THE INHERITANCE AND LEGACY OF JIMI HENDRIX: THE BLUES ON ACID

AFST 3390
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This is an upper-level undergraduate course satisfying both diversity and fine arts prerequisites.

GRADUATE CREDIT FOR THIS COURSE: In order to obtain graduate credit for this course, you must satisfactorily complete a graduate level project with a topic and parameters approved beforehand by the course instructor.

REQUIRED TEXT
African American Music: An Introduction.
by Mellonee V. Burnim (Editor), Portia K. Maultsby (Editor)

Various PDF articles.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine Jimi Hendrix from at least the following perspectives:

1. From a personal point of view in an attempt to understand his philosophy of life from
   • his own words in his writings and interviews.
   • interviews with friends and family.
   • his poetry and song lyrics.
2. As a Black man:
   • defying established stereotypes of the Black man (begging the question, how is a Black man supposed to behave?)
   • functioning as a modern musician in the ages old tradition of minstrelsy
3. As a cultural phenomenon, both as
   • a modern minstrel being exploited by the music industry
   • a Jesus figure amongst his largest audience, young White males
   • the quintessential icon of the 1960s youth counterculture
4. As a musician
   • living and expressing the blues ethos of catharsis and pleasure
   • surviving in the music industry as a rock god
   • innovating and creating art
From scores of sources, including interviews, documentaries and biographies, we will attempt to put into context Jimi’s attitudes toward the turbulent times of his life including the Civil Rights Movement and Black causes and the 1960s youth counterculture; and attempt to bring meaning to his untimely death at the age of 27.

This course will examine the legacies of slavery and Jim Crow in an attempt to understand Jimi’s feelings and attitudes to his own people who, in striking contrast to Jimi, were overtly and aggressively embracing notions of Black empowerment.

This course will examine the death of Jimi Hendrix and the various conspiracy theories in light of main themes of Howard Zinn’s A People’s History of America.

This course will examine Jimi’s inheritances and legacies, which will include:

- the history and plight of the African American commencing with slavery, and ending with the birth of hip hop.
- the music of the African American from the work song to rap
- the ideological foundation of the 1960s counterculture or so called, Hippie Movement. This will include:
  - the Urban Folk Revivals of the 1920s, 30s, 40s and 50s
  - the work of the Beat Poets
- his influence on pop music in general and in subsequent musical movements such as funk, modern jazz, heavy metal and hip-hop.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students will leave the class with an understanding of the following:

1. A people’s history of the United States, including the following:
   a. the history and plight of the African American from slavery to the present focusing on the institutionalized exploitation, denigration, and discrimination of the African American; and the African American's unending struggle for equality and social justice.
   b. the history of the political Left and the plight of the American White worker (mostly through the efforts of the musicians -- the urban folkies)
2. The history of American popular music and its role in mediating and creating racial strife in American society
3. The social history of rock music and its impact on race relations, technology and self-image
4. The history of Black music and its impact on American popular music and society and its function in African American society
5. The powerful and influential music industry (dispelling myths about success in popular culture).

Students will also learn positive values by gleaning attitudes and philosophies from musician biographies, song lyrics and seminal events in the history of American and the history of rock music.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will understand American history from the perspective of the victim and develop an awareness of our indebtedness -- both individually and collectively -- to the African American; students will be able put the history of American popular music, and especially rock music, into the context of the new American history and view it as a venue for the conflict and resolution of issues relating to racial strife in America.
2. Students will be able see similarities between the events and legacies of African American history and their own experiences as members of a subgroup.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of the technical and interpretive qualities of rock music: first, through the study of historical precedents for rock and then, through the analysis
of seminal songs in the history of rock.
4. Students will develop the skills to:
   a. discern styles of rock music and fashion
   b. be cognizant of minute details and formal strata in rock songs
   c. overcome bias and prejudice when making musical choices; and then scaffold their non-judgmental attitudes of music to other facets of their lives.
1. Students will appreciate the skills and organization involved in the production and distribution of popular music
2. Students will understand how music functions in society and in our lives and the profound effect it can have on human behavior
3. Students will leave the course with vital life-skills for coping and success, which they learn by accessing philosophy and ethics through the analysis and interpretation of song lyrics and musician biographies; and by understanding the underpinning causes and effects of important events in the history of American music culture, which serve as examples of injustice, fortitude, perseverance, empowerment and pride within the context of conflict.
4. Students will come to understand that rock music is a continuation of African American musical traditions; that rock evolved out ages-old African American creative processes and traditions; and that rock’s acceptance or rejection by mainstream America is consistent with the reaction of the White establishment to previous generations of African American music.

ASSIGNMENTS (7 total; each weighted by a factor of three)¹
  1. Final Project (one of the following)
     a. Thesis Paper
     b. Group Presentation followed by class discussion
     c. Dance Presentation
  2. Informant-focused Interview Paper
  3. Live Performance Review
  4. CD Review
  5. Listening Journal
  6. Deep Listening
  7. Canonic Poem/Song Lyric Comparison

ACTIVITIES (3 total; each weighted by a factor of two)
  1. In-class group discussions and presentation
  2. Blackboard group discussions
  3. Song analysis class discussion

EXAMS (All exams are either posted on Blackboard or they will be take-home)

Quizzes (20 total; each quiz weighted by a factor of one)

  - African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross (Video Documentary in 6 Episodes) (Blackboard)

¹ A grade weighted by a factor of two means that two grades will be entered for one assignment; a grade weighted by a factor of three means that three grades will be entered for one assignment. A grade book with one quiz, one assignment, one essay exam and one activity might look like this: 90 85 85 85 75 75 75 75  90 90 respectively, with an average of 82.5. If all of the grades were weighted equally the average would be 90. The discrepancy occurs as a result of the higher weighted grades are lower than the others. Doing well on the quizzes is not an indication of your overall grade.
- African American Music: An Introduction (Blackboard)
  1. Secular Folk Music
  2. Religious Music
  3. The Blues
  4. New Orleans, Ragtime, the Birth of Jazz
  5. Jazz
  6. Rhythm and Blues
  7. Soul Music
  8. Funk
  9. Disco, Techno, Dance and House
  10. Rap

- Lecture Quizzes (Blackboard)
  1. The Birth of Rock and Roll
  2. The Era of the Producer
  3. The Beatles and the Revival of Rock
  4. The Rise, Evolution and the Fall of the 1960s Youth Counterculture

**Essay Exams (Take Home)** *(4 total; each weighted by a factor of four)*

I. The Role of Music in African American Society and Culture
II. The Role of Race in the Birth of Rock and Roll and Rockabilly
III. The Demise of the Hippie Movement
IV. Jimi Hendrix: Word Cloud Essay (in lieu of a final exam)

**Course Requirements**

**Participation:** Students are expected to participate in class. Participation is a vital part of your education and a skill that you will need to be successful throughout your career. Professors tend to remember students who participate in class and at some point you will need letters of recommendations from your professors. Sleeping or appearing to sleep in class, refusing to respond to the Instructor, unauthorized texting or other use of personal electronic devices in class, or acts that show a clear attitude of contempt toward the class, the Instructor, classmates or visitors will be penalized by points off the student’s participation grade. This should be extremely rare.

**Homework:** All homework is due at the beginning of class on the due-date. Any work posted or turned in after the beginning of class will be counted as late, and subject to late penalties. Other daily responsibilities: Check Blackboard and your UTEP email account daily for announcements/updates.

**Tests/exams:** Quizzes will be posted on Blackboard and due dates are listed in the Course Calendar. There will be four benchmark essay exams. These essays need be comprehensive, but that does not mean that they need to be long. Points off for verbosity; points added for terse, but thorough essays. Get to the point, meet the objectives and write with proper grammar.

**Papers or other writing assignments:** Major written assignments in this class include those listed above under “grading.” All written assignments done outside of the classroom must be completed and submitted printed on paper, single-space. Handwritten assignments will not be accepted.

**Oral reports:** A group presentation and the final collective presentation.
Required Policy Information

Attendance / Lateness Policy: In this course you are required to attend all classes, except in the case of university-sponsored activities or other excused absences. Other excused absences (proof may be required) are:

Medical — a contagious illness or other diagnosed debilitating condition is affecting the student’s ability to attend class;
Family Medical — the student is responsible for the care of a sick, injured or disabled person and the provision of that care affects the student’s ability to attend class;
Death of Family Member — the death of a person who is considered to be a member of the student’s family or who is otherwise considered to have a sufficiently close relationship to the student that the person’s death is considered to be a showing of good cause for temporary absence;
Military Duty — active duty service as a member of the Texas National Guard or the armed forces of the United States is considered to be a showing of good cause for temporary absence;
Work Schedule — the temporary change of the student’s work schedule that is beyond the control of the student, and that affects the student’s ability to attend class.
Other Emergencies, here defined as an immediate threat to life and property, or unexpected events that interrupt public access to the university.

If you miss a class for any reason, excused or unexcused, you are still responsible for getting with someone else in the class, finding out what you missed, and turning in a summary of the class that you missed.

Attendance will be taken at every class, by means of a sign-in sheet. It is your responsibility to sign in. If you do not sign in, you are counted as absent. For example, the fact that your car didn’t start in the morning is no excuse for not being present. Every student needs to have some other backup arrangement ready to get to campus on time in case regular transportation plans fail or are not available.

You are required to make non-emergency medical and dental appointments, or interviews, outside of class time. If you miss class for any reason, excused or unexcused, you are still responsible for learning the material covered and turning in all work. You will be held accountable for all the material covered in every class, through either attendance or through make up work, not just on tests. If you do not make up missed work, you may lose all credit for that work, plus extra penalties for refusing to participate. LEAVING DURING CLASS, AFTER HAVING SIGNED-IN AND TURNED-IN WORK DUE ON THAT DAY, IS UNETHICAL AND IS GROUNDS FOR DROPPING YOU FROM THE CLASS.

Withdrawal: Simply not attending classes does not constitute official withdrawal, so please see your advisor in order do so. If you simply stop attending this course, you will be counted as absent and will receive grades based on work completed up to your last attendance as well as missing class requirements assigned during your absence. In cases of extreme absenteeism (here defined as the total equivalent of two weeks worth of absences any time in the semester, for any reason including excused absences), you may possibly be dropped at the Instructor’s option without notice, with a grade of “W” if the infractions occur prior to April 2. However, if the last infraction happens on or after April 2 or if the majority of your absences are unexcused, you will automatically fail the course. AS YOU CAN SEE, THERE IS LITTLE VALUE IN SKIPPING CLASS.

Tardiness and the "Ten Minute Rule"
If the instructor is more than ten minutes late for class without notice or advance arrangement, you may leave without being counted absent. If you arrive more than ten minutes late for class (or leave class early before being dismissed), you will be counted absent.

Policy for late work: Assignments submitted after class begins on the due date will be penalized one letter grade for every day late.
Students who fail to submit assignments on time do not receive feedback on performance. Therefore, it is important to submit work before deadlines for full credit and proper feedback. To earn a passing grade (“A,” “B,” or “C”) students must have completed all major assignments, paragraphs, and essays, even if they are too late to get points. If a major assignment is over three calendar days late, the student faces failure for this assignment. However, in order to pass the class students must still complete all major assignments in good faith. "Better late than never."

**Policy for missed tests:** The only formal “test” in this course is the Final Exam. Students failing to sit for the Final Exam will receive a grade of "F" for the course. Any student who will not be able to attend the Final Exam at the scheduled date and time may take the exam early.

**Policy for extra credit:** Extra credit is available for certain extra event reports related to the theme of this course, or for participation in certain other special events. Ask the instructor for details if interested. Extra credit may also be offered at the Instructor’s option for extraordinary work clearly beyond the level of the course. This latter type of extra credit is rare, and may not be requested.

**Copyright Statement** Some of the materials in this course are copyrighted. Violation of US copyright law can result in civil damages up to $100,000 for each work copied. Copying of textbooks is not "fair use" under the Copyright Act. The “fair use doctrine” only permits non-commercial copying of part (in general, not more than 10%) of a copyrighted work. Do not bring a copied textbook to this class. Your cooperation is expected.

1.3 **Student Conduct:** [From the Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Affairs]

Each student is responsible for notice of and compliance with the provisions of the Regents Rules and Regulations, which are available for inspection electronically at [http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules/homepage.htm](http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules/homepage.htm).

1.3.1 **Scholastic Dishonesty:** [From the Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Affairs]

It is the official policy of the University that all suspected cases or acts of alleged scholastic dishonesty must be referred to the Dean of Students for investigation and appropriate disposition. It is contrary to University policy for a faculty member to assign a disciplinary grade such as an "F" or zero to an assignment, test, examination, or other course work as a sanction for admitted or suspected scholastic dishonesty in lieu of normally charging the student through the Dean of Students. Similarly, students are prohibited from proposing and/or entering into an arrangement with a faculty member to receive a grade of "F" or any reduced grade in lieu of being charged with scholastic dishonesty. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

1.3.12 **Plagiarism:** [From the Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Affairs]

"Plagiarism" means the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one’s own academic work offered for credit, or using work in a paper or assignment for which the student had received credit in another course without direct permission of all involved instructors.

**Students with Disabilities Policy:** If you have or suspect a disability and need an accommodation you should contact Disabled Student Services Office (DSSO) at 747-5148 or at [dss@utep.edu](mailto:dss@utep.edu) or go to Room 106 Union East Building.

**Syllabus Change Policy:**

Except for changes that substantially affect the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.
**Class meeting dates:** Mondays and Wednesdays. In case of absence, or if class is ever cancelled due to circumstances beyond Instructor control, students are still expected to complete and submit all assignments shown on the Calendar if at all possible.