

RYERSON UNIVERSITY
Department of Philosophy and Music

MUS 108 Section 01, Winter 2014

Gospel Music: Songs of the Spirit

Tutorial:

Lecture:

Instructor: Dr. Peter Johnston

E-mail: peter.johnston@ryerson.ca

Office Hrs (JOR 407):

This is an ACS professional elective (PE) course available to students of all levels.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Gospel music evolved from syncopated African spirituals, field hollers, and Christian hymns, and in turn influenced musical traditions as diverse as the blues, Celtic music and soul. Using lecture, audio-visual examples, group discussion and group singing exercises, this course will explore the vocal tradition of gospel music through a socio-cultural, historical, political and aesthetic lens, and in so doing trace the history of one of the oldest and most exuberant vocal genres of North America.

GOALS OF THE COURSE:

1. To develop an understanding of the complex history of Gospel music, and of its relationship to popular music in North America and around the world.
2. To develop a vocabulary for analyzing and discussing the musical structures of Gospel specifically, and African-American music in general.
3. To develop skills in performing Gospel songs and songs from related traditions

COURSE EVALUATION:

Listening Quiz (In-class)	5%	Week 5 – 13 Feb
Gospel Record Review)	10%	Week 6 – 27 Feb
Listening Journal	5%	Week 7 – 6 March
Annotated Bibliography and Outline	10%	Week 8 - 13 March
Essay	25%	Week 10 – 27 March
Final Test (In-class)	25%	Week 11 – 3 April
Participation	20%	Continuous

Please notify the professor in writing of any accommodations requested during the term for religious observances or disability, by the second class as per university policy. Any alterations in assignments, tests or deadlines will be discussed in class prior to

implementation. This course is lecture-based, with student participation through guided listening activities and group discussion.

Further details about the assignments will be available on Blackboard under “Course Information”.

REQUIRED TEXT: Links to all required readings will be provided on Blackboard.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

This course is divided into two parts: a practice-based tutorial and a lecture. Attendance will be taken in both the tutorial and lecture sections of the course.

In the tutorial we will explore the details of gospel music performance practice, loosely following the musical developments explored in the lectures. Materials and repertoire will be determined on a week-by-week basis, based on students’ skill level and collective progress. Students are expected to take part in all of the exercises and performances, and to familiarize themselves with the assigned repertoire before class.

For the lecture component, students are expected to complete the assigned readings *before* each lecture and be prepared to discuss them in class. A list of questions pertaining to the readings will be posted each week on Blackboard; students should expect to be called upon in class to answer these questions.

Participation grades will be determined through participation in class discussion and in the practical component of the course.

If a class is missed, students *cannot* submit in-class assignments or reading questions over email or at a later date, and the mark for that particular assignment will not be counted towards the participation grade.

Unavoidable absences during tests must be discussed in person with the professor within one week of the date of absence, and written documentation of illness, vehicular accidents and funerary attendance is mandatory by that time in order to avoid a grade of “0” on the test. Students will not be excused from deadlines for work, extracurricular or family obligations, or transportation issues other than a documented transit breakdown. *Unless there is a test or assignment due, if you do not have written documentation, you **do not** need to notify the professor that you will miss class.*

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR PROFESSOR

E-mail should be used only when you are unable to meet the professor in office hours. In *all* communications with the professor, you must identify yourself by full name (as written on the course roster) **AND** by your course and section number (e.g., “John

Smith, Music 211-01”). Due to the temptation for misuse of communication technology, e-mail and phone messages requesting 1) explanations of material or announcements in classes not attended, 2) extensions or 3) grade information will not be granted. Students must consult their professor *in person* in one of the office hours posted or immediately before or after class for all such matters. *Emails received after 5 pm on Fridays will not be answered until the following Monday morning. Please allow 24-48 hours to receive an email response from the professor on weekdays.* Class notes will *not* be provided by the professor over email, and will be available on the course Blackboard website approximately one day before lecture. Students are responsible for consulting Blackboard regularly for pertinent announcements and notes as they become available.

Students may wish to explore the Learning Success website at www.ryerson.ca/learningsuccess to improve their core academic skills as useful workshops on note taking, essay writing, and learning from textbooks are presented there.

Cell phones, smart phones, mp3 players, etc. should be turned off at the beginning of each class. Lectures and tutorials may not be recorded without the permission of the professor. Recorded audio and visual examples played in class are under copyright.

Students are expected to be respectful of the professor and their fellow students; please do not talk especially during special presentations or musical examples.

MUS 108 CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to revision):
--

All readings will be posted on Blackboard. With the exception of Week 1, the required readings are for the Thursday lectures only. For each week, Reading 1 is required, and Reading 2 is suggested for further background

Week 1 (Tutorial): Class introduction; overview of term, course objectives; brief survey of gospel music history and performance practice.

Lecture: Introduction - Africans in America: Music and Spirituality

Reading: Small, Christopher. “Africans, Europeans and the Making of Music.” *Music of The Common Tongue: Survival and Celebration in African American Music*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1987. 17-48.

Available as an e-book through the library:

<http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzQlODAxI9BTg2?sid=1c7fa38d-4ea8-457e-b734-8bd6e1eb935a@sessionmgr113&vid=1&format=EB&rid=1>

Week 2: Gospel Roots and Routes: Spirituals, Work Songs, and Blues

Tutorial song: The Buzzard Lope – Georgia Sea Island Singers

Reading: Darden, Robert. "The Rise of Spirituals in North America." *People Get Ready!: A New History of Gospel Music*. New York: Continuum, 2005. 34-69

Week 3: The Formative years of Gospel, Part I: The Great Migration and the Making of a new Tradition

Tutorial song: Swing Low, Sweet Chariot – The Plantation Singers

Reading: Darden, Robert. "The Foundations of Gospel: The Black Exodus, Barbershop Quartets, the Pentecostals, and Jack-leg Preachers" *People Get Ready!: A New History of Gospel Music*. New York: Continuum, 2005. 130–158.

Week 4: The Formative years of Gospel, Part II: From the Church to the Streets

Tutorial song: If You See My Savior – Thomas A Dorsey

Reading: Darden, Robert. "Chicago and the Rise of Gospel Music." *People Get Ready! A New History of Gospel Music*. New York: Continuum, 2005. 181-195.

Week 5: IN CLASS LISTENING QUIZ

From Spirituals to Swing: Sister Tharpe and the Secularization of Gospel Music

Tutorial song: Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen – Mahalia Jackson

Reading: Wald, Gayle. "From Spirituals to Swing: Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Gospel Crossover." *American Quarterly*, 55.3. (2003): 387-416.

READING WEEK: 17-21 Feb.

Week 6: GOSPEL RECORD REVIEW DUE

Southern Gospel: The Holy sounds in Country and Bluegrass

Tutorial song: Down By the Riverside – Sister Rosetta Tharpe

Reading: Goff, James R. "The Rise of Southern Gospel". *Church History*, 67.4. (1998): 722-744.

Week 7: LISTENING JOURNAL DUE

Crossing Over: Tracing the influence of gospel music on popular music in the 1950s, 1960s, and 970s

Tutorial song: That Old Country Church – The Blackwood Brothers

Reading: Maultsby, Portia K. "The Impact of Gospel Music on the Secular Music Industry." *Signifyin(g), Sanctifyin', and Slam Dunking*, ed. Gena Dagele Caponi. The University of Massachusetts Press, 1999. 172-190.

Week 8: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ESSAY OUTLINE DUE

Getting God Going: Gospel music and social activism in the Civil Rights Movement

Tutorial song: Must Be Jesus (The Southern Tones) and I Got A Woman (Ray Charles)

Reading: Johnson Reagon, Bernice. 1987. "Let the Church Sing 'Freedom'". *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 7. (1987): 105-118.

Week 9: Doing the Lord's Work: The Evolution of Contemporary Gospel

Tutorial song: People Get Ready – Curtis Mayfield

Reading: Kernodle, Tammy L. 2006. "Work the Works: The Role of African American Women in the Development of Contemporary Gospel". *Black Music Research Journal*, 26/1. (2006): 89-109.

Week 10: ESSAY DUE

Contemporary Gospel Music: Holy Hip Hop and the sound of tradition

Tutorial song: Oh Happy Day – Edwin Hawkins Singers

Reading: Smith Pollard, Deborah. "Preachers in Disguise." 2008. *When the Church Becomes Your Party*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008. 137-159.

Week 11: FINAL TEST IN CLASS (3 Apr)

Tutorial Song: Brighter Day – Kirk Franklin and the Family

Week 12: Performance day – we will perform all of the songs learned in the tutorials.

TEST (25%):

The final test in Week 11 will consist of three components:

1. Listening: students will be expected to analyze and identify recorded examples using the musical terminology learned in class. The necessary listening skills will be taught in depth throughout the lectures, and no prior musical knowledge is assumed for the successful completion of this course.
2. Short Answer: students will be asked to define terms learned in class and demonstrate their knowledge of important historical figures and events.
3. Long Answer: students will be asked to write a detailed response to one of three questions, each of which will be based on one of the course readings.

ESSAY (25%):

Students will be given a choice of topics for the essay. Essays are to be 6-8 typed, double-spaced pages (1500-2000 words), Times font size 12, with a complete bibliography and discography at the end, and submitted in hard copy on the due date. Long quotations must be indented and single-spaced. The essay will build on journal and bibliographic assignments from earlier in the term. Students are expected to use reference materials in the library (books, journals, encyclopedias, recordings) and reliable sources on the internet. Authors must therefore be cited in all websites used, and proper bibliographic format used. Use of Wikipedia is prohibited. Students should use a minimum of four peer-reviewed written sources in addition to recordings, and must cite all directly or indirectly quoted and paraphrased material, including the professor's notes or lectures. The course reader and class notes will not be counted as one of the four required written research sources.

Late essays will be penalized at a rate of 5% per business day for the first week after the due date, counted from 4 pm each day. Late essays must be placed in the 4th floor Jorgenson Hall drop box. A grade of "0" will be permanently assigned to missing essays or tests after one week. Exemptions from the penalty will only be granted with appropriate written documentation and in person consultation with the professor within one week of the submission deadline. Students are not expected to use the Turnitin service for the detection of plagiarism on essays and other written assignments. *It should be noted, however, that plagiarism is dealt with seriously under the Ryerson academic code, and all written assignments will be subject to further investigation of research sources used should it be warranted.* Further details outlining citation practices, proper bibliographic referencing, and research techniques will appear in the essay handout and will be discussed in class. Any questions regarding the use of source material, proper citation and bibliographic format, and other essay concerns are welcome during office hours. As email is a poor format for these types of discussions, please save them for appointments in person.

LISTENING JOURNAL (5%):

Listen to a series of 16 gospel recordings, and write a short paragraph (3-6 sentences) on each track (use Times font, size 12), using the terms and concepts discussed in class and in the readings to describe and contextualize the music. Submit in hardcopy on the due date. The recordings can be found through the free iTunes U service, which is part of the iTunes store:

<https://itunes.apple.com/itunes-u/black-gospel-music-restoration/id431880465?mt=10>

In your description, address points such as: how these recordings are structured (musical form, instrumentation, tempo); the techniques employed by the composers and performers (vocal/instrumental styles, lyrical content, improvisation, rhythmic feel, mood); and generally how the songs fit in to the gospel tradition (historical context, connections to other musics). Write in complete sentences in your listening journal, and you may write in the first person. This assignment is your chance to write critically about a piece of music, and is intended to demonstrate how your listening skills have improved as the course progresses.

Gospel Record Review (10%):

Write a review of a gospel album that has been released in the last year. Please choose an album that inspires you to express yourself as a critic. You can have an overwhelmingly positive reaction to a record, a negative one, or, more likely, a combination of positive and negative feelings about a record. It is up to you to research the performer(s), label, and/or producer's history in the music world, and to formulate an informed opinion about the music. Like a true freelance writer, you should practice the art of concise speech and self-editing: your reviews must be between 750 and 950 words long, and submitted in hard copy on the due date. Please use Times font, size 12. There is no need to cite your sources for this assignment, beyond using the author's

name for any direct quote. Make every word count, and feel free to write in the first person; this assignment should read like a review in a magazine or newspaper.

Here is a useful link to a “How To” site for record reviews:

<http://suite101.com/a/how-to-write-a-music-album-review-a128389>

You can use the website www.allmusic.com to find out about gospel albums that came out in the last year, and to listen to sound clips. The site requires that you register, but the process is very fast. Complete albums can likely be found on iTunes, Youtube, or many other online sources. You might even wish to go to an actual record store to purchase a CD, or a public library to borrow one.

Please be aware of the basic format of a record review: an opening hook that gives away your general impression, then an exploration of your own reaction to the record in context of the artist’s past and the musical landscape. Be creative and original. Know your album thoroughly, and give specific examples from songs as well as a comprehensive look at the album as a whole. Also, work in at least one reference to our reading for our coursework – this does not require a proper citation.

Check out the reviews in your favorite music magazine or websites for examples. NOW Magazine, The Grid, The Globe and Mail, The Guardian, Mojo Magazine, The Village Voice, The Wire, and Rolling Stone are examples of print publications with excellent record reviews. There are many online sources as well—Pitchfork.com is perhaps the most reliable and widely known. You can have a particular audience in mind for your review, but make sure your review is accessible to those without much prior knowledge of with the artist or genre in question.

Here are some links to examples to record reviews that will be helpful to you:

Jason Heller’s review of “I Heard the Angels Singing: Electrifying Black Gospel” (originally appeared on www.pitchforkmedia.com on 10 Dec 2013): <http://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/18810-i-heard-the-angels-singing-electrifying-black-gospel/>

Joshua Klein’s review of Johnny Cash, *Ultimate Gospel*: <http://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/9934-ultimate-gospel/>

Ryan Dombal’s review of Bobby Womach, *The Bravest Man in the Universe* (originally appeared on www.pitchforkmedia.com on 14 June 2012): http://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/16721-the-bravest-man-in-the-universe/?utm_campaign=search&utm_medium=site&utm_source=search-ac

Finally, have fun with this assignment — the music review is one of the most vibrant forms of popular writing, so take this opportunity to gain some experience with this kind of critical writing.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY/ESSAY OUTLINE (10%)

As part of the essay preparation, an annotated bibliography consisting of a variety of peer-reviewed sources (four minimum) will be handed in along with an outline for the essay. Begin with a detailed description of your final paper topic and then move into a description and assessment of sources relevant to this topic. These sources must not include the required readings for this course. Your bibliographies should give a sense of the materials dealt with in each piece, what issues the writer discusses, and an assessment of its suitability for the essay topic. This assignment should be 3-4 pages long, double-spaced, Times font size 12, and submitted in hardcopy on the due date.

Here are some tips on how to write a detailed essay outline:

Developing an outline for an essay helps to organize ones ideas to tell a story. The outline is a fast and easy way to get your thoughts on paper in an organized way, so that you can move easily towards fleshing out your basic ideas in a longer paper.

An outline involves three parts: 1) introduction, 2) supporting facts, 3) conclusion. Developing your outline is like building a house – without a solid foundation or big idea, the walls will cave in. Your introduction needs to be connected to a big idea. The supporting facts should explain a logical flow of information which collectively supports your big idea. The conclusion is your opportunity to reflect on your personal thoughts, share some insights gained through your research, and illustrate how the big idea is important and worthy of further discussion.

The outline allows you to give structure to your ideas. Your essay needs to be organized with a logical flow – each point is like connecting-the-dots, so that your outline does not get off-topic. Less is more. The points in your outline will be further elaborated upon with your essay writing, in adding description, personality, and tone around these main points.

You can use headings to structure your outline, and write out the main points in short, concise (yet complete) sentences.

The components of an outline are as follows:

- I. Introduction
 - a. big idea, and why it is important
 - b. List of main points

- II. Point I
 - a. Supporting statement

- b. Application to big idea

- III. Point 2
 - a. Supporting statement
 - b. Application to big idea

- IV. Point 3
 - a. Supporting statement
 - b. Application to big idea

- V. Conclusion
 - a. Summarize main points
 - b. Link points to big idea, reiterate importance

Here is an example of an annotated bibliography entry in Chicago style:

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995. Print.

Lamott's book offers honest advice on the nature of a writing life, complete with its insecurities and failures. Taking a humorous approach to the realities of being a writer, the chapters in Lamott's book are wry and anecdotal and offer advice on everything from plot development to jealousy, from perfectionism to struggling with one's own internal critic. In the process, Lamott includes writing exercises designed to be both productive and fun.

Lamott offers sane advice for those struggling with the anxieties of writing, but her main project seems to be offering the reader a reality check regarding writing, publishing, and struggling with one's own imperfect humanity in the process. Rather than a practical handbook to producing and/or publishing, this text is indispensable because of its honest perspective, its down-to-earth humor, and its encouraging approach.

Chapters in this text could easily be included in the curriculum for a writing class. Several of the chapters in Part I address the writing process and would serve to generate discussion on students' own drafting and revising processes. Some of the writing exercises would also be appropriate for generating classroom writing exercises. Students should find Lamott's style both engaging and enjoyable.

USEFUL MUSIC SOURCES:

The Ryerson library contains many good sources on all genres of music, including books, journals, recordings, and videos. Consult the Ryerson Library Music Research Guide for access to online sources such as the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, various music encyclopedias, and databases of journals and articles in music and other disciplines, many of which will be useful for your research topics. Some of these sources, and methods for accessing them, will be discussed further in class.

Music Research Guide:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/library/subjects/music/index.html>

Students may or may not be successful in finding articles on the specific genre, artist or composition they are researching, but are encouraged to research artists, genres, and compositions that may be useful points of socio-historical or artistic comparison for their essays, listening journals, and album reviews as well, so as to provide a framework for their own individual ethnographic analysis.

The Faculty Course Survey dates will be announced in class.

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

Format and Submission Guidelines

- On the title page please include your name and student number, and always keep a copy of your paper in print or computer file.
- All assignments must be double-spaced, in 12 point font (not a *fancy* font please), with 1 inch margins and page numbers.
- All assignments should be submitted in the lecture period.
- Assignments will **not** be accepted over email.
- Late papers will only be accepted with prior consent of instructor
- If your paper is late, it will likely be returned to you after the papers submitted on time are returned.
- Only under truly extraordinary circumstances – for example a death in the family or hospitalization – will an extension be considered by the instructor.

Tips for written assignments:

- Remember to provide a title, preferably one that highlights your thesis or central concerns.
- Avoid a lengthy, overly general introduction; state your intentions concisely and engagingly.
- Make the paragraph the basic unit of composition. Each paragraph should address a specific thought or point, and develop the central idea in a coherent way. A new thought needs a new paragraph.
- Provide transition between topics. Your essay should have continuity; it should “hang together.”

- Support or illustrate your assertions; be as specific and precise as possible.
- Quoted materials (see “plagiarism” below) belong in quotation marks and a page number should be supplied. Ideas or passages that are paraphrased (written in your own words) also need to be referenced.
- Avoid over-use of quoted materials. Passages that are quoted need to be contextualized and require comments that directly forward your own argument.
- You may use the word “I” in your work for this class.
- Avoid errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Remember to proofread your assignments. You can lose as much as a full mark – possibly even more – by forgetting to proofread and to make final revisions. Ideally, a final draft would be looked over by a writing lab.

For basic writing tips, the classic text *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White is highly recommended.

Plagiarism

According to the Ryerson University [Code of Academic Conduct](#), plagiarism means *claiming the words, ideas, artistry, drawings, images or data of another person as if they were your own.*

You are probably aware that purchasing an essay or having someone else write it for you constitutes plagiarism, but there are other forms of plagiarism that may not be so obvious. In University, you will often be required to use outside sources like websites, books, articles, and textbooks, but in your written work or oral, you must separate your ideas from those of others and properly cite your sources. Whether you are writing a research essay, a self-reflection paper, a lab report, a computer program, or an oral presentation you must always do your own work.

There are many different types of plagiarism, including:

- Copying and pasting material from a website
- Making minor changes to an author's words or style and then presenting the material as your own
- Taking text from published authors, your friend's paper, or work you've already handed in
- Using a direct quotation but leaving out the quotation marks
- Paraphrasing too closely to the original
- Failing to cite sources or citing them incorrectly such that the work cannot be properly found
- Working with another student on a project but failing to put both names on the final product
- Having someone else re-write or heavily edit your paper

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. More information about how to avoid it, penalties, and other procedures are outlined on the Ryerson University website: <http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/Undergraduate/plagiarism/index.html>

Statement of what grades mean:

Exceptional	80	-	100%
Good	70	-	79%
Satisfactory	60	-	69%
Marginal	50	-	59%
Failure	0	-	49%

80-100% indicates *EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE*: comprehensive in-depth knowledge of the principles and materials treated in the course, fluency in communicating that knowledge and independence in applying material and principles.

70-79% indicates *GOOD PERFORMANCE*: thorough understanding of the breadth of materials and principles treated in the course and ability to apply and communicate that understanding effectively.

60-69% indicates *SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE*: basic understanding of the breadth of principles and material treated in the course and an ability to apply and communicate that understanding competently.

50-59% indicates *MARGINAL PERFORMANCE*: adequate understanding of most principles and materials treated in the course, but with significant weakness in some areas and in the ability to apply and communicate that understanding.

0- 49% indicates *FAILURE*: inadequate or fragmentary knowledge of the principles and materials treated in the course or a failure to complete the work required in the course.

More information: http://www.ryerson.ca/currentstudents/essr/gradescales_ugrad/