

**WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC**  
**Country Music**  
**MUS 321**  
**3 credit hours**

**Class Meeting Times and location:**

online - Blackboard

**Instructor contact information:**

John Martin IWFAC 339, (270) 745-6890, [john.martin@wku.edu](mailto:john.martin@wku.edu)

**Required material:**

**Texts**

"Country Music, a Cultural and Stylistic History", second edition,  
Jocelyn R. Neal. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-049974-7

**Internet connection**

**Course description:**

This course will study country music as a music genre created in America, primarily from the 1920's to the present. The course will emphasize the performers, contrasting country and bluegrass styles, instrumentation, and lyric content. The course will examine geographic regions of the United States where these styles developed, and examine the cultural, social, economic, and political impacts on the development of the music and the professional careers of the performers. The course will also examine how country music has made its way into pop culture, how the ability to record sound shaped music of the early 20th century, and the struggle of artistic integrity vs. monetary pursuit.

**Course content**

- I: The Early Years (1920s and 1930s)
  - A. Birth of Country Music
  - B. National Stars on the Horizon
  - C. New Traditions, Cowboys, and Jazz
- II. WWII and after (1940s and 1950s)
  - A. Honky-Tonk and Rockabilly Revolution
  - B. The birth of Bluegrass
  - C. The Nashville sound
- III. Coast to coast (1960s and 1970s)
  - A. California Country and Country Rock
  - B. Classic Country
  - C. Outlaw Country and Southern Rock Rebellion
  - D. Bluegrass in Japan
- IV. Expansion (1980s and 1990s)
  - A. Urban Cowboys
  - B. Neo-traditionalists
  - C. The commercial Country explosion
  - D. Country music gains popularity in China
- V. Country music navigates genre (1990s and 2000s)
  - A. Alternative country

- B. Redefining Country
- C. Breaking borders
- D. European country and western

#### Colonnade Connections Course: Systems Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course will:

1. Analyze how systems evolve.
2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.
3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.

Students will evaluate the process of how folk music developed into one of the most popular and profitable styles of popular music in today's market. The course will compare many styles of country and bluegrass music, some being much more popular and financially successful than others. Students will address factors that regulate what characteristics may or may not be involved in a particular style's success.

#### **Grading:**

There will be two exams and weekly quizzes. Each exam and assignment will carry the following percentage of the final grade:

Midterm exam =	20%
Final Exam =	30%
Written assignment =	20%
Quizzes =	30%

A = 90 -- 100%
B = 80 -- 89%
C = 70 -- 79%
D = 60 -- 69%
F = anything below 60%

All students are strongly encouraged to [get the COVID-19 vaccine](#). Out of respect for the health and safety of the WKU community and in adherence with CDC guidelines and practices of all public universities and colleges in [Kentucky](#), the University requires that a cloth face covering (reusable or disposable) that covers both the nose and mouth must be worn at all times when in public areas within all buildings. Students must properly wear face coverings while in class regardless of the room size or the nature of the classroom activities. Students who fail to wear a face covering as required will be in violation of the WKU Student Code of Conduct and will be asked to comply or will face disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the University. Accommodations can be requested in special cases through the Student Accessibility and Resource Center ([SARC](#)): [270-745-5004](#) (voice), [270-745-3030](#) (TTY), or [270-288-0597](#) (video).

All students must immediately report a positive Covid-19 test result or close contact with a person who has tested positive to the Covid-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019. The assistance line is

available to answer questions regarding any Covid-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by public health agencies or the office of the governor. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information. [www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill](http://www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill)

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's [Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy](#) (#0.2070) and [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159.

Performing Arts Addendum: Face coverings may be removed for WKU courses in Music (MUS) and Theatre (THEA) where physical use of the face/mouth is required for course content. Face coverings will only be removed for the unique needs of the activity and will remain in place at all other times, including entering/exiting the room and general communication. Discipline specific guidelines regarding aerosol disbursement and directionality, as well as social distancing, will be strictly adhered to.