



Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

2025 Summer Session

MUS 235 African Diaspora Music

Course Outline

Course Code: MUS 235

Instructor: Jonathan C. Kramer

Home Institution: North Carolina State University

Office Hours: By Appointment

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Credit: 4

Class Hours:

This course will have 60 class hours, including 32 lecture hours, professor 8 office hours, 8-hour TA discussion sessions, 4-hour review sessions, 8-hour extra classes.

Course Description:

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the rich history, evolution, and cultural significance of musical performance within the African diaspora in the United States. Beginning with the musical traditions and rhythmic structures of West and Central Africa, the course traces how enslaved Africans preserved, transformed, and reinterpreted their musical heritage in the New World, despite immense cultural disruption and systemic oppression.

Students will examine how African musical elements—such as call-and-response, polyrhythms, improvisation, and spiritual expression—persisted and evolved across various historical periods, giving rise to influential American genres including spirituals, blues, jazz, gospel, soul, funk, hip-hop, and beyond. Particular attention will be given to the social and political contexts that shaped these musical forms, from slavery and Reconstruction to the Civil Rights Movement and contemporary Black cultural expression.



Through guided listening sessions, class discussions, multimedia materials, and critical readings, students will develop the analytical tools necessary to identify and describe the core musical features, lyrical themes, and cultural functions of African American music. They will also explore the roles that African American musicians, composers, and communities have played in shaping broader American identities, challenging dominant narratives, and creating new forms of resistance and celebration through sound.

By the end of the course, students will be equipped not only to recognize the sonic and cultural elements of African diasporic music, but also to understand its enduring legacy and transformative power within the tapestry of American life.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and explain various genres and styles of African American music, along with their defining characteristics.
2. Analyze the contributions of influential African American musicians and their impact on American culture across diverse musical traditions.
3. Connect developments in American music to major historical events and social movements.
4. Examine how race intersects with gender, class, and other identities in the creation and reception of music.
5. Recognize the enduring legacy of historical African American musicians in contemporary music practices.

Required Textbooks:

- *Cultural Codes: Makings of a Black Music Philosophy—An Interpretive History from Spirituals to Hip Hop* by William C. Banfield.
- *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States* by Samuel A. Floyd, Jr. Oxford University Press, 1995.

Grading & Evaluation

Attendance	10%
Assignments	20%
Presentations:	20%
Midterm:	25%



Final: 25%

Grading System (1 ~ 100)

A+ : 96 - 100	A : 91 - 95
B+ : 86 - 90	B : 81 - 85
C+ : 76 - 80	C : 71 - 75
D+ : 66 - 70	D : 60 - 65
F : 0 - 59	
Pa : Pass	Fa : Fail

Table of Contents

Unit 1: African American Roots (1600-1770)

Lesson 1: General Characteristics of African Music

Lesson 2: General Characteristics of African American Music and cultural survivals

Lesson 3: Music, Rhythm, and Dance

Lesson 4: Plantation Songs

Unit 1 Summary

Unit 2: Antebellum – WWI (1770-1865)

Lesson 5: Folk Spirituals

Lesson 6: Source Materials

Lesson 7: Precursor to Blues

Unit 2 Summary

Unit 3: Post-Slavery America (1865-1900)

Lesson 8: Concertized Spirituals

Lesson 9: Blues

Lesson 10: Ragtime and Brass Bands

Lesson 11: African American Contributions to Classical Traditions



Unit 3 Summary Midterm Exam

Unit 4: Early 20th Century (1900-1930s)

Lesson 12: Early Gospel

Lesson 13: 40 Acres and the Blues

Lesson 14: New Orleans Jazz

Lesson 15: Big Bands

Unit 4 Summary

Unit 5: WWII - Civil Rights Movement (1940s-1960s)

Lesson 16: Freedom Songs

Lesson 17: Golden Age of Gospel

Lesson 18: Black Music and the Media

Lesson 19: Rhythm and Blues

Lesson 20: Soul Music

Lesson 21: Jazz (Post WWII)

Unit 5 Summary 2

Unit 6: Post-Civil Rights to the New Millennium (1970s-2000)

Lesson 22: Contemporary Gospel

Lesson 23: Dance Styles

Lesson 24: Hip Hop

Lesson 25: Urban Contemporary

Lesson 26: Jazz (Post Civil Rights Act)

Unit 6 Summary

Unit 7: New Millennium to Present (2001-Present)

Lesson 27: Sacred Traditions of the New Millennium

Lesson 28: Out of the Past

Unit 7 Summary



Student responsibilities/expectations: The main course material will be presented through lectures. Students are advised to keep pace with the course material as it is being presented. Consequently, students should endeavor to attend class and discussion sessions, and spend sufficient time working on assigned homework problems. If for any reason a student misses a class, he/she should endeavor to obtain the notes and learn the missed material. Students should not hesitate to ask questions or seek additional assistance to ensure that they are staying on pace with the class.

Examinations: There will be two midterm exams plus one cumulative final exam. The exams will contain problems to solve and definitions, brief explanations of concepts, and simple proof.

