This course is an introductory survey of the field of popular music studies. A range of approaches to popular music, from several disciplinary contexts, will be explored. The course will be conducted as a seminar, with extensive discussion of readings and concepts along with presentations by students.

**Texts:** Required readings are found in a number of places: in a binder in the Graduate Resource Centre on the second floor of the North Campus building (rm. NCB-280); as electronic resources; or in the required textbooks. I have ordered the following books from the UWO bookstore, though used copies may be floating around:

Hugh Barker and Yuval Taylor *Faking It*;
Simon Frith *Performing Rites*;
Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin *On Record*;

**Evaluation:**

**Participation:** 20%
This is a graduate seminar, and your presence in class and thoughtful contributions to discussions are crucial to the learning experience. I expect everyone to show up having read and thought about the required readings and prepared to be called upon during class dialogues. The “Aesthetic Exercise”, in which each student will present a song to the class and briefly describe what they like (or dislike) about it, will be included in the evaluation of the Participation component, as will other students’ responses to those presentations.

**Faking It Book Report:** 10% due Oct. 24th
**Performing Rites Book Report:** 10% due Nov. 28th

This involves reading and responding to the book in question (in 5-6, double-spaced pages). You should pay particular attention to potential overlaps between questions of taste formation and ideas of authenticity in your report. You should not summarize the argument of the book, unless you wish to illustrate a particular point in your discussion.

**Seminar Presentation:** 10% (dates to be assigned)
This involves a 20-minute, in-class presentation of one of the required readings. You should do three things in your concise presentation: outline what you believe to be the key points and argument(s) of the reading; identify its strength(s) and weakness(es); and prepare 2 questions concerning the article that will be used to begin the general discussion of it by the class at the conclusion of your presentation.

**Final Paper:** 50% due via email January 10th, 2017
approx. 20 pp., double-spaced, plus bibliography, illustrations, appendices, etc.

You have two choices here but you must meet with me to discuss your choice before December:
1) A synthesis paper, in which you select eight authors from at least three different lecture topics, and write a synthetic account that explores, critiques, relates and evaluates their arguments and assumptions in light of what you have learned in the class.

2) An original research paper, in which you identify a reasonably limited question or problem in the study of popular music in consultation with me, research it, and then construct and present an analysis/argument.

Outline of Lectures and Readings

Sept. 12th  **Introduction: Pop, Popular, Popularity...**
Excerpts from Raymond Williams (1983) Keywords London: Fontana.

**CLASS CANCELLED:** Prof. Keightley will be presenting at the International Association for the Study of Popular Music at University College Cork, Ireland.

Sept. 19th  **What is This Thing Called ‘Popular Music Studies’?**


Recommended Reading:

Sept. 26th  **Hi/Lo**


Recommended Reading:
Paul DiMaggio (1982) “Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America” Media Culture and Society 4.1


Also Recommended: Andrew Chester (1970) “Second Thoughts on a Rock Aesthetic” in On Record


Oct. 3rd  History  Special Guest: Dr. Daniel Goldmark, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.


Recommended Reading:


Oct. 10th  Thanksgiving

Oct. 17th  Class Cancelled

Oct. 24th  Early Approaches  1st report due
Robert K. Merton (1946) "The Social and Cultural Context” from Mass Persuasion


Oct. 31st  Subcultures
Paul G. Cressey “The life-cycle of the taxi-dancer” [1932]
Milton M. Gordon “The concept of the subculture and its application” [1947]
Albert K. Cohen “A general theory of subcultures” [1955]
Howard S. Becker “The culture of a deviant group: the dance musician” [1963]
Dick Hebdige “Subculture: the meaning of style” [1979]
Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber “Girls and subcultures” [1977]
(Above readings in The Subcultures Reader) and

Dick Hebdige “Style as Homology and Signifying Practice” and
Angela McRobbie “Settling Accounts with Subcultures: A Feminist Critique”
(Above two readings in On Record)

Recommended Reading:
Ken Gelder, The Subcultures Reader, “Introduction: the field of subcultural studies”, “Introduction to part one”, and “Introduction to part two”.

Nov. 7th

Connoisseurs
“The Aesthetics of Rock” (Brackett);
“Get Off My Cloud” (Paul Williams, 1966);
“Pop Eye: Evaluating Media” (Richard Goldstein, 1966);
“Musical Events—Records: Rock, Etc.” (Ellen Willis, 1968);
“Where Did the Sixties Go?” (Brackett);
“Of Pop and Pies and Fun” (Lester Bangs, 1970)

Will Straw (1991) “Communities and Scenes in Popular Music”
(Above two readings in The Subcultures Reader)


Recommended Reading:
Ken Gelder “Introduction to part seven”

London: Routledge.

Nov. 14th

Industry


Recommended Readings:

Nov. 21st Gender/Sexuality
Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie “Rock and Sexuality”
Simon Frith “Afterthoughts”
Mavis Bayton “How Women Become Musicians”
Richard Dyer “In Defense of Disco”
(all four from On Record)


Recommended reading:
Sue Wise “Sexing Elvis”
Barbara Brady “Do Talk and Don’t Talk” (both from On Record)

Nov. 28th

**Authenticity**


Recommended Reading:


Dec. 5th

**Stardom and Authorship**

Roland Barthes (1972) “The Grain of the Voice” (both in On Record)


Recommended Reading: