

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

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

2021-2022 LA ST 311: Latin American Popular Music A1 (Fall Term)

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Time: 2:00-3:20 TR  
Place: T 1-119  
Office Hours: Fridays 2:00-4:00  
or by appointment

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**Course Prerequisite:** None

**Technology requirements (minimum):** Access to Internet, including eClass, Spotify, and Google Drive. It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate technology for the course.

**Experiential Learning Component**

X this course has a significant experiential learning component (15% or more of the course grade)

**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**

None

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available**

- Exam registry – Students' Union  
[http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services\\_and\\_businesses/services/infolink/exams](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:***

Popular music communicates the sorrows, frustrations, hopes, and dreams of a people. In Latin America, popular music continues pre-European oral storytelling traditions and can function as social critique or protest. This course surveys forms of Latin American popular music from the *corrido* in Mexico, to salsa in the Caribbean, to samba and bossa nova in Brazil, to tango in Argentina, as well as Latin American versions of rock and hip-hop. Students will create a curated, annotated playlist or musical documentary as a final project. 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 on a particular subject in Latin America via an annotated playlist/podcast.
- 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. eClass access for supplementary readings
4. Carol Hess, *Experiencing Latin American Music*, University of California Press, 2018

***Important Dates:*** [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: September 1, 2021

Add/Delete Date: September 15, 2021

50% Withdrawal Date: October 4, 2021

Withdrawal Date: November 30, 2021

Last Day of Class: December 7, 2021

Final Exam Date (if applicable): None

***Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):***

Term Work 100%

***Explanatory Notes on Assignments:***

Presentation of a “subgenre” of popular music 10%

Physical class participation/listening journal 10%

Exam #1	(October 7)	20%
Exam #2	(December 2)	20%
<b>Final project</b>		<b>40%</b>
a).	Pitch for potential topics (Sept. 28)	10%
b).	Annotated bibliography of topic (November 2)	10%
c).	Deep dive into primary source (November 16)	10%
d).	Script with music (December 9)	10%

### **Presentation 10%**

Students can work in pairs or alone to present the social and historical context of a musical movement. Topics will be selected from the eClass document, “Movements and Topics for Annotated Playlist Projects.” Presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes, including all media. Although it is not required, it is highly recommended that students pick a topic that reflects the final project.

### **Physical class participation/listening journal 10%**

This portion of the final grade is a 50/50 mix of an informal listening journal that students will keep and physical attendance in class. The listening journal should be one Google Doc that reflects deeply on one song per class. Entries should be around 250 words and reflect the student’s interpretation of the sound, lyrics, context, instrumentation, etc. of a given song for that day’s class. Two excused absences are permitted. Beyond two, 10% will be deducted per day from this portion of the grade.

### **Exams 1 & 2 20% each**

Exams are not cumulative. They are a mix of identifications of songs studied in class and multiple choice questions. This portion of the grade will be a straightforward test of the student’s reading and lecture comprehension.

### **Final project 40%**

The final project will be constructed via four separate assignments, each one building off the previous one. The ultimate goal is to build a half hour annotated playlist in Latin American music that surveys the context of a particular musical movement. This project is a “public humanities” project that should be 1. Approachable for the general community, and 2. Backed up by rigorous scholarship and research. Students can work in pairs or individually.

If students decide to change their topic after the first assignment is due, they may; however, they will need to redo the assignment(s) for the new topic.

#### **Part 1: Survey the list of topics (10%)**

- For this assignment, students survey the list of possible projects, conduct light research, and then pitch me in approximately 300 words what you intend to research and how you intend to research it.
  - Assignment #1 for the final project. Pitch me the idea of your playlist in 300 words, more or less (no more than 350, no fewer than 250). In your pitch, tell me:

- What topic are you going to cover and why did you choose it?
- What are a few notes of historical or political perspective will you bring to the topic?
- What ideas for sources do you have? (interviews, documentaries, scholarship?)
- List one song you will definitely include and why you picked it.

Part 2: Annotated Bibliography. November 2 (10%)

- For this assignment, students will list 5 sources about their topic in Chicago Style. Along with the citation will be a one paragraph annotation, which summarizes the main points of the source. Further details:
  - 4 secondary sources and 1 primary source
  - At least two scholarly sources, peer-reviewed, and on-topic must be included. The remaining two could be books, magazine or newspaper articles, podcasts, documentaries, etc.
  - Each annotation should summarize the main points, key words, and argument of the source.

Part 3: Deep dive into Primary Source. November 16 (10%)

- For this assignment, students will submit an in-depth deep dive into one primary source. Possibilities include:
  1. Transcription of an interview with a musician who works on your topic
  2. A long summary (around 1000 words) of a memoir or autobiography by a musician
  3. Transcription and/or translation of an oral history from the Smithsonian Folkways
  4. Translation from Spanish or Portuguese of an already existing interview.

Part 4: Transcript of entire playlist. (10%)

Students put the whole project together, playing at least four songs, and relating them to the context they have researched: social movements, feminism, political revolution, etc. The entire project will be 30 minutes if spoken out loud (approximately 3000 words).

- The gold standard, the type of project you should be aiming for, would be this podcast: [The Vanishing of Harry Pace](#)

**Required Notes:**

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.

**Student Responsibilities:**

***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](#) 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.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

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:***

Students may record lectures in any format they see fit, as long as it is 1. For study purposes only, and 2. Not distributed beyond the class for any reason.

***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 23.4.2 and 23.4.3 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. **Let me put this in a very-straightforward way: there will be no extensions granted AFTER the deadline. Period.**

***Disclaimer:***

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

**Student Resources:**

**The best all-purpose website for student services is:**

<https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

[The Academic Success Centre](#) provides professional academic support to help students maximize their academic success and achieve their academic goals. We offer appointments, advising, group workshops, online courses, and specialized programming year-round to students in all university programs, and at all levels of achievement and study.

They also administer the University of Alberta's [Duty to Accommodate procedure](#) for students and works with students, instructors, campus units, Faculties and departments, community and government agencies, and on and off-campus service providers to coordinate students' disability-related accommodation needs for participation in university programs.

For general information and to register for services visit the [Academic Accommodations](#) webpage.

[The Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

[The First Peoples' House](#) provides an environment of empowerment for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners to achieve personal and academic growth.

[Health and Wellness Support for Students](#) outlines available mental and physical health resources that are offered on-campus and in the community.

[The Office of the Student Ombuds](#) is a confidential service that strives to ensure that university processes related to students operate as fairly as possible. We offer information, advice, and support to students, faculty, and staff as they deal with academic, discipline, interpersonal, and financial issues related to student programs.

### **Learning and working environment:**

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment.

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) section of the University Calendar.

**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	%
<p>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.</p>	A+	4.0	95-
	A	4.0	100
	A-	3.7	90- 94 86- 89
<p>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.</p>	B+	3.3	82-
	B	3.0	85
	B-	2.7	75- 81 70- 74

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	66-
	C	2.0	69
	C-	1.7	61- 65 58- 60
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	55-
	D	1.0	57 50- 54
Failure.	F	0.0	0-49

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