

## **MUN 2800 (26883)**

### **Popular Music Ensemble (spring 2021)**

Ensemble Director: Jason Mullen: jasonmullen@ufl.edu Office Hours: Via zoom and by appointment

Class Time: Thursdays, Periods 11-12 (6:15-8:10)

MUB 120 (School of Music Building)

#### **Objectives and Description:**

Defining popular music is difficult. Generally, it can be considered as, “music that is mass-reproduced and disseminated via mass-media” which is listened to by “large numbers” and “typically draws upon a variety of preexisting musical traditions” (Starr & Waterman). With such broad definitions, popular music studies converge with diverse and profound issues such as: race, identity, gender, class, place, technology, aesthetics, and society. The Popular Music Ensemble explores popular music from all genres/subgenres and eras utilizing socially informed and musically creative methods towards investigating these issues through performance.

The ensemble is open to drummers/percussionists, rappers, horn players, bassists, programming/sequencers/synthns, vocalists, keyboard players, guitarists, strings, etc. and aims to create a space for all UF students to develop musicianship, critical thinking, and performance skills.

Exact note-for-note recreations of popular songs, although possible and sometimes appropriate, are not always conceivable, nor desirable; rather, crafting an informed and ensemble-specific interpretation will be favored. There is no need to be able to read music for this ensemble. If it becomes a necessary tool for remembering a part, we'll write something down in notation for those who read it, but mostly we'll rely on chord charts, lyric sheets, and our ears.

The semester will be broken into **three phases**. Within the **first phase** we will decide on repertoire that we want to explore considering available instruments/singers, number of students, and desired message we may wish to communicate. The **second phase** will be the laboratory setting, where we deconstruct component parts of a song, exploring: structure, lyrics, timbre, instrumentation, and meaning. Students are encouraged to work together, with the instructor and one another, in developing parts that work for them individually and for the song as a whole. In the **third phase** we will begin learning and rehearsing interpretations of the song for performance. This phase will engage problem-solving skills and asks that you employ a communal sense of flexibility as we work through and polish our repertoire for performance.

The semester will culminate with a performance, which will be accompanied by a brief oral explanation that curates the arranging process, socio-historical background, and interpretations of a song's meaning.

In light of the distancing protocols due to Covid 19 our final performance may not have a live in-person audience. Let's work together throughout the semester to reimagine different ways we can share our work i.e., live stream, video, socially distanced outdoor performance, etc.

**Requirements and Policies:**

This ensemble is a group effort; for example, shaking the tambourine on eight bars is equally as important as someone singing lead vocals. With this spirit in mind, everyone is expected to learn and practice their parts and come to rehearsals prepared to cooperate, analyze, and perform.

Students requesting accommodation should first register with the Disability Resource Center. The DRC will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Here's the DRC's information:  
[DRC@ufsa.ufl.edu](mailto:DRC@ufsa.ufl.edu) (352) 392-8565.

This ensemble will often record audio and video as tool to help document and learn. These recorded materials will be kept only among those enrolled in the class and not shared outside of the group. If you are in anyway uncomfortable with this, please contact me directly so we can make arrangements that you are comfortable with.

In case of scheduling conflicts including a date in which you cannot make a rehearsal, please inform the instructor in advance.

**Assessment/Grading:**

Your grade is determined by attendance and effort in this class. If you attend rehearsals and performances, practice your parts and try your best you will receive an A for the course. If you do not show up to rehearsals or come consistently late to rehearsals, you will receive less than an A. Attendance: 50%; Effort: 50%. Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points may be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#calculating>

**GRADING:** A 95% A- 90% B+ 87% B 83% B- 80% C+ 77% C 73% C- 70% D+ 67% D 63% D- 60% E 0-59%

**Preliminary Performance Dates:** • (time/location TBA)

**Covid Notice:**

In response to COVID-19, the following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

\* If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit this link for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment: <https://coronavirus.uflhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.

\* You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing. Following these practices is our responsibility as Gators.

\* Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.

\* Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom.

\* If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email [covid@shcc.ufl.edu](mailto:covid@shcc.ufl.edu)<<mailto:covid@shcc.ufl.edu>>) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website<<https://click.info.gator360.ufl.edu/?qs=8f0d5e01a3f7385148f144e2089093522a358a8d85cb9db73c31675d3c5e5c0d27748d40c212f544822551342f1912ea5b4f2b890d5952e8>> for more information.

\* Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

\* If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

\* Continue to regularly visit [coronavirus.UFHealth.org](https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org)<<https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org>> and [coronavirus.ufl.edu](https://coronavirus.ufl.edu)<<https://coronavirus.ufl.edu>> for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.