

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2017-2018 LA ST 311 A1: Latin America and the Cultures of Popular Music (Fall Term)

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Time: 3:30-4:50pm TR
Place: T B 90
Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00-5:00
or by appointment

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 involved

Community Service Learning component

X Optional

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students' Union
http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services_and_businesses/services/infolink/exams
 - 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. While tracing their origin and development, these musical genres 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. The course is conducted in English. No

knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese or musicology 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
- Carry out a public research project that will annotate the lyrics to one significant artist or group in Latin American popular music, to be hosted on genius.com
- Appreciate the wide variety of music in Latin America and its role in the region's history
- Produce a polished oral presentation on a movement or subgenre in Latin American popular music

Texts:

1. Access to Internet and course website (required).
2. Premium 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. Spotify is offering premium service to students for \$5.
<https://www.spotify.com/ca-en/student>
3. I am providing most of 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:
 - a. http://reviews.cnet.com/2300-6468_7-10011889-21.html
4. You must print out and bring to class all readings.
5. Mark Brill, *Music of Latin America and the Caribbean*. New York: Pearson, 2011 (or newer edition)

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Term Work 100%

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Presentation of a “subgenre” of popular music | 20% |
| Written participation on Facebook group | 10% |
| Physical class participation | 10% |
| Exam #1 (Oct. 17) | 20% |
| Exam #2 (Nov. 30) | 20% |
| Genius or CJSR Prospectus (Nov. 9) | 5% |
| Genius portfolio or CSL annotated transcript (Dec. 12) | 15% |

Class Facebook Page (10%):

Entries should consist of 200-300 words (around one page) commenting on an aspect of the reading. Five will be evaluated over the course of the term. I will post one to three questions on the class Facebook page to which you must respond to at least one by the due date in the daily work schedule. The other option to reply to someone else’s comment and start a thread.

Important notes about Facebook page:

- **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.
- Please start conversations and debates. But flame-throwing and trolling will not be permitted.
- The best sort of post will be original, engaged, brief and readable.

Presentation (20%)

Presentations will be given on a topic of interest by groups of 2 students, for approximately 20 minutes, with an absolute maximum of 25 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!!!**

Please read this post!!! It applies to every presentation you will ever do. You will lose points for going over your 25 minute time limit. Practice, people.

Physical class participation (10%): 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. Texting or emailing during class will lower your participation grade 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 and preparation. This segment of the grade will be evaluated with regard to 1. Attendance. 2. Preparation (doing the readings) 3. Active participation in group work.

Exam #1 (20%): This test will be held on Oct. 17 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 (15%)

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 5 songs by one artist using legitimate sources to support information and analysis.

CSL students: (15% for segment and transcript)

Students will produce a segment on Edmonton-based Latin American Music CJSR's program, Generator. Students are responsible for finding sources, interviewing them, writing the transcript, and recording and editing audio. Volunteers must attend a CJSR news orientation. The final transcript with annotations of research.

Prospectus (5%) On November 9 by class time, students will hand in 500-word summary of their final project. It will include the artist to be profiled, a bio sketch, a statement about why you're interested in the project, and annotations of at least three sources you plan to use to write about your artist. This applies for CSLers and non-CSLers. Hand it in via Google Docs, please.

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) 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 www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour that 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 that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy 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 direct 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 [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the [Student Conduct & Accountability Office](#) 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, digital or otherwise, 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. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose.

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar.

Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the participation component of this 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:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

| Descriptor | Letter Grade | Grade Point Value | % |
|---|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students. | A+ | 4.0 | 97-100 |
| | A | 4.0 | 93-96 |
| | A- | 3.7 | 90-92 |
| Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students. | B+ | 3.3 | 87-89 |
| | B | 3.0 | 83-86 |
| | B- | 2.7 | 80-82 |
| Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course. | C+ | 2.3 | 77-79 |
| | C | 2.0 | 73-76 |
| | C- | 1.7 | 70-72 |
| Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter. | D+ | 1.3 | 65-69 |
| | D | 1.0 | 60-64 |
| Failure. | F | 0.0 | 0-59 |