Teaching African American Music: Creating an Equitable and Responsible Curriculum

Vandercook College

Course Code: 7262
Time: Wednesdays @ 4:00pm

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Office Hours by appointment
mdiaz@vandercook.edu

Course Description

This course gives students the opportunity to study the music, history, artist, styles and cultural impact of African American Music through research, listening, discussion and creating. Though African American music history is a cornerstone of American music and history, many music teachers have limited knowledge about how to incorporate Afrocentric pedagogy into their classrooms, leaving their curriculum unbalanced and inequitable. This class will survey and demonstrate the musical and cultural history, genres and artists that comprise the rich diaspora of black music including spirituals, blues, jazz, gospel, rock, funk, soul, pop and hip hop.
Student Engagement Statement
Each class week will consist of a 60-90 minute discussion and presentation zoom call, plus an additional 1-2 hours of independent student work, research, and discussion. Students are required to prepare for the first day of class by observing and reflecting upon the pre-course class work which is emailed to students 48 hours before.

Philosophy Statement
This class is intended to challenge pedagogical philosophies including how you were taught music, how you believe music should be taught, and the way you teach music intentionally. Additional emphasis is placed upon the intersection of eurocentric and afrocentric music education, culturally relevant and responsible music teaching, and student-centered music education. These are necessary factors to reflect upon to ensure that teachers are able to clearly review and identify bias in their current curriculums and rebuild curriculums that are equitable and culturally responsive.

Outcomes and Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Outcomes Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>● Students will research and review African American Music and its social and cultural</td>
<td>● Students will listen, read, observe, and discuss the meaning of a wide variety of</td>
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<td>impact over generations by listening, analyzing, reading, and reviewing music.</td>
<td>significant African American art and artists.</td>
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<td>● Students will review, create, and discuss effective and equitable lesson and unit plans</td>
<td>● Students will review, identify, and create lesson and unit plans that showcase</td>
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<td>that include African American Studies.</td>
<td>different African American styles from 1650 to the present Day.</td>
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<td>● Students will debate and discuss the contrast between eurocentric education and its</td>
<td>● Students will create and demonstrate a balanced curriculum that represents a wide</td>
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<td>supremacy in music pedagogy in America as compared to afrocentric education styles and</td>
<td>variety of pedagogical practices that are racially equitable and culturally</td>
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<tr>
<td>pedagogy.</td>
<td>responsive.</td>
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Students will discuss and observe best pedagogical practices for incorporating different afro-centric learning styles that are representative of different styles of music.

Students will discuss, observe, and create lesson and unit plans that demonstrate excellence in different pedagogical practices that are appropriate for various styles of music.

Program-Level Outcomes Addressed:

**Professionalism in Teaching**
Candidates will participate in group and character-building activities by working alone and with others to explore personal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to personal and professional growth.

Students will demonstrate the ability to:
1. Research best educational practices
2. Discern new uses for information from a variety of course work
3. Reflectively discuss their teaching and ways to enhance it

**Excellence in Music**
Candidates will explore more deeply the culturally and historically important aspects of music, musicians, and composers throughout the world and across time.

Students will demonstrate the ability to:
1. Recognize style traits of various composers, genres, and periods
2. Identify major and transitional composers in a variety of styles, genres, and periods
3. Learn or review and apply new techniques to perform in a style appropriate to genre, style, period, and culture

**Strength in Character**
Candidates will develop new approaches to the praxis of teaching by learning about, experiencing, and using best practice techniques as borne out in proven traditional practices and those demonstrated as effective through current research.

Students will demonstrate the ability to:
1. Discuss a variety of educational approaches
2. Describe why particular educational approaches are chosen for use
3. Choose and apply new approaches to the teaching praxis.

**Instructional Materials**
In order to decentralize an emphasis on Eurocentric methods (which is largely based on written tradition) and emphasize Afro-centric methods (which is largely based on an oral tradition), no books are required for this class. However, students will observe, reflect,
and discuss a wide variety of articles and documentaries throughout the class which are listed in the course bibliography.

**Course Bibliography**  
**Instructional Materials and Course Bibliography**

**Articles and Videos**

The Racial Politics of Music Education***  

Music Theory and White Supremacy  
(first 30 mins)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kr3quGh7pJA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kr3quGh7pJA)

Slave Songbook: Origin of the Negro Spiritual  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zeshN_ummU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zeshN_ummU)

Up From Slavery by Booker T. Washington  
Chapter 1: A Slave Among Slaves | Up from Slavery | Booker T. Washington | Lit2Go ETC  

Is Eurocentricity a problem in our music schools?  

Teaching whiteness in the classroom  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3AFhSsRyyk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3AFhSsRyyk)

The Birth of Soul by Ray Charles  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-x9o6qQxbdw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-x9o6qQxbdw)

The Tanning of America  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-x9o6qQxbdw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-x9o6qQxbdw)
Course Weekly Requirements

1. Weekly Learning Resource
One article or video will be sent out per week. You will need to respond to the four questions below on schoology, as well as engage with two of your classmates' responses. In certain cases there will be an additional statement added.
   ○ What do you agree with?
   ○ What do you disagree with?
   ○ What do you want to incorporate in your class?
   ○ What do you have a question about?

2. Weekly Zoom Call
Students must attend Weekly Zoom calls (Time TBD). In this meeting we will further discuss the article or video sent out, and I will also demonstrate song writing practices in different styles.

3. One Lesson Plan or Unit Overview per week.
   Lesson plan or Unit Overview should include:
   ○ Objective
   ○ Unit
   ○ Essential Question
   ○ Basic Agenda
   ○ Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>Zoom Conferences -25%</td>
<td>90-100 = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Resource Response -25%</td>
<td>80-90 = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Lesson Planning -25%</td>
<td>70-80 = C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm and Final Research Projects -25%</td>
<td>65-70 = D</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-65 = F</td>
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Attendance Policy
Students will be required to attend the weekly zoom meetings on Tuesday from 3-4PM EST. Meeting links and invitations are made available on the classes Schoology web page. If a student must miss an online class, the student is responsible for re-watching and responding to the Zoom discussion, which will be saved and made available on Schoology. The student alone is responsible for the work due. An excused absence will
be applied if the student gives 48 hours notice and responds to the class replay. If a student is not virtually present, an unexcused absence will apply, and the student will receive no credit for that portion of their grade.

**Candidate Conduct**

An important part of VanderCook's Conceptual Framework and Candidate Dispositions and Outcomes is the focus on professionalism and character. Specific descriptors include participation as well as attendance, flexibility in the face of changing circumstances and institutional needs, the commitment to continual personal development, self-reflection and growth, respect for the academic community and the individuals and resources of that community, and behavior, speech and dress that is appropriate and respectful in the educational environment. Failure to observe standards of professional behavior may result in referral to the Standards Committee and/or the appropriate dean. Consistent concerns in this area will have an impact on successful completion of the program.

**Health and Safety**

VanderCook College of Music is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Basic information regarding the maintenance of health and safety within the contexts of practice, performance, teaching and listening is provided throughout the academic year. Health and safety information specific to this course will be addressed. It is the responsibility of each individual musician to take an active role in making informed decisions to help maintain their own health and safety.

**Academic Honesty**

Candidates are expected to maintain the highest standards of integrity in their academic work. Failure to do so will jeopardize a candidate’s success in the program. Examples of academic dishonesty include: Presenting another’s words, music, or concepts as your own by failing to acknowledge or properly cite the source. Communicating or receiving answers or information to/from another in a testing situation. Consulting notes or any other source of answers/information in a testing situation, unless the instructor authorizes such access. Making available or accessing tests or quizzes from current or previous classes unless explicitly authorized by the instructor. Bringing, by any means, answers or information into a testing situation except as explicitly authorized by the instructor. Collaborating or turning in jointly produced work on any test or assignment that is intended to reflect individual effort.
Plagiarism

Plagiarism means taking someone else’s words, ideas, data or work and presenting them as your own. This could mean an exact duplication of someone else’s work without proper citation of the source, or it could mean you present it with only small changes and do not cite the source. Plagiarism can occur in art, music, literature, or technology – really in any area of intellectual work. All work submitted should be properly credited to the original source of the information or idea whether the source is a book, Internet site, article, or any other medium. In written work, quotation marks or block indentations show direct quotations and the source must be cited. If information that is not common knowledge is paraphrased or summarized from a source, that source (including websites) must be cited. Failure to do so in academic assignments represents cheating and carries the appropriate penalties. Copyright compliance is the goal of VanderCook College. Information to help with clarification of what constitutes fair use of copyrighted material, including photocopying, is on permanent reserve in the Ruppel Library.

No candidate should expect to receive a passing grade on any test or assignment that reflects dishonesty or academic irregularity. Cheating in any form may result in failure of the class and academic expulsion.

Disability Statement

If a student has a disability which might interfere with that student’s ability to function in this course it is the responsibility of that student to notify the instructor at the beginning of the course.

Course Calendar and Class Session Breakdown

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<th>Pre-Class Preparation</th>
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**Week 1: Intro Class Week of February 14, 2021**

1. Teacher/Student Introductions
2. Review Syllabus
3. Eurocentric vs. Afrocentric Music Education
Homework

1. Watch and discuss the first 30 minutes of Music Theory and White Supremacy.
2. In a 4 paragraph essay that reflects upon what kind of theory you lean towards, and your students' cultural backgrounds.
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kr3quGh7pJA/

Week 2: The Music of West Africa -Week of February 21

1. Discussion:
2. Teacher Presentation: West African Unit Plan by MED
   https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1UcXh_ljTG8ZmlYO1TL6BfyCtwyQj_jyvRFeh3veCqnk/edit#slide=id.p

***Khe Khe Kule in Mr. Diaz's Music Class

Homework

Create: a Lesson or Unit Plan using a West African Song or Technique
Watch and Note (18 minutes)
Slave Songbook: Origin of the Negro Spiritual
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zeshN_ummU

Week 3: Slave Songs Week of February 28, 2022

1. Student Presentations: West African Lesson/ Unit Plans
2. Listening: Compare and Contrast:
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlCanglXR2w
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oFcFzjT7Tw
3. Teacher Presentation: Slave Song Unit
4. Listening: Popular Spirituals for Choir

Homework

Option 1: Create a Lesson/ Unit Plan with a slave songs
Option 2: Identify 2 choir/band/ orchestra songs or spirituals you can teach.
Find 2 performances for each example that you can reference.
Read and Discuss: Up From Slavery by Booker T. Washington
Read the first Chapter, paying close attention to the last 2 paragraphs.

Week 4: Blues Part 1 - Week of March 7, 2022
1. Excerpt from "Up from Slavery" by Booker T. Washington
2. Writing Blues Songs
3. Teacher Share: How to write the Blues and Blues Unit

Homework

Create: Write a 2 verse Blues Song and Record it.
We will share in class next week.

Create: A Blues Lesson Plan or unit plan

Watch and Discuss: Blues Story: A Documentary

Week 5: Blues Pt. 2, Race Identity and Civil Rights - Week of March 14, 2022
1. Student Share: Blues Songs
2. Teacher Share: Blues Unit

Homework

Create: Research an African American Classical Musician or music style.
Create a lesson or unit plan that is representative of that style.
Be sure to include:
- The artist or style you are representing
- 3-5 significant works
- Cite your sources
Week 6: Black and Classy -Week of March 21, 2022
Students will present their lesson and unit plans in the below various styles:

1. Orchestral
2. Choral
3. Band
4. Music Theatre

Watch and Discuss: Jessye Norman; When I am Laid in the Earth
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOlAi2XwuWo

Homework

Research, Share, Watch, and Discuss: Research a jazz documentary you can use to teach with.

Week 7: Black and Jazzy! -Week of March 28, 2022

1. The History of Jazz Music
2. The Jazz Genre Map
3. Discussion Jazz Methods for each grade level
   a. Elementary scat singing
   b. Middle School Head learning
   c. Orchestra/ Band/ Choral Jazz Works

Homework

Watch and Discuss: The Birth of Soul by Ray Charles Pt. 1
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3AFhSsRyyk

Homework/ Research Project: Research a Jazz Method (Song/ Technique/ Sheet Music) you can incorporate into your classes and create a quick lesson plan around it.

Week 8: Music of the Civil Rights Movement/ R&B and Rock and Roll
Week of April 4, 2022

1. Discussion: Why should we teach protest music? What are things we should be aware of when teaching protest music?
2. Teacher Presentation: Music of the Civil Rights Movement
3. **Brainstorming and Planning:** How to teach protest
4.  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLc5QJJsMgyw

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**Homework**

**Watch and Discuss:** The Birth of Soul by Ray Charles Pt. 2  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3AFhSsRyyk

**Create a Unit Plan** that outlines the Protest Music and the Civil Rights Movement. Be sure to have a final project where students lead independent protests.

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**Week 9: Funk, Soul, and Rock & Roll Week of April 11, 2022**

1. **Discussion:** What is cultural appropriation and how can we teach about it?
2. **Student Presentations:** Protest Music and the Civil Rights Movement

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**Homework**

**Watch and Discuss:** The Tanning of America Pt. 1

**Create a lesson or unit Plan that outlines funk/ soul/ or black rock & roll music:**

Be sure to include:

- The artist or style you are representing
- 3-5 significant works
- Cite your sources
- Use little kids rock to teach modern songs
**Week 10: Hip hop Part 1 - Week of April 18, 2022**
1. Discussion: What is an equitable and responsible curriculum? And how can we ensure that our students are getting what they need to succeed.
2. Teacher Presentation: Hip hop Part 1
3. Student Presentations: Funk, Soul, and Rock and Roll

**Homework**

**Research and Respond:** The equity articles.
**Create a Unit Plan** that teaches Hip hop fundamentals.

**Week 11: Hip Hop Part 2 - Week of April 25, 2022**
1. **Discussion:** Create an Equity plan in small groups (band/ choir/ orchestra). Create 5 creed (I Will/ I Believe) statements that speak to how you will commit to creating an equitable and responsible classroom.
2. **Teacher Presentations:** Hip Hop part 2

**Homework**

**Due:**
**Create a Curriculum Map** that highlights the evolution of African American Music. Be sure to include your lesson and Unit Overviews. Include a final project.

**Week 12: Final Project Presentations - Week of May 2, 2022**
Students will present their final projects.