

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

www.mlcs.ca

2015-2016

Fall 2015 LA ST 311: Latin American Popular Music

Instructor: Russell Cobb
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Time: 11:00-11:50 MWF
Place: T 1-90
Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00-5:00
or by appointment

Personal Website: <http://www.mlcs.ualberta.ca/People/Faculty/CobbRussell.aspx>
Course Website: <http://albertamusica.wordpress.com/>

Course Prerequisite: None

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

No, not needed, no such projects approved.

Community Service Learning component

X Optional

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students' Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- X NA

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)

- Yes
- X No

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is a survey of forms of Latin American popular music in their cultural context. Special attention is paid to the *corrido* in Mexico, *salsa* and *son* in the Caribbean, *samba* and *bossa nova* in Brazil, *tango* in Argentina, as well as Latin American versions of rock and hip-hop, which have all travelled beyond the places where they originated. While tracing their origin and development, they will be placed in the context of the cultures from which they emerged, with a view to understanding the meaning they have in that context, both as expressions of popular life and culture and as symbolic capital that has in some cases been appropriated by processes of commodification and the formation of national and regional identities.

The course is conducted in English. No knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese is required. All readings will be in English and translations of song texts will be provided as required.

Objectives:

- Develop a historical and theoretical knowledge of Latin American popular music
- Improve critical thinking and writing skills
- Develop a public research project that will annotate the lyrics to one significant artist or group in Latin American popular music, to be hosted on Rapgenius.com
- Appreciate the wide variety of music in Latin America and its role in the region's history

Texts:

1. Access to Internet and course website (required). **YOU MUST PRINT OUT AND BRING READINGS TO CLASS.**
2. Spotify account. Follow our LA ST 311 playlist along with the readings as most of the songs come out of the readings. English translations are provided when needed.
3. Headphones or speakers for intensive music listening (required)
 - I am providing all the music and texts for free through eClass, so do yourself a favour and invest in some quality headphones that will allow you to concentrate and enjoy the richness of the music. Here are some suggestions:
 - http://reviews.cnet.com/2300-6468_7-10011889-21.html

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Term Work 100%

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Class journal hosted on blog and (average one blog entry every two weeks)	13%
Individual Presentation of a “subgenre” of popular music	13%
Class participation	13%
Exam #1 (Oct. 14)	20%
Exam #2 (Nov. 30)	20%
Rap Genius portfolio (Dec. 9)	21%

Class blog (13%): This is your space to reflect on readings and music. Entries should consist of 200-300 words (around one page) commenting on an aspect of the music that you love, hate, or find interesting or confusing. Writing here can be informal, but it must be original and must be focused on our topics. You might pose questions or venture some diverging opinions. Although you have a certain amount of freedom to post, you must post by the due dates listed in the daily work schedule. **There will be no credit for posts after class time on the due date. There is zero tolerance for plagiarism here, as well as in the more formal writing assignments.**

CSL students can use this space to reflect upon their experience thus far.

Individual Presentation (13%)

Presentations will be given on a topic of interest by each student, for 15-20 minutes. Each presentation will also include a 2 minute assessment (a quiz on your information, for example) to be given to the rest of the class. Presentations will be assessed based on content, organization, time management, and engagement with the audience. Students will choose one musical genre or movement from a list and present their findings on that topic on the day listed in the syllabus. **Material deemed important from presentations may be included on exams...so pay attention!!!**

Class Participation (13%): Students are expected to come to class with reading and listening done before class and to engage with lectures and discussions. More than three unexcused absences will result in a 10% loss of the participation grade for each subsequent absence after three. Eating, texting, or emailing during class will automatically lower your participation grade by 10%. Class attendance is especially important to understand the music in its context. Students will evaluate *themselves* at the end of term. Participation will be evaluated holistically and based on class attendance, participation in group activities, and reaction on eClass forums (which is especially important if you are shy).

Exam #1 (20%): This test will be held on Oct. 14 and will cover the first half of the content covered in the term. It will come straight from readings, screenings, and discussions. There will be short answers, no longer than a paragraph each.

Exam #2 (20%) This test will be held on Nov. 30 and will cover the second half of the content covered in the term. It will come straight from readings, screenings, and discussions. There will be short answers, no longer than a paragraph each.

NON-CSL Students: Genius Artist Annotation (21% final portfolio)

For the final project, students will be annotating the work of one Latin American artist or music group on the website Genius.com, which is an open-source database of annotations of lyrics. Students will fully annotate 10 songs by one artist using legitimate sources to support information and analysis.

CSL students: (16% for segment and reflection paper; 5% for class presentation of segment)

Students will produce a segment on Edmonton-based music and/or dance for The Wanderer or Capital City Records, or CJSR's news program. This will be accompanied by a 4 page reflection paper on the student's experience.

Required Notes:

"Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar."

Academic Integrity:

"The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity

and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment safe and free of discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels this policy has been or is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that directs discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>).

Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110> .

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.”

Students in languages courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment

by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular daily attendance is essential for optimal performance. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result. In this course, more than three unexcused absences will result in an automatic lower letter grade for the class participation component for each absence above three.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, assignments may be handed in one class-day after the stated deadline, with a 10%-per-class-day penalty assessed for each class-day of lateness. **There will be no make-ups or late credit for quizzes or blog entries. Let me put this in a very-straightforward way: there will be no extensions granted AFTER the deadline. Period.**

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (“**MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale**”). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”			
Letter	%	Pts	Descriptor
A+	95-100%	4.0	Outstanding: Superior performance showing understanding and knowledge of the subject matter far exceeding expectations.
A	90-94%	4.0	Excellent: Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	86-89%	3.7	Very good: Clearly above average performance with complete knowledge of subject matter.
B+	82-85%	3.3	Very good
B	75-81%	3.0	Good: average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
B-	70-74%	2.7	Good
C+	66-69%	2.3	Satisfactory: Basic understanding of the subject matter

C	61-65%	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	58-60%	1.7	Satisfactory
D+	55-57%	1.3	Minimal Pass: Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.
D	50-54%	1.0	Minimal Pass: Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.
F	0-49%	0.0	Fail: Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.