

## M151 – American Popular Music Class Syllabus

**Professor Bill Yeager**, Director of Jazz Studies - M202

**Office phone number:** (619) 594-4680 (voice mail)

**Email:** [yeager1@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:yeager1@mail.sdsu.edu)

(mass emails are sent through [nobody@blackboard.sdsu.edu](mailto:nobody@blackboard.sdsu.edu) - do not reply to this address as it goes to nobody!)

**Office hours:** MW 9:30am – 10:00am in M113 / TTH 9:00am-9:30am in M113

**Once you click “Begin” to start an exam, you must click “Save and Submit” within the 60 minutes (120 minutes on Final). Even if you decide to not take the exam at this time or answer just a few questions, you still must click “Save and Submit” within the 60 minutes or you will be locked out of system! This will also negate any previous attempts or later attempts and give you a grade of ZERO. You cannot pause the exam! It is also important that you have a strong Internet connection when taking the exams so you don’t fall off and get locked out of the system.**

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

This course contains numerous MP3 music samples. In order to be successful in this course, you must be able to play these on your PC or Macintosh computer. Use of smart phones and tablets is not recommended, especially when taking tests in this course.

Not all Internet browsers work with Blackboard 9.1 (especially “Google Chrome” and “Internet Explorer”). You need to download either “Firefox” or “Safari” for this class. It plays the MP3’s perfectly from the “Yahoo Media Player”. I would also suggest that you go into “Preferences” and make your Blackboard login page <https://blackboard.sdsu.edu/webapps/login/> be the homepage for this browser, as you will be using this on a daily basis.

Students are responsible for reviewing the Blackboard test taking tips at the following website before taking an exam. This will reduce technical problems and frustrations:

[http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/student/additionalhelp/student\\_test.html](http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/student/additionalhelp/student_test.html)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This is an **Explorations course in the Humanities and Fine Arts**. Completing this course will help you to do the following in greater depth: 1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments; 2) describe various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures; 3) identify issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance; 4) demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

Music is art as well as science. To be able to comprehend it to the fullest we must, therefore, be able to appreciate both its emotional and intellectual content. The aim of this course is very simple: To provide you with the tools for a basic understanding of popular music. It will not make you a musician or teach you how to write music. It will, however, give you the necessary background to understand what is going on technically when you are listening to popular music, so that your experience is not limited to a wash of sound that produces a certain feeling.

This course challenges the student to reevaluate a familiar musical medium, popular music, as cultural expression blossoming from events, trends and contemporary thought, as opposed to sheer entertainment for listening or dance. It analyzes the musical and textual structure as the vehicle for this expression.

American Popular Music connects the student to the recent past and examines cultural context and change, and practices. In addition, it requires the student to learn about the basic elements of music in preparation for the student's concert report.

**American Popular Music** will deal with human response both physiological and psychological to music. It will deal with U.S. and World history and societal factors from the 19th and 20th centuries to the present. The materials and facts presented in this class, in addition to being historical, are very **graphic and direct**. This course will introduce the student to the evolution of American popular music from its early roots to the present. The popular music artist's works will be studied and evaluated from musical, sociological, psychological, historical and financial perspectives. Students should develop a better understanding of where the music originated from; the forms intrinsic musical quality/value; the affects/influences this music has both in their present and future lives; and how the entertainment industry impacts/controls social, psychological and financial facets of American life.

#### STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of popular music. Students demonstrate the ability to use the Internet for research. They can identify the instruments, styles and musical concepts incorporated in popular music and will be exposed to some of the great masters of this art form.

---

#### COURSE FORMAT

American Popular Music is offered as a hybrid class incorporating a textbook and materials on Blackboard. A required paper reviewing a SDSU Jazz Ensemble Concert (with a world class guest artist TBA) is part of the curriculum.

---

Textbook (available at Aztec Shops)

[American Popular Music - Music 151 - San Diego State University](#) – ISBN 0077809025

David Lee Joyner (with additional materials from "Music: An Appreciation" seventh, brief edition / Roger Kamien), McGraw-Hill, 2009.

---

#### ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR

**Bill Yeager** has a diverse musical background, both as a performer, composer/arranger and educator. He is a Professor of Music and Director of Jazz Studies at San Diego State University and is a well-known studio/jazz/classical trombonist performing on hundreds of records, films, TV shows and commercials.

From artists studied in this course alone, Professor Yeager has recorded or performed with:

Ray Charles (2 Grammy winning CDs), Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Elvis Presley (the Elvis Lives tour), Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughn, B.B. King, The Benny Goodman Orchestra, The Glenn Miller Orchestra (conducted by Tex Beneke), Dizzy Gillespie, David Sanborn (with the SD Symphony), Johnny Cash, Paul Anka, Tina Turner, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross and the Supremes, The Spinners, The Temptations, The Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, Paul Simon, the Moody Blues, Billy Joel, Barry Manilow, and Donna Summer. Also featured in this course are a number of his original compositions/arrangements and recorded performances.

He has performed on such films as the "Rocky" movies, TV shows such as the "Tonight Show", "Hawaii Five-O", "The Bob Hope Show" and commercials such as Budweiser and Apple Computers. Before coming to San Diego, Bill was founder/director of the highly acclaimed Los Angeles Jazz Workshop where he recorded three very successful albums and received a Grammy nomination.

His SDSU Jazz Ensemble #1 has won the National Collegiate Jazz Competition in Orlando, FL and has been featured at the Monterey Jazz Festival at Sea, Hawaii International Jazz Festival, Ensenada Jazz Festival, the North Sea Jazz Festival (Holland), Montreux Jazz Festival (Switzerland), as well as numerous first place awards. His groups have performed throughout the U.S., Europe, Taiwan, Bolivia, and Mexico.

---

## EVALUATION AND GRADING

### EVALUATION

14 Exams (5pts each)	70%
Required Concert Report	10%
Final Exam	20%

### GRADING

A	93-100%
A-	90-92.99%
B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%
B-	80-82.99%
C+	77-79.99%
C	73-76.99%
C-	70-72.99%
D+	67-69.99%
D	63-66.99%
D-	60-62.99%
F	below 60%

You have a time limit of 60 minutes to take the exams (120 minutes for the Final Exam). You may take the exams multiple times within the time window it is offered.

**Once you click “Begin” to start an exam, you must click “Save and Submit” within the 60 minutes (120 minutes on Final). Even if you decide to not take the exam at this time or answer just a few questions, you still must click “Save and Submit” within the 60 minutes or you will be locked out of system! This will also negate any previous attempts or later attempts and give you a grade of ZERO. You cannot pause the exam! It is also important that you have a strong Internet connection when taking the exams so you don’t fall off and get locked out of the system.**

Please make sure you have 60 minutes of free time to finish the exam (120 minutes for the Final Exam).

**Exams will be made available at 11am on Wednesdays (after that class) and close at 11:55pm on Fridays (except the final exam that has extended times).**

You have multiple attempts to take the exams. You will receive the grade from your last attempt.

**Do not miss exams, as this will greatly affect your grade. There are no make-ups!**

---

#### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable. Consequences will be administered in accordance with official school policy.

---

#### REQUIRED CONCERT REPORT

SDSU requires a writing component for all GE courses. Students in Music 151 will write a 350-420 word report (about one and a half pages at 12 point in either Times New Roman or New York font) evaluating the SDSU Guest Artist Concert (featuring the SDSU Jazz Ensemble, directed by Bill Yeager).

Date, time and location of this concert and the possible make-up are listed in the "Class Schedule".  
IT IS IMPORTANT YOU PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS BEFORE THE CONCERT DATE TO AVOID A POSSIBLE SELL OUT AND LONG LINES!!!

**Online Purchase:** You can purchase tickets online at: <http://music.sdsu.edu/>. Follow the link on the home page under Quick Links: "Purchase Concert Tickets." You will be able to print your tickets at home on your own printer or you can pick them up at will call. Only students with a Visa or MasterCard can purchase their tickets online. Box office will be open one hour before the performance.

Reports will be evaluated for clarity, style, and grammatical correctness. Plagiarism of any sort will result in an "F" for the entire course and will be denied course forgiveness.

#### M151 CONCERT REPORT REQUIREMENTS

The following points clearly delineate what is expected on the concert report. Carefully following this format will insure a good grade.

1. Neatly typed (No credit given if not typed).
2. Offer objective observations on four or five pieces in the program as defined in the terms of the text and lectures.
3. Offer subjective perceptions and opinions of those pieces. Did you like or dislike what you heard, and why.
4. The required length of the paper is one and one half typewritten pages. Limit the maximum length to two pages. Type Font size should be 12 (New Times Roman or New York), double-spaced (350-420 words). Papers noticeably under the 350-420 word requirement will be penalized.
5. Grading will be based upon two factors. First, 5 points of the concert report will be evaluated on the basis of the accuracy of the objective observations. Second, the latter 5 points will be evaluated on the basis of correct spelling, proper grammar and proper application of punctuation.
6. This is an academic paper. Do not write in a conversational, text message or "novelist's" manner or style.
7. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade in the course in accordance with University policy.

#### CONCERT REPORT POLICIES

Failure to turn in the concert report will result in the student losing all credit for the report. No make-ups will be allowed.

Students may be excused for one of three reasons. They are as follows:

1. Class conflict.
2. Work conflict.
3. Any other activity that was planned prior the beginning of the semester.

If an unexpected medical or family emergency occurs on the day of the assigned concert date or alternate concert report performance date, the student may sign up for a new alternate concert report date (a medical emergency will, again, require written verification from an attending physician on appropriate letterhead). An unexpected work conflict will require documentation from the student's supervisor or employer on company letterhead.

CONCERT REPORT GRADING PARAMETERS

The following are examples of errors that will cause a student to forfeit points on a concert report:

1. Mixing past tense with present tenses in describing an event that occurred in the past. Write the paper in past tense. (Minus 1 point per occurrence)
2. Run-on sentences. (Minus 1 point per occurrence)
3. Incomplete sentences. (Minus 1 point per occurrence)
4. Incoherent or non sequitur sentences. (Minus 1 point per occurrence)
5. Redundant information. (Minus 1 point per occurrence)
6. Misspelling proper names of performers, composers and/or arrangers and song titles that appear on the program. (Minus 1 point per occurrence)
7. Misspelling the names of instruments, conceptual terms and historic or rhythmic styles, like:  
Cymbal, not symbol  
Bass, not base  
Saxophone, not saxaphone  
(Minus 1 point per occurrence)
8. Incorrect application of conceptual and technical terms. (Minus 1 point per occurrence)
9. Improper application or non-application of paragraphs. (Minus 1 point per occurrence)
10. Proper delineation of song titles.  
**The wrong way:**  
The ensemble's first piece, Happy Birthday, was poorly performed. (Minus 1 point per occurrence)  
**The right way(s):**  
The ensemble's first piece, Happy Birthday, was poorly performed. Or:  
The ensemble's first piece, "Happy Birthday," was poorly performed. (Take note that the comma is inside the quotation mark!)
11. Instruments do not play themselves.  
**The wrong way:**  
The alto saxophone played a wonderfully melodic solo. Instruments don't play themselves!  
(Minus 1 point per occurrence)  
**The right way(s):**  
The alto saxophone player performed a wonderfully melodic solo. Or;  
The alto saxophonist played a wonderfully melodic solo.
12. Incorrect application of prepositions  
(Minus 1 point per occurrence)

**ESSAY RUBRIC (Left column represents Grade Letter from A to F)**

	CONCEPTUAL	THESIS	DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT	STRUCTURING	LANGUAGE
A	Essay includes thoughtful analysis. Essay shows command of interpretive and conceptual tasks required by the assignment. Essay includes original, insightful ideas that go beyond	Essay is controlled by a clear, precise, well-defined thesis. Thesis is sophisticated in both statement and insight. Thesis is argumentative	Essay includes well-chosen concrete detail integrated with appropriate, insightful commentary. Quotations are used effectively. Causal connections between ideas is	Transitions are appropriate, clear, and smooth. Paragraph arrangement is particularly apt.	Essay uses a variety of sophisticated sentences structures effectively. Essay employs aptly chosen words and has avoided "to be" verbs. Essay

	ideas discussed in class.	in nature.	evident.		has few minor grammatical errors.
B	Essay shows a good understanding of the text(s). Ideas go beyond the obvious. Essay may have one minor factual or conceptual inconsistency.	Essay has a clear, specific, argumentative thesis that is central to the essay. Thesis may be too general.	Essay focuses on the thesis consistently. Essay develops a main argument with clear major points, appropriate textual evidence, and supporting detail. Essay makes effort to link rather than list ideas.	Paragraphs exhibit distinct units of thought. Transitions are clear. Paragraphs are coherently arranged.	Essay may have some mechanical or stylistic problems such as occasional problematic word choice or awkward syntax. Essay may have a few spelling or punctuation errors, or a cliché. Quotations are usually presented effectively.
C	Essay shows an understanding of the basic ideas and information involved in the assignment. It may have some factual, interpretive, or conceptual errors.	Essay has a general central thesis or controlling idea.	Essay only partially develops the argument. Some ideas and comments are underdeveloped or unsupported. Essay makes limited use of textual evidence. Analysis is shallow.	Essay includes some awkward transitions. Some paragraphs are brief, weakly unified, or underdeveloped. Paragraph arrangement may not be entirely cohesive.	Essay includes frequent wordiness. Several sentences may be unclear or awkward. Essay uses words imprecisely and over-relies on passive voice. Essay may include one or two major grammatical errors (subject/verb agreement, fragments, etc.). Essay makes an effort to present quotations accurately.
D	Essay reveals an inadequate command of text and has included significant factual and conceptual errors. Essay does not respond directly to the demands of the assignment.	Thesis is vague or not central to the essay.	Essay frequently only narrates (retells the story). Essay digresses from one topic to another without developing ideas. Essay makes insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence.	Structure of essay is simplistic. Essay wanders from topic to topic and includes extraneous ideas. Paragraph breaks are inappropriate. Paragraphs are illogically arranged.	Essay includes some major grammatical or proofreading errors that interfere. Language is marred by colloquialisms, clichés, or repeated inexact word choices.

					Quotations are inappropriate or punctuated incorrectly.
F	Author has not understood the text, the discussions, or the assignment.	There is no discernable thesis.	Essay demonstrates little or no development. It may list facts or include misinformation. Essay does not use quotations, or fails to cite sources, or plagiarizes material.	Essay does not include transitions. Paragraphing is incoherent. Essay suggests poor planning or no serious revision.	Essay includes numerous grammatical and stylistic problems that seriously distract from the argument.

#### CONCERT PROTOCOL

1. **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY – ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES MUST BE TURNED OFF!!!**  
No cell phones, laptops, iPods, etc. can be used. Absolutely no text messaging. Noncompliance will result in the device being confiscated and no credit for the concert. No smoking, food or drinks are allowed.
2. Attendance credit will be forfeited for talking or disruptive behavior during the concert (Section 41304 California Code of Regulations SDSU Catalogue). If you are **late** or **leave early**, you will **not** receive credit.
3. Each student is personally responsible for filling out an attendance card obtained from an usher before the concert begins and turning it into an usher when the concert is completed. Cheating on this graded procedure will result in a grade of “F” in the class, denial of course forgiveness and the matter reported to the University Judicial Officer.
4. It is appropriate and encouraged to applaud for soloists during a performance in a jazz or popular music concert setting. This can inspire the performers and make for a more enjoyable experience for all.