance of “Strange Fruit” through creative means of their own choosing.

5. Post-War Struggles
This unit will explore the ways in which composers processed the challenges of post-World War II life.

Featured Repertoire:
Bernstein Mass and Age of Anxiety

Reading:
Ch. 33 Classical Music in the Postwar Years
Ch. 35 Songs of Loneliness and Praise: Postwar Popular Trends

Performance activity: 9/11 Compositions

Objectives:
Explore through creative means the impact of world events on worldviews
Explore composition as a dialog with the past

Groups will prepare works that explore the ways that events such as 9/11 and the recent Tsunami disaster have changed their views of the world. These compositions will consist of texts that are constructed from quotations of pre-existing texts accompanied by recordings of sounds collected and arranged by the students.
6. Music and Identity
This unit will explore the interplay of identity and creativity in the work of musicians from the late 20th century to the present.

Featured Works:
Babbitt “Phonemena”, Adams *Harmonliehre*

Reading:
Ch. 37 Melting Pot or Pluralism? : Popular Music and Ethnicity  
Ch. 39 Trouble Girls, Minimalists, and the Gap: The 1960s to the 1980s  
Ch. 40 Black Music and American Identity

**Performance activity: Serial Composition**

Objectives:
Explore the rigor of serial organization through application of serial techniques to pitch, rhythm, and timbre

The class will participate in the composition and performance of a short serial work for piano, voices, and percussion.

7. Music of Social Conscience
This unit will explore the use of music to raise awareness of issues and to contribute to organization for change.

Featured Works:
Rzewski “Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues”, John Luther Adams *in the white silence*

Reading:
Ch. 30 The Golden Age of the American Musical  
Ch. 36 Jazz, Broadway and Musical Permanence

**Performance activity: Protest Song**

Objectives:
Explore the use of music as a vehicle for making challenging statements  
Explore the relationship of melody and harmony.

Each student will research a contemporary issue and comment on the issue by composing a song. Students who are not skilled with notation will record their work, and it will be transcribed by students in MUS 110. Songs will be performed with a simple chordal accompaniment on guitar or piano.