



Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

2026 Winter Session

MUS 460 Echoes of Africa: Diaspora Sounds

Course Outline

Course Code: MUS 460

Instructor: TBA

Home Institution: TBA

Office Hours: By Appointment

Email: TBA

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 investigation of the musical traditions and cultural legacies of the African Diaspora in the United States. Beginning with the rich musical practices of pre-15th century Sub-Saharan Africa, students will examine how African musical systems—characterized by complex rhythms, call-and-response structures, communal participation, and spiritual functions—were carried across the Atlantic through the transatlantic slave trade and reshaped within the social, political, and cultural contexts of the Americas.

Special attention is given to the ways in which these African-derived musical elements interacted with European and Indigenous musical traditions, giving rise to distinctly African American genres including spirituals, work songs, blues, ragtime, jazz, gospel, R&B, soul, funk, hip-hop, and more. The course interrogates the roles that race, gender, class, and geography have played in the



development of these musical forms and considers how African American communities have used music as a vehicle for resistance, resilience, political activism, and cultural affirmation.

Through critical listening, scholarly readings, class discussions, and analytical writing, students will engage with primary and secondary sources to trace the evolving function of music in African American life—from the era of slavery to the civil rights movement and into the present day. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to contextualize musical works within broader historical narratives and cultural movements, and to articulate the profound impact of the African Diaspora on American musical and cultural identity.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Identify and critically describe key genres and stylistic features within African American musical traditions, articulating their cultural, historical, and aesthetic significance.

Evaluate the artistic and cultural contributions of influential African American musicians, analyzing their impact on the evolution of American music and broader cultural discourses.

Interpret major developments in American music in relation to pivotal historical events and social movements, including slavery, emancipation, the Great Migration, the civil rights era, and contemporary activism.

Analyze the intersectionality of race, gender, class, and other identities in the production, performance, and reception of African American music across historical contexts.

Trace the legacy of historical African American musical practices and their influence on contemporary genres, artists, and cultural expressions in the United States and beyond.

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

Course Syllabus Timeline: Core Topics

Week	Session	Topic
1	1	Review of course objectives, and an introduction to the musical and cultural foundations of Africa.
	2	Exploration of indigenous musical traditions, social structures, and performance practices in Sub-Saharan Africa.
	3	The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Cultural Displacement Examination of the forced migration of Africans and the cultural consequences of the slave trade on musical expression.
	4	African American Music in the 19th Century Study of early Black musical forms including folk, spirituals, and the emergence of Black composers in the 19th Century.
2	1	The Plantation System and the Emergence of the Black Church Analysis of music's role within plantation life and the rise of sacred traditions in African American religious contexts.
	2	American Civil War Investigation of African American musical responses to war, emancipation, and shifting national identities.



Week	Session	Topic
	3	Midterm Review Session & Discussion Session
	4	Midterm Examination
	1	Brass Bands and the Evolution of Early Jazz Tracing the development of Black brass bands and their contribution to the emergence of jazz in the early 20th century.
3	2	Office Hour & Discussion Session
	3	Analysis of how Black migration patterns shaped the development of R&B and urban musical landscapes.
	4	The Role of Music in the African American Civil Rights Struggle
	1	Examination of musical innovation and sociopolitical expression in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement.
4	2	Exploration of contemporary urban narratives through hip-hop culture.
	3	Review Session & Discussion Session
	4	Final Exam

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