Music & Society (WRTG 3020)
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Overview
First and foremost, this is a class that will focus on inquiry and analysis: asking questions so that we may better understand the topic at hand. Naturally, our topic will be music – especially the way it functions in your life and in society at large. The medium through which we will express our thoughts and opinions is the written word; therefore, we will spend quite a bit of time covering not only style and grammatical issues, but also ways to make our opinions clear and persuasive. To help us reach these goals, the class will be taught not in lecture format, but as a workshop.

Core goals for the course:
1. To help you shape, and then eventually defend, your own ideas and opinions
2. To hone your analytical skills: your ability to judge, to make sense of things
3. To help you better understand music’s impact on your life
4. To introduce you to the many functions of music
5. To explore what music means to society – what emotions and ideas it evokes, what values it reflects, and so on
6. To heighten your awareness of the sounds that surround you
7. To aid you in structuring your ideas
8. To help you achieve a graceful, error-free writing style

Texts and materials
Please have duplicated drafts (typed, double-spaced, and stapled) ready when due. Drafts are required, but not graded. Please number and date all drafts. I will not accept papers that have not been reviewed. Assignments that are late will receive half-credit.

Required texts (available through campus bookstore):
1. Professor Brigham’s Music & Society Reader WRTG 3020 (packet of readings)

You will receive readings and other course materials in the form of handouts. Essential tools for writing are a good dictionary and thesaurus; I recommend Webster’s Collegiate and Roget’s, respectively.

Attendance
Regular attendance and active participation are crucial to this course. Students who miss class will be expected to ask classmates for the information missed (you will exchange email addresses for this purpose). Because life often gets in the way of scholarly pursuits, I allow (but do not encourage) you to miss three class periods. Please note that I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. For every additional absence, your participation grade will be lowered ten points. Seven absences will result in an F for the course. If, for reasons beyond your control, you cannot meet these standards, you have
the right to ask me for an IWIF — essentially, an incomplete. Students who miss two classes in the first two weeks will be administratively dropped.

Tardiness and leaving early is unacceptable and will also affect your participation grade. Two late arrivals/early departures count as one absence. If you are late, you must take responsibility for that fact and make sure I haven't marked you absent.

**Grading standards**

These standards apply to papers as well as other written assignments. Grades for oral presentations are based on clarity, form, and delivery.

- **A** Exceptional in form and content; responding to a topic or question that many find interesting, it offers an original point of view and follows a compelling narrative or line of reasoning. If need be, the paper responds to counterarguments thoughtfully, and it certainly analyzes evidence or one’s experience in an in-depth manner. The style is graceful and error-free.

- **B** Clearly written, well-developed, interesting. The paper may have some minor, non-recurring difficulties regarding the narrative, argument, style, or mechanics, but no flaws that compromise the point of view it presents or the readability of its prose. OR An essay that is far less ambitious than an “A” paper; this is an essay that may be well-written and organized, but whose narrative, reasoning, and argument may be nonetheless somewhat routine or self-evident.

- **C** A mixture of strengths and weaknesses. The paper may be readable, reasonably well-organized, and support a point of view satisfactorily, but it will have some important unresolved problems concerning the quality of the claim, the line of reasoning, the narrative, the use of evidence, style, or grammar. The paper may fulfill the basic requirements of the assignment, but say little of genuine importance or significance.

- **D** Seriously deficient in content, form, style, or mechanics. It may be disorganized, illogical, confusing, unfocused, or contain pervasive errors that impair readability.

- **F** Incoherent, formless, or not turned in when due.

**Participation grading standards** (class discussion, oral and written critiques)

- **A** Excellent critics are always prepared and know the strengths and weaknesses of the paper at hand. Moreover, they consistently suggest ways to make the author’s point clearer and more persuasive. These critics offer their insights freely and are noted as excellent critics by their classmates. Contrary to popular opinion, excellent critics do not dominate discussions.

- **B** Above average critics differ from excellent critics chiefly in their lack of consistency. They may also wait for me to call on them, instead of taking the initiative. They are noted as good critics by their classmates.

- **C** Average critics are sometimes prepared, sometimes not. These critics may have some trouble discerning the paper’s strengths and weaknesses; thus, they may not be sure how to make it clearer, more interesting, or more persuasive. Average critics generally wait to be called on. Again, they are noted as average critics by their classmates.
Below average critics are generally not prepared and do not participate in class
discussion.

**Approximate Calculation of Grades**

*Please note that there is no extra-credit

30% Written responses to reading questions
10% Participation (in-class participation, comments on classmates' drafts, timely
submission of work)
5% Miscellaneous homework
10% Musical Taste in Adolescence paper
10% Functional Music paper
5% Soundwalk paper
15% Personal Essay on a musical theme
15% Genre/Popular Music assignment

**Plagiarism**

If you submit another person's work as your own or fail to credit the ideas of others,
you will receive an F in the course.

**Special Notes**

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, let me know early in
the semester so your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to bring
documentation of your disability to the Disabilities Service Office in Willard 322 (phone
303.492.8671).

If you speak English as a second language, let me know before the third class
period. Though it may not be necessary, the Program for Writing and Rhetoric offers a
version of WRTG 3020 in the ESL format.