

Syllabus Spring Semester 2017-2018

## COMM 281.1 — Music, Culture & Criticism

Room: Martino 225

Day/Time: TR 1230-145p

Credit Hours: 3



CHESTNUT  
HILL  
COLLEGE

**Instructor:** Dr. Myles Ethan Lascity

**Office:** DeSales 2

**Office Hours:** 2-4p W; and by appointment

**Email:** LascityM@chc.edu

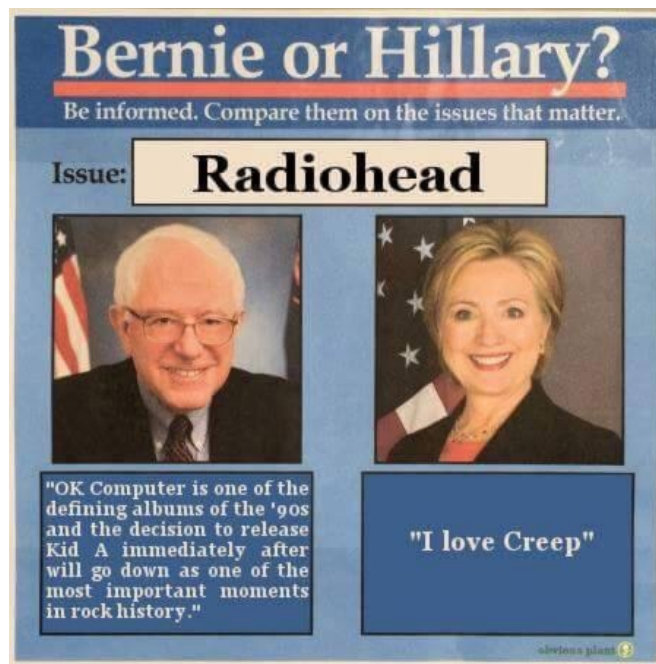
### About This Course

#### Requirements

Powers, Devon. (2013) *Writing the Record: The Village Voice and the Birth of Rock Criticism*. University of Massachusetts Press.

*\*\*Available in eBook from Logue*

Ratliff, Ben. (2016) *Every Song Ever: Twenty Ways to Listen in an Age of Musical Plenty*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.



Subscription to Spotify, Apple Music or similar listening application.

One book from the 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  Series

#### Recommended Reading

Woodworth, Marc and Grossman, Ally-Jane (2015) *How to Write About Music*. Bloomsbury.

#### Course Description

This course interrogates the role of popular music in culture and highlights the role of music criticism as a journalistic practice. Special attention is paid to the

historical development of music criticism and the production of contemporary criticism.

### **Purpose of this Course**

This course is designed to allow students to think critically about the music they listen to and how popular music interacts with other social and cultural aspects of society. Students will be familiarized with the processes of music criticism, including critical listening, extended discussion and writing about popular music.

### **Course Objectives**

This course is designed to give students a chance to explore and critically analyze popular music. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to (1) critically listen to popular music; (2) produce informed criticisms in a variety of formats; (3) understand and reflect on the production of popular music; and (4) understand the history of popular music criticism.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Chestnut Hill College has adopted ten Students Learning Outcomes that we believe should be an integral part of every CHC student's education. The following will be emphasized in this course: Communication, Critical and Creative Inquiry and Integrative Learning.

### **Methods of Evaluation**

Your grade will be graded out of 900 points.

### **Attendance and Participation – 300 pts**

Attendance and participation are extremely important in this class. This means regular and prompt attendance, coming to class having done the assigned readings, contributing to discussion and respectfully listening to others.

*From the Undergraduate Studies Catalog (p. 59):* There is a relationship between the academic success of the student and class attendance. The School of Undergraduate Studies expects its students to accept their responsibility to attend class regularly and promptly. An Instructor may lower a student's grade because of absences from class. It is the responsibility of the Instructor to set forth in writing at the beginning of a course any special conditions regarding absence in the course.

A student who finds it necessary to be absent from class should, if possible, inform the Instructor in advance of the absence. If absences occur, it is the student's responsibility to make up whatever work has been missed. Permission

to make up laboratory assignments, studios, quizzes, and examinations may be granted at the discretion of the Instructor. When an Instructor determines that a student's progress is being seriously impeded by excessive absences from class or by other difficulties, the Instructor will refer the student to the Office of Student Success.

Each class you will be given two (2) points for coming to class. Contributing to the discussion will be worth up to an additional eight (8) points. Being late to class, not paying attention to the discussion or actively disrupting class will result in a loss of participation points.

You are allowed **two (2)** unexcused absences from class. **Missing eight (8) or more classes without a valid excuse will result in a failure of the course.**

*Note:* The instructor reserves the right to (a) assign and include pop quizzes into your participation grade and (b) give additional points for outstanding attendance and participation.

### **Assignments – 500 pts**

Discussion Leader — 50 pts

Students will be assigned to lead class discussion once throughout the term. This will be decided in the second week. After which, students are responsible for rearranging discussion leadership responsibility in case of illness or other circumstances.

Discussion Questions — 150 pts

For each assigned reading, students should question three **thoughtful** discussion questions prior to the start of class. For full credit, questions should be posted by 9 am. Questions posted between 9a and 11a will received partial credit. **No credit will be given for questions posted after the start of class.**

Written Music Criticism — 200 pts (One midterm; One final)  
Podcast — 100 pts

### **PDE Assignments – 100 pts**

Students are required to complete 5+ additional instructional hours outside of class meeting time to meet the PDE requirement of 42 hours per 3-credit course.

There will be two major assignments in class and accompanying online discussion:

Group Reading and Presentation of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  Series — 15 hours

**Written assignments are due by the beginning of class on the assigned due date. No exceptions.**

**Late assignments will be accepted, but one letter grade (10 points) will be deducted for every day the assignment is late.** All late assignments must be emailed to me.

If you are having an issue or need an extension for any reason, please discuss it with the instructor as soon as possible. Accommodations can be made but they will not be made if you wait until the due date.

**Plagiarism and story fabrication is a serious issue within the communication field. As such any instances of plagiarism or fabrication will result in a failing grade for the assignment and failing grade in the course.** There are not exceptions to this rule. Please refer to the college's policies on academic honesty in your student handbook and online. Students will also be reported to the dean of SUS.

Grade	Average	Class Points	4.0 Scale
A	93-100	837-900	4.0
A-	90-92	810-828	3.67
B+	87-89	783-801	3.33
B	83-86	747-774	3.0
B-	80-82	720-738	2.67
C+	77-79	693-711	2.33
C	73-76	657-684	2.0
C-	70-72	630-648	1.67
D+	67-69	603-621	1.33
D	60-66	540-594	1.0
F	59 and below	Less than 531	0.0

## **Academic Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

Every student who enrolls in any course taught at CHC is required to abide by the CHC Academic Integrity Policy. Specific instructions from each faculty member may be added to the course requirements as well.

### **Special Accommodations/Disability Policy**

Americans with Disabilities Act: Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines and has accommodations authorized by the Chestnut Hill College Disability Committee should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. This is presented to the instructor in the form of an Accommodations Letter provided by the CHC Disability Committee. If a student feels he/she may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability (eg. sensory, learning, psychological, medical, mobility), he/she should contact the Disability Resource Center to arrange an appointment for assistance in verifying your eligibility for academic accommodations. Contact Kristin Tracy, Director of the Disability Resource Center, 331 St. Joseph Hall, Phone: 215-753-3655, Fax: 215-242-7748, [TracyK@chc.edu](mailto:TracyK@chc.edu).

### **College Policy for Withdrawal**

*From the Undergraduate Studies Catalog (p. 47):* Students are permitted to withdraw from a course with the approval of a Faculty Advisor. A student who wishes to withdraw from a course or courses must complete the Change of Registration Form. If a student completes a Change of Registration Form before the deadline indicated on the Academic Calendar a non-punitive grade of “W-Withdrawal” is recorded on the transcript; the GPA is not affected. After the deadline, a grade of “WF- Withdrawal/Failing” is assigned and the GPA is affected. Students are responsible for all outstanding debts to the College regardless of the grade assigned.

### **College Policy for Incomplete Grade**

*From the Undergraduate Studies Catalog (p. 49):* Students having earned at least 24 academic credits may take up to 4 credits per semester of electives on a Pass/Fail (P/F) basis. The total number of P/F courses taken may not exceed 18 credits. Electives are defined as any course not required for a major or minor or the core curriculum. A course may be taken P/F (even a course in the major department), but it will count as an elective and will therefore not be counted toward the requirements for the major or the minor. The only P/F credits that may be counted towards a major or minor requirement are those earned for fieldwork,

internships or practica at the discretion of the department.

Requests to change the grading option must be received in the Office of the Registrar by the deadline published in the Academic Calendar. The Instructor's permission is required to change the grading option of a course after the drop/add deadline as published in the Academic Calendar.

## Class Schedule

*This is a working schedule. Any changes will be made between the instructor and the class. You are responsible for knowing about any alterations to the syllabus if you are not in class when the changes are discussed.*

Week	Date	Class Plans
Wk 1	Jan. 16	Class Introduction
	Jan. 18	Powers — Introduction: Criticism
Wk 2	Jan. 23	Powers — Village Powers — Pop
	Jan. 25	<b>Taylor Swift, "Reputation"</b> <i>Carmanica, "Taylor Swift is a 2017 Pop Machine ..."</i> <i>Cox, "Taylor Swift, Reputation"</i> <i>Sheffield, "Taylor Swift Ditches Tabloid Drama ..."</i> <i>Sargent, "In Embracing Evil on Reputation ..."</i>
Wk 3	Jan. 30	<i>Woodworth and Grossan — "The Album Review"</i> <i>Woodworth and Grossan — "Track-by-Track"</i>
	Feb. 1	Ratliff — Introduction Ratliff — Chapters 1-5
Wk 4	Feb. 6	Ratliff — Chapters 6-10 Ratliff — Chapters 11-15
	Feb. 8	Ratliff — Chapters 16-20
Wk 5	Feb. 13	TBA
	Feb. 15	<b>Frank Ocean, "Blonde"</b> <i>Carmanica, "Frank Ocean Transmits Intimacy ..."</i> <i>Weiner, "... Dizzy, Trippy, Druggy Marvel"</i> <i>Jonze, "... a baffling and brilliant five-star triumph"</i> <i>Weiss, "... is Pledging its Goddamn Time"</i>
Wk 6	Feb. 20	Powers — Hype Powers — Identity
	Feb. 22	Powers — Mattering

<b>Wk 7</b>	<b>Feb. 27</b> <b>March 1</b>	<b>Midterm Presentations</b> <b>Midterm Presentations</b>
<b>Wk 8</b>	<b>March 6</b> <b>March 8</b>	<b>No Class — Spring Break</b> <b>No Class — Spring Break</b>
<b>Wk 9</b>	<b>March 13</b>  <b>March 15</b>	<i>Woodworth and Grossan — “Analysis”</i> <i>Woodworth and Grossan — “Personal Essay”</i> <i>Woodworth and Grossan — “The Blog Post”</i> <i>Woodworth and Grossan — “Cultural Criticism”</i>
<b>Wk 10</b>	<b>March 20</b>    <b>March 22</b>	<b>Kendrick Lamar, “Damn.”</b> Carmanica, “Rap’s Skeptical Superstar ...” Hsu, “... Lamar’s Holy Spirit” Trammell, “Kendrick Lamar, Damn.” Weingarten, “...From Uplift to Beast Mode ...” <b>TBA</b>
<b>Wk 11</b>	<b>March 27</b> <b>March 29</b>	<b>TBA</b> <b>Easter Break — No Class</b>
<b>Wk 12</b>	<b>April 3</b>  <b>April 5</b>	<i>Vernallis — “Telling and Not Telling”</i> <i>Vernallis — “Connections Among Music, Image ...”</i> <i>Manghani — “The Pleasures of (Music) Video”</i>
<b>Wk 13</b>	<b>April 10</b>  <b>April 12</b>	<b>Group Presentation: Kayne West’s “My Twisted Nightmare”</b> - Ariel, Kristian, Lily and Matt <i>Wright — “The Boy Kept Swinging...”</i> <i>Slee — “Moving the Music ...”</i>
<b>Wk 14</b>	<b>April 17</b>  <b>April 19</b>	<b>Group Presentation: Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the U.S.A.”</b> - Emily, Jen, Macailagh and Steph <b>TBA</b>
<b>Wk 15</b>	<b>April 24</b>    <b>April 26</b>	<b>Group Presentation: A Tribe Call Quest’s “People’s Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Rhythm”</b> - Cleo, Isaac, Josie and Mohamad <b>CULTURAL CRITICISM DUE</b> <b>Beyoncé, “Lemonade”</b> <i>Als, “Beywatch”</i> <i>Burr, “... a Guide to a Woman’s Inner Life”</i> <i>Kornhaber, “... the Sacredness of Sex”</i> <i>Pareles, “Beyoncé Makes ‘Lemonade’ ...”</i> <i>Shffield, “Beyoncé: Lemonade”</i>



<b>Wk 16</b>	<b>May 1</b>	<b>Group Presentation: ABBA's "ABBA Gold"</b> - Adam, Geena and Jordie
	<b>May 3</b> <b>(10:45a)</b>	<b>Class Wrap-up/SECOND REVIEWS DUE</b>