

“Honky Tonk Ensemble”: MUS 231/560 Sec 35

Lab Course to also accompany Dr. Jacobsen’s class, “Country Music and Cultural Politics” MUS/ANTH 435/535

Fall 2016, University of New Mexico Department of Music

Alex McMahon

E-mail: amcmaho1@gmail.com

Office Location: B105, before class meets on Monday nights

Office Hours: Before/after class on Monday nights

For all office hours, if possible **please email/talk to me** in advance to let me know you are coming so I can put you in my schedule

Office Phone: Please email me in lieu of calling

Course Meeting Time and Location: Monday 7:15-9:15 PM, Center for the Arts B105. *Additional rehearsals will take place on given evenings throughout the semester, see calendar below.*

Course Description

This course focuses on learning to perform country music from the 1960s, '70s and '80s, also known as “honky tonk” music. Artists and material covered include songs by Kitty Wells, Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline, Tammy Wynette, George Jones, Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, Waylon Jennings, Buck Owens, Johnny Rodriguez and Charley Pride. Guest artists will be brought in to run clinics on singing and how to communicate with the sound engineer and also give general input on the dynamics of playing in a band.

Taught by performing country artists, the class focuses on country singing style, harmony, rhythm and lead instrumentation, song arrangement, and performance techniques for successful performance. The class is designed to be taught as a group, with students learning to perform as a band in the process.

Desired outcomes for this course include an increased appreciation for the poetics and nuance of country music performance (including stylistic details relating to honky tonk), hands-on knowledge of country music’s sonic progression and history, and a more intimate knowledge of country music’s thematic content from the perspective of someone who has performed it.

Learning objectives

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

- Perform at least one Honky Tonk song very well from memory (either the vocal, rhythm or lead part)
- Perform at least 7 songs at a moderate level from memory as a member of the ensemble
- Understand and utilize vocal, instrumental or performance techniques that are distinctive to Honky Tonk music.
- Articulate and perform basic knowledge about the distinctive styles within the country music genre covered in class

Required Films (available via streaming and/or as DVDs on three-hour reserve in Zimmerman Library):

Submit a one paragraph write-up about the music in each film in UNM Learn

1) *Crazy Heart* (<http://www.vudu.com/movies/#!/content/173142/Crazy-Heart>, \$2.99)

2) *Coalminer’s Daughter* (http://www.amazon.com/Coal-Miners-Daughter-Sissy-Spacek/dp/B003AAW0UA/ref=tmm_aiv_swatch_1?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1452283907&sr=8-2, \$2.99)

Optional Films: *Tender Mercies*

Required Listening:

All required class listening will be provided to you in CD format. Be sure to listen through all the way to the end before making your selection.

- 1 – I’m a One-Woman Man - Johnny Horton
- 2 – Kansas City Blues- Wayne ‘The Train’ Hancock
- 3 – Your Good Girl’s Gonna Go Bad - Tammy Wynette
- 4 – I still Miss Someone - Johnny Cash
- 5 – Workin’ Man Blues - Merle Haggard
- 6 – After the Fire is Gone - Loretta Lynn
- 7 – Hello Walls - Willie Nelson
- 8 - Just Because I’m a Woman - Dolly Parton
- 9 – Look Away- Nikki Lane
- 10 – She’s Got You - Patsy Cline
- 11 – Half a Mind- Ernest Tubb
- 12 – She’s No Angel - Kitty Wells
- 13 – Sam’s Place - Buck Owens
- 14 – Stop the World (And Let Me Off) - Waylon Jennings
- 15 – Just Between You and Me - Charley Pride
- 16 – Take Me - George Jones
- 17 – Bright Lights and Blonde Haired Women - Ray Price
- 18 - Ridin’ My Thumb to Mexico - Johnny Rodriguez
- 19 - Hank and Lefty Raised My Country Soul - Stoney Edwards
- 20 – Lost Highway- Hank Williams

Additional Required Performances/Shows:

TBD, I’ll discuss in class and email about any local shows that might be of interest to the class, though they are by no means mandatory. Should any of the students know of a good honky-tonk show, please share it with the class. There is currently no fieldtrip planned for the Fall 2016 semester.

Suggested Reading:

“Why Does Country Music Sound White” (2008) by Geoff Mann
Ethnic and Racial Studies, 31 (1): 73-100.

Real Country: Music and Language in Working-class Culture, 2004. Aaron A. Fox.

Distribution of grades: Students may earn up to a total of 1000 points

Attendance.....	32%	(320 points; 20 points per class, rehearsal or field trip fully attended)
.....		(If you are late, 10 points will be deducted)
2 Class Performances.....	50%	(500 points; 250 points per performance)
(As professional courtesy you must stay until the headlining act has finished, if not 50 points will be deducted)		
.....		Friday October 21st , The Tannex, 7:00-9:00PM
.....		Thursday November 17th , Sister Bar, 7:00-9:00 PM

Effort & Preparedness.....	8% (80 points)
Movie Write-ups	5% (50 points, 25 points per write-up)
Instructor Evaluations.....	5% (50 points)

Class Participation

This course should be conceived of as a band rather than a class. As such, attendance and participation is paramount. If you are absent, it may result that your song will not be prepared enough to be part of the set list for performances. Also, being on time means arriving early so that your instrument is tuned, your gear is ready, and you're ready to rehearse **BY THE TIME CLASS STARTS**. Please be prepared for the songs that we will be rehearsing each week.

Song Selection

You will be given a CD of 20 songs representative of Honky Tonk music. Each student will choose at least one song that they will prepare at a high level of vocal performance, rhythmic precision or instrumental lead (memorized). Song selection is **first-come, first-served** and is based on who sends me an email selecting a given song, first. As an ensemble we will prepare at least 7 songs for performance that include a mix of styles, rhythms and tempo. However, we reserve the right to decide which songs ultimately are part of the performance set list and who performs which songs. Remember, if you miss class, we may not have enough opportunity to practice the song that you're responsible for, and as such it may be cut from the set for the performances.

Performances

You are encouraged to attend as many live performances of Honky Tonk music as possible throughout the course of the semester to get a better sense for this genre as a style of music and as a dance genre. Bands to look out for include:

- Boris McCutcheon and the Saltlicks
- A Band Named Sue
- Tumbleweeds
- Merlettes
- Steve Rose & the Buffalo Nickel Band
- Bill Hearne Trio
- E. Christina Herr Band
- The Gunsels
- Rabid Childs

Honky Tonks

Good honky tonks in Albuquerque and the surrounding area include:

- Molly's Bar – Tijeras
- Mine Shaft Tavern – Madrid
- Wild Pony – Los Lunas
- Caravan East – Albuquerque
- Dirty Bourbon – Albuquerque
- Triple Sevens—Isleta Resort and Casino

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

How to succeed in this class

- A rule of thumb: the more you put into a class, the more you will get out of it.
- Come to every class and arrive on time. Class attendance is required (see attendance policy). We only meet once per week, so every class is important. This is an ensemble, so your attendance directly affects your classmates and our preparation for performances.
- Encourage your classmates/bandmates. This ensemble will be made up of students of varying musical skill levels and backgrounds. We can learn from each other's strengths.
- Participate in class. Ask questions, express your ideas, and actively listen to what your classmates have to say (see participation guidelines).

- Memorize material/get off the page as soon as possible (i.e., beginning in Week 2 of the semester). Memorizing helps us to internalize material much more quickly and deeply, so your ability to really listen to yourself and others will be greatly facilitated by coming to class with songs memorized.
- Communicate with me. Many personal and academic problems can be resolved if you are forthright about them. Talk to me before or after class or send me an e-mail. If you are having a problem, the sooner you talk to me about it the better. The longer you wait, the less I will be able to help you.

Attendance

Students are required to attend every class, to be on time (early), to come to class prepared (having practiced the relevant songs), and to participate actively in rehearsal. **If you will not be able to attend class, please advise us, as this will affect which songs we'll be able to rehearse.** You will earn 20 attendance points for each class period fully attended, totaling 320 points if you attend all 13 class sessions. If you arrive late, 10 points will be deducted from the 20 possible points. **Students who miss two classes, or enrolled students who miss the first two classes of the semester, will be administratively withdrawn from the course.** Students on academic probation are not allowed *any* unexcused absences.

Attendance includes the extra rehearsals on the night before each performance.

Attendance at the two off campus performances is paramount and represents the culmination of our in-class rehearsals and are required. As a matter of professional courtesy, participation in performances means that you will stay until the headlining act has finished performing. This is a valuable opportunity to learn from veteran performers and is also part of the reciprocal nature of networking and professional performance. If you do not stay until the final band has finished, 50 points will be deducted from the 250 possible points.

Credit

This is a 1 credit course, which means that you are expected to spend 3 hours per week on this class (at UNM, students are awarded one credit for every three hours they spend on course work). You will only spend 2 hours in class each week; the remaining 1 hour will involve work outside of class. However, to be musically prepared I would recommend practicing/preparing **30 minutes per day/5 times a week.**

Cell phones and laptop computers

Screens often impede human connection and communication. For this reason, **this is a screens free class.** Please turn your cell phone off before class begins. Ringing phones are very distracting and disrespectful. Text messaging is not allowed during class. Except in the case of a documented disability, computers and ipads are also not permitted in class. Please plan to take notes longhand.

Communicating with your professors (or employers) via e-mail

This is a tip rather than a policy. Students convey respect, maturity, and professionalism when they use upper and lower case letters in e-mails, include greetings (something other than just "hey"), use correct punctuation, and write more formally than they would when text messaging friends.

Practice Etiquette

At the beginning of class, we will always have a very brief check-in to touch base, clarify the material we'll be going over, and cover any other essential items relevant to that week's class. As a basic performance etiquette, it is considered rude to play, "noodle" or practice your instrument while others are speaking; please make a conscious distinction between discussion time and playing time; they are not interchangeable.

Grading

I work hard to be fair and open in my grading, and am happy to discuss grades with students at any time. Each assignment prompt will include a grading rubric that explains how I will evaluate your work. Keep the rubric in mind as you're completing the assignment, and try scoring your own work before you turn it in to identify weak areas. If you have questions about grading rubrics, please ask! Each assignment will be scored on a point system, and your grade will be the percentage of points you earned. Finally, I will convert your average back into a letter grade using these ranges:

93–100 = A 90–92 = A- 87–89 = B+ 83–86 = B 80–82 = B- 77–79 = C+

73-76 = C

70-72 = C-

67-69 = D+

63-66 = D

60-62 = D-

0-59 = F

Social Media

The UNM Honky Tonk Ensemble has Facebook, Vimeo and Soundcloud pages and a Youtube channel to post news, photos, videos and to host events (e.g. the public performances). If you would like to opt out and not have your information included on posts, photos, etc., please let the instructor know. Our social media presence will be used to promote performances as well as to provide information to potential students who would like to join the ensemble future semesters.

Accommodations for students with special needs

UNM complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing a process for disclosing disabilities and arranging for reasonable accommodations. If you have a documented disability, you can arrange for accommodations by contacting the Accessibility Resource Center (<http://as2.unm.edu/>) at jegreen@unm.edu (e-mail) or calling 505-277-3506. Students needing academic accommodations are required to register with the ARC and provide required disability related documentation. Although you may request an accommodation at any time, in order for the ARC to best meet your individual needs, you are urged to register and submit necessary documentation 8 weeks prior to the time you wish to receive accommodations. Concerns or questions related to the accessibility of programs and facilities at UNM may be brought to the attention of the ARC or the Office of Equal Opportunity-Affirmative Action (http://www.unm.edu/~oeounm/affirmative_action/) (phone: 277-5251). It is the student's choice to disclose difference/disability information to individual instructors. However, only students who provide their instructors with an Accommodations Agreement can receive accommodations.

Sensitive Course Materials

Material in this course may be sensitive for some of you. UNM supports this exploration as a way to further your critical thinking as students. As University policy states:

"University education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it necessarily involves engagement with a wide range of information, ideas, and creative representations. In the course of college studies, students can expect to encounter—and critically appraise—materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar understandings, ideas, and beliefs." Students are especially encouraged to discuss these matters with faculty on the first day of class but are also always welcome to do so at any point during the semester.

In performing in a Honky Tonk ensemble—a genre often linked to working-class white/Anglo identities—sensitive and important issues relating to race, class and gender can surface. We encourage these discussions, and also encourage you to delve as deeply into what are actually the multi-faceted and diverse origins of country music—including Native, African American and Hispanic—throughout the course of the semester. What we are not okay with is the parodying—in an unkind way—of working-class white identities or "rednecks." This class aims to provide a dignified window into the beauty of a working-class verbal art form often dismissed, maligned and stereotyped. As such, we are very invested in you learning this material in a way that helps you to appreciate and connect with it more deeply.

Problems Using UNM Learn

Please ensure that you can use UNM Learn successfully. If you have any problems using UNM Learn, your first line of contact should be the Technical Support at UNM Learn, which is open Monday-Friday 8-5 at 505-277-0857, to assist you with such issues. Please visit the "support" tab in your UNM Learn shell, located in the upper right hand corner when you are at the home location, for any/all support related issues. Also note that I do not check BB Learn messages on a regular basis; rather, my UNM email should be used, instead.

Exceptions to these policies

I do not make exceptions to these policies except in very rare situations such as medical or family emergencies when the circumstances are severe and beyond a student's control *and* when the student has demonstrated responsibility and communicated with me as early as possible.

Policies are only fair if they are applied consistently and evenly and everyone knows what they are. If I make an exception for you under normal circumstances, it is not fair to other students, who may have also benefited from the same exception. Please do not ask for exceptions unless you find yourself in an emergency situation (in which case I will be happy to work with you). Instead, I encourage you to plan ahead and communicate with me about problems you see coming (such as work piling up around deadlines or exams).

Guest Speakers and Performers

We will be inviting Susan Hyde Holmes, (hands down, one of New Mexico's best bass players, long time member of Boris and The Saltlicks and rock solid session musician), Brett Davis (fellow Saltlick, guitar aficionado, amp builder and tone master) and Percussionist extraordinaire Greg Williams (of Le Chat Lunatique) to give a comprehensive Honky Tonk rhythm workshop. Each musician has many years of playing experience and will share their individual expertise with the class while also discussing band dynamics, tips for live performance and they'll address any questions the class might have. The date of this workshop is TBD.

COURSE SCHEDULE

All readings are required, and you should always bring your articles to class. Note that the definitive syllabus is always the one on UNM Learn, and I reserve the right to modify or change the schedule throughout the semester.

Additional rehearsals are set for Thursday in B105, 6:15-9:00 PM, (though these rehearsals are supplementary to Monday's rehearsals, so we may not have to stay as late as 9). I play in a local band *The Handsome Family* and will be gone Sept. 13th-Oct. 4th on tour through the Midwest and east coast. To accommodate for my absence, I want more rehearsals in before our performances so that everyone will feel confident and prepared. Hopefully this will encourage The Ensemble to rehearse on its own too, outside of UNM.

Week 1:

M 8/22 Course Introduction – Expectations, Logistics, Honky Tonk Music
*Listen to provided CD and pick 1 song that you would like to learn and lead in the Ensemble. Email me your choice **BY 8/25***

Week 2:

M 8/29 **Rehearsal and Memorization Techniques**
Watch "Coalminer's Daughter" and submit one paragraph write-up about the music in the film by Monday, 10 a.m. in UNM Learn

TH 9/2 Rehearsal

Week 3:

M 9/5 Rehearsal

TH 9/8 Rehearsal

Week 4:

M 9/12 **Rehearsal**
Watch "Crazy Heart" and submit one paragraph write-up about the music in the film by Monday, 10 a.m. in UNM Learn.

From 9/13-10/4 I am out of town, on tour with The Handsome Family. I encourage you all to meet and rehearse even in my absence. I will be able to be reached via email if you should have any concerns or questions.

Week 7:

M 10/3 **No Class or Rehearsal**

Week 8:

M 10/10 Rehearsal

Th 10/13 Rehearsal

Week 9:

M 10/17 Dress-Rehearsal (run whole show out of memory)

Fri 10/21 First Performance (Tannex, 7:00 PM)

Week 10:

M 10/24 Debrief Performance and begin new material for final performance

Week 11:

M 10/31 Rehearsal

Week 12:

M 11/7 Rehearsal

TH 11/10 Rehearsal

Week 13:

M 11/14 **Dress Rehearsal for Final Performance**

TH 11/17 **Final Performance –Sister Bar with Steve Hammond (solo) and The Dave Payne Band. Arrive NO later than 7**

Last day to bring in verification printout of online instructor evaluations for class credit (Hard copies, only)

Week 15: LAST DAY OF CLASS

M 11/21 **Debrief Performance & Very Special Guest Performer/Clinician:**

TBD

The End! I hope you learned a lot and have a great winter break