Texas A&M University  
Core Curriculum  
Initial Request for a Course Addition to the Fall 2014 Core Curriculum  

Foundational Component Area: Creative Arts

In the box below, describe how this course meets the Foundational Component Area description for Creative Arts. Courses in this category focus on appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.

The proposed course must contain all elements of the Foundational Component Area. How does the proposed course specifically address the Foundational Component Area definition above?

The proposed course addresses the Foundational Component Area definition in the following ways. It involves the analysis and appreciation of 20th/21st century popular music forms such as blues, mento, ska, rocksteady, reggae, calypso, soca, hip-hop, highlife, hip-life, kwato and Afro-beat, all of which are creative artifacts and works of imagination of Africa-descended people in the United States, the Caribbean and Africa itself. It asks students to synthesize and interpret the diverse artistic expression that constitute this music in the contexts of an African continental traditional heritage; the New World experiences of cultural appropriation, hybridization, reinvention and revitalization; and the reconnections of the African Diaspora with the African continental “homeland.” It also asks students to communicate their analysis/synthesis/interpretations using critical, creative and innovative means ranging from their engagement with assigned readings and audio-visual resources, classroom discussions, traditional and non-traditional modes of individual/group presentations, individual and group creative projects, reading and viewing reaction papers, and a final research paper.

Core Objectives

Describe how the proposed course develops the required core objectives below by indicating how each learning objective will be addressed, what specific strategies will be used for each objective and how student learning of each objective will be evaluated.

The proposed course is required to contain each element of the Core Objective.

Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information):

The course will address the learning objective of critical thinking by encouraging student’s inquiry, synthesis of information, analysis, creative thinking, innovation, and evaluation. The specific strategies for these are as follows. Inquiry—the course will raise vital questions and problems about popular music in the African Diaspora. However students will be asked also to raise their own questions and problems and to formulate them clearly and precisely in their papers, projects, presentations and discussions. Synthesis of information—students will be asked to explore common themes in the relevant material that the course provides (and what they discover on their own), and to use abstracted ideas (theories) to understand them as a whole. Analysis—students will be asked to come to well-reasoned conclusions/solutions about the questions and problems raised in the course, and to test their conclusions and solutions against relevant criteria for critically engaging with popular music. Creative thinking and innovation—students will be encouraged to think, with an open mind, across alternative (cultural, theoretical) systems of thought, and asked to explore alternative or non-traditional means of communicating their conclusions and solutions. Evaluation—students will be asked to recognize and assess the assumptions, implications and practical consequences of their conclusions and solutions. The learning objective of critical thinking will be evaluated by the following criteria: clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth,
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breadth, logic and fairness of a student's arguments, evidence, conclusions and solutions.

Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication):

The course will address the learning objective of communication by encouraging students’ effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and audio-visual communication. The specific strategies for these are as follows. Oral communication—Students will do creative and formal presentations of course material alongside other relevant material identified by the student but not specifically assigned in the course. Students will be asked to individually, collectively and actively participate in thoughtful class discussions of readings and audio-visual material provided in the course and presented by fellow students. Audio-visual communication—students will be encouraged, in their presentations, to use video, still images, sound and live performance to convey Popular Music in the African Diaspora as an embodied artistic expression, i.e. as a process and product of performance. Written communication—students will convey their synthesis, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of course and other material through reading and viewing reactions papers, a midterm essay and a final paper, and short ad-hoc written assignments throughout the semester. The learning objective will be evaluated on the basis of students' ability to be clear, precise and socially/critically thoughtful in their communication.

Teamwork (to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal):

The course will address the learning objective of teamwork by encouraging students’ ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to do so. Specifically, student will be asked to synthesize, analyze and interpret material individually but also collaboratively in class discussions, class presentations and creative projects. Teamwork will be evaluated not only on the basis of the successful completion of the collaborative endeavors but also the capacity to present both the diverse and unified voices of the group.

Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities):

The course will address the learning objective of social responsibility by promoting intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility and the capacity for regional, national and global engagements. Intercultural competence—students will not only interact with and across music of diverse cultures of the African Diaspora, but will also be encouraged to think with an open mind across alternative cultural systems/thoughts and to recognize their own cultural assumptions as they do so. Knowledge of civic responsibility—the critical and cultural engagements of the course will assist students to develop an informed set of values, ethics and beliefs; to seek an intellectual and social climate that favors civility and respect; and to promote civil discourse and the treatment of all with dignity and respect regardless of personal or other differences. Regional, national and global engagements—a key focus of the course is to understand Africa and its Diaspora as a regional, national but also global manifestation. By helping students to analyze, understand, and communicate critically and sensitively about the music of these diversely manifested communities students will develop the ability to engage with these communities in their regional, national and global dimensions. Students social responsibility will be evaluated on the basis of how they understand and communicate the importance of popular music in the African Diaspora as, among other things, an opportunity to engage with the world outside the classroom.
Department of Performance Studies

AFST/MUSC/PERF 327 Popular Musics in the Africa Diaspora

Request for International and Cultural Diversity (ICD) Designation

The course, which examines popular music among diverse cultures of African descent on at least three continents (African, United States and the Caribbean), entails not just a sense of geographic diversity but also an understanding of diverse political, social and cultural circumstances that have shaped the music. It highlights not only the international/global diversity of the music and people/cultures that make it but also connections both among these cultures and with cultures outside it. A hundred percent of the content of the course comes from the last 50 years.