New Course Proposal for Field-of-Study Credit

**Proposed Field of Study**  Performing and Visual Arts (FSVP)

**Course Number**  Music 114

**Course Title**  Popular Music of the 1970s and 1980s

**Catalog Description**  An investigation of the rock and pop music of the US, UK and Jamaica during the 1970s and 1980s through musicological, anthropological, and sociological methods.

**Course Prerequisites**  None

**Credit**  1 Unit

**Estimated Enrollment**  20-25

**Offerings/Instructor**  Annually/Paul Yoon

**Staffing Implications**  No new staff required

**Adequacy of Resources**  Adequate

**Interdepartmental/Interschool Implications**  None in particular

**Approval of Department**

**Contact Person**  Paul Yoon or Gene Anderson

**Purpose/Rationale**  Students will be able to discuss not only the historical developments in popular music of the 70s and 80s, but also the musics’ cultural and social impact and overarching discourses. Through a series of papers, students will investigate how the music of these eras influenced and was influenced by the politics and issues of the day. Additionally, students will argue for how these issues effected musical styles and presentations. Finally, students will be able to identify at least some of the ways the musics of the 70s and 80s have impacted the music and bands that came after it.

**FSVP Credit**

1. Students will organize a “Halloween Karaoke” where they will dress like and (attempt to) sing like some musical performer of the 70s or 80s. This event will be open to the larger student body. Karaoke technology was first introduced in 1970, thereby keeping in line with the theme of the class. This project would be collaborative, where the students work together to pull off the event. The purpose of this project will be to explore the idea of
performance as theater and thereby to investigate, through personal experience, notions of authenticity and spectacle in order to question how to read social texts such as the concert experience or the music video (both for the performer and the audience/consumer).

2. Each student will produce a 90 to 120 minute “podcast” that covers some of the issues addressed in class. This time would include playing songs. Options might include focusing closely on one group or artist and emphasizing their importance. Alternatively, one might take a particular topic, such as gender, and highlight various artists who inform this topic in some way. Each presentation must be detailed and include a thesis that outlines the student’s theoretical & musicological analysis of the music (meaning both the sociological as well as the formal and stylistic). These podcasts will then be “broadcast” on a class website devoted to the class topics.

Description

Popular music of the 70s and 80s represents a pivotal moment in American & British musical culture. The dissolution of the Beatles in 1970 left a vacuum that was filled by a diverse field of rock and pop artists variously labeled progressive, glam, punk, funk, soul, disco, heavy metal, arena, psychedelic, and hard rock. The influence of musical developments in the 80s are still felt today through rap and MTv, both of which began in the 80s. This course investigates the music of these two decades through musicological, anthropological, and sociological methods. We will study the way these musics shaped and were shaped by the discourses of style (both musical and sartorial), gender, sexuality, class, human rights, technology, and race. The music covered in this course will primarily come from the English-speaking world; specifically, the U.S., the U.K., and Jamaica. In addition to studying the music itself, we will look at the importance of film and video and how these media relate to musical developments.

Outline

(The following list is rough and loosely ordered. Written in parenthesis are the proposed sociological topics that accompany the topic.):

1. Listening to music
   a. Basic listening skills (meter, rhythm, major/minor, tonic/dominant, etc.)
   b. Specific understanding of pop song construction & the blues
2. What came before
   a. Quick overview of major developments in rock/pop history
3. Countercultural Movement (Politics, human rights)
4. Psychedelic Rock (Technology, politics)
5. Prog (progressive) rock (Musical style & form)
6. Glam (Gender)
7. Funk (Afro-futurism, politics)
8. Heavy Metal (Gender)
9. Rockumentaries & Mockumentaries (Technology)
10. Punk (Class, musical style, politics)
    a. American roots (Television, Patti Smith, The Ramones, Richard Hell, Iggy Pop, MC5)
    b. British punk (Sex Pistols, The Clash)
    c. American Punk, redub (Dead Kennedys, Minor Threat, Husker Du, The Minutemen, Black Flag)
11. Ska, Reggae, & Dub (politics, human rights)
12. “Can Music Save your Mortal Soul?” (Christian rock, probably won’t do this section)
13. Three chords and the Truth
    a. Bruce Springsteen, U2, “We Are the World,” “Do they Know its Christmas?” Live Aid, etc.
14. MTv (technology, race [Michael Jackson])
    a. Pop explosion
15. New Romantics & “Alternative” Music
16. Rap & Hip-Hop (Race, musical style)
17. Bad Hair Decade (Gender, MTv)
18. Madonna (Gender, sexuality)

Sign-offs

Staffing (Dona Hickey)

Library Resources (Linda Fairtile)

Classroom Technology (Kevin Creamer)

Classrooms (Registrar)