Music and Society (WRTG 3020)
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Overview
First and foremost, this course focuses on inquiry and analysis: asking meaningful
questions so that we may better understand the topic at hand. Naturally, our topic will be
music. The medium through which we will express our thoughts and opinions is the written
word; therefore, we will spend time covering not only style and grammatical issues, but also
ways to make our insights 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 help you better understand music’s impact on your actions and attitudes.
3. To improve your creativity
4. To heighten your awareness of the sounds that surround you
5. To help you achieve a graceful, error-free writing style
6. To hone your oral presentation skills

Materials
Your own writing serves as the text for this course. Please have duplicated drafts
(typed, double-spaced, and stapled) ready when due. I do not accept late homework or
major papers that have not been reviewed.

You will receive other course material 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 two 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. Six 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 IW/IF – essentially, an incomplete.

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 content, form, and style: 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 Deficient in content, form, style, or mechanics. It may be disorganized, illogical, confusing, unfocused, superficial, 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, attendance, preparedness)

A Excellent critics are always prepared for class and offer their insights freely. (This does not mean they dominate class discussion; they are more discrete than that.) Moreover, they understand the strengths and weaknesses of the paper at hand, and consistently suggest ways to make the author’s point clearer and/or more persuasive. They are noted as excellent critics by their classmates.

B Above average critics are usually prepared for class. Regularly, they offer their insights. They often understand the strengths and weaknesses of the paper at hand and usually suggest ways to make the author’s point clearer and more persuasive. They are noted as good critics by their classmates.

C More often than not, average critics are prepared for class. Occasionally, they will offer their insights freely, but usually they wait to be called on. These critics may have some trouble discerning the strengths and weaknesses of the work in front of them; thus, they may not be sure how to make it clearer, more interesting, or more persuasive. They are noted as average critics by their classmates.

D Below average critics are generally not prepared and generally not participate in class discussion. They have difficulty determining the strengths and weaknesses of the work in front of them. They are noted as below average critics by their classmates.

F These critics are not prepared and do not participate in class discussion.
Approximate Calculation of Grades
*Please note that there is no extra-credit

15% Participation (in-class participation, comments on classmates' drafts, timely submission of work)
15% Personal Essay
15% Crap Band paper and presentation
15% Music Review
5% Oral Presentation of Review
30% Research Essay/Paper
5% Miscellaneous homework

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.