

RYERSON UNIVERSITY  
MUS 108 ESSAYS  
Dr. Peter Johnston  
Department of Philosophy and Music  
Winter 2014

PLEASE REFER TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS HANDOUT ON PLAGIARISM DISTRIBUTED WITH THE COURSE OUTLINES. Failure to document your sources is a violation of the Student Code of Academic Conduct and is subject to penalty. Every use of or reference to another's work must be documented. Short quotations, paraphrasing, and long quotations must all be fully referenced in your essay, in Chicago (16<sup>th</sup> ed.) format.

Essays are to be 6-8 typed, double-spaced pages (1500-2000 words) with a complete bibliography and discography (if referencing recordings) at the end. Long quotations must be indented and single-spaced.

**Essays are due 27 March 2014, and must be submitted in hard copy, to the professor in class.**

Choose one of the three questions below for your essay.

1. Find a spiritual or gospel song that has been recorded by at least 3 different artists (more if desired) from different style periods (such as Mahalia Jackson, Take 6, the Fisk Jubilee Singers, for example), and compare and contrast the different performances. How are they similar? How are they different? Has the instrumentation changed? Are the dynamics, rhythms, tempo, form, or melody different? How does the timbre of the singer change? Is there a different mood to the piece? Now look at the piece in a larger context—are there similarities between the different artists' styles? Why was this song important to these particular artists, and important within the gospel tradition in general? Did a particular recording represent a new approach to gospel music, or an affirmation of traditional ideas? Provide some background from scholarly sources on the song and the performance style represented by each artist.
2. Discuss the relationship between gospel music and secular, popular music by conducting a detailed analysis of the career of an artist who “crossed over” from performing in church to performing “in the world”. How did they draw on their church background to create the music for which they became known? What issues did they face around negotiating the boundaries between sacred and secular music? Are they able to maintain a kind of dual profile, or did they make a choice to favour one facet of their career over another? Did their music change as their career progressed? Why did they make the move to cross over? How was their secular music received by the church community, or vice versa? Discuss the music using terminology from class, including elements such as timbre, melody, harmony, tempo, dynamics, rhythm, and form. Provide cultural context for the artist by positioning their work in relation to important historic events and the work of their contemporary artists in the sacred and secular fields.

Artists you might write about include: Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, James Brown, Nina Simone, Elvis Presley, Sam Cooke, Whitney Houston, Roberta Flack, Al Green, and Marvin Gaye. Other artists are possible – if choosing someone not on this list, please discuss with the professor in advance.

3. African-American gospel music has changed and incorporated many different musical influences since the golden age of the music in the mid-20th century. These changes have often resulted in considerable tension between those who wish to maintain traditional sacred music and those who wish to broaden Christianity's appeal to get the message to a wider audience. Looking specifically at the careers of artists who work exclusively in the sacred field (rather than those who have crossed over into the secular field), develop an analysis of how commercial secular musics such as R and B, funk, hip hop, and soul have influenced musicians working in the church. What are the issues in play around appropriating popular musics into church services? What are some important historical recordings or events that marked a shift in the gospel field? What are some sounds and performance techniques that gospel artists have appropriated from popular music? How do gospel artists negotiate the pressures of maintaining a career outside of the popular music industry? How do churches look to maintain their congregations in an increasingly secularized world? What role does music play in contemporary worship? What are some recent trends that might tell us about the future of gospel music? Provide some background information from scholarly sources on the artists, songs, and performance styles in question.

\*All papers must contain musical and historical analysis based on the terms used in class. This analysis must be incorporated into the paper, not separate. Analysis should occupy approximately 15-20% of your paper. (1-2 pages)\*

SOURCES: Use at least four peer-reviewed sources. Some suggestions:

Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World, Ed. John Shepherd.  
ML 102 P66C66 2003.

Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock and Soul. Irwin Stambler. ML 102 P66S8 1986b.

Popular Music or Popular Music and Society. Online refereed journals available through JSTOR via Ryerson library.

Other sources may be found on JSTOR for music journal articles. Searching electronic resources with your topic may reveal other useful sources.

Other possible (and often helpful!) sources

The Encyclopedia of Music in Canada

The Garland Encyclopedia of Music

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (on-line and hard copy)

The Grove Dictionary of American Music

New Grove Dictionary of Jazz

Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians  
The New Oxford History of Music.

For recordings, try CDs in the library, the Metro Toronto Reference Library, CBC, and HMV. Youtube should only be used as a last resort; many videos can be labeled incorrectly or poor sound quality will pose barriers to analysis.

\*Recordings discussed in class, or listed on your listening lists are not permitted for discussion in your paper.\*

Also see the Research Help page on the Ryerson library website. The Music Research Guide offers helpful tips on searching for peer-reviewed electronic journals.

### Citation Requirements

Students are expected to use reference materials in the library or available through the library website (books, journals, encyclopedias, recordings). You may use more than one article or entry from a peer-reviewed source to count towards your four peer-reviewed sources (such as two entries from the Grove Dictionary of Music). Reliable online sources, such as the official website for an artist, may be consulted for additional information. Official biographies or non peer-reviewed magazine articles or books on popular music in general are also acceptable secondary sources. Authors must 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 prof's notes or lectures.

Essays with citations, bibliographies, and discographies that do not meet the format of the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Chicago Manual of Style will lose 10%. Bibliographies and discographies must be single-spaced, with second and subsequent lines of each entry indented and all punctuation in the correct place. Either author-date format or footnotes may be used for in-text citations. You may put your bibliography and discography on the same page.

There will be no exceptions to this rule. Misplaced punctuation, misnumbered citations, and other minor mistakes will be grounds for losing the full 10%. The library has reference guides on reserve, or check the Chicago quick guide online for assistance in citing sources: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

Essays that do not use the minimum four peer-reviewed sources will lose 5% per missing source.

It is possible to lose a total of 30% of the essay grade with a combination of no peer-reviewed sources and an incorrectly formatted bibliography or citations. Please take care in all of your citation practices.

The text readings 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 midnight. 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.