

SYLLABUS

SPAN 3070: LATIN AMERICAN MUSIC

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Music is an integral part of Latin American culture. In this course, we will study the musical traditions of the Hispanic Caribbean, focusing on the rhythms, instruments, artists, style and tendencies in each of these regions. Through essays, written and oral assignments, students will investigate various social aspects of music culture (representations of ethnic, racial, class, regional, and gender identities) from an interdisciplinary framework that will emphasize the links between music and areas of knowledge such as geography, history, politics, economics, technology, and media. Music invites us to consider how social identities are constantly formed and reshaped by cultural traditions and practices.

We will examine the music legacies connected to the colonial history of the Caribbean. We will continue with a study of Afro-Caribbean traditions, including a study of another religious genre, *toque de güiros*, as well as *bomba*, a recreational drum music created by slaves in Puerto Rican sugar plantations and played today by Puerto Ricans from different races.

We will look at the role of popular music in the Caribbean. We will study romantic music as represented by the genre of the *Bolero* and how bolero contributed to the creation of *Bachata* in the Dominican Republic. Then we will examine *Merengue* music from the Dominican Republic by listening to the work of Juan Luis Guerra and other musicians. We will also discuss the role of the Caribbean diaspora from New York in the emergence of *Salsa* music as well as the contributions of Puerto Rican orchestras to this music genre. We will study *Timba*, another kind of dance music from the Caribbean that could be considered as an innovative form of salsa that mixes Cuban jazz, Afro-Cuban rhythms, reggae roots, and hip hop.

We will turn to the role of politics in Cuban *Nueva Trova* and *Nueva canción* from the Caribbean. Politics, along with youth culture, will also play a role in our study of *Cuban rap* in the Havana of the 21st Century. As Hip Hop cultures evolve around the world, we will take a look at the development of *Reggaetón* music in Panama, Puerto Rico and the US. The main goal of the course is to offer a comprehensive overview of the role of music in Caribbean cultures.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Enhance listening comprehension through music listening and discussion of regional accents
- Identify different types of songs, music styles, artists, and instruments from different regions of Latin America
- Analyze through readings and writing the impact of history, geography, politics and economics in Latin American music

- Investigate and analyze the representation of ethnic, racial, class, regional and gender identities in Latin American music

COURSE MATERIALS

All course materials (readings, music, and media resources) will be made available by the professor on canvas. For some assignments, student are expected to do independent research to find music and media materials. Some documentaries suggested by the professor are available online, either via youtube or via streaming services such as Netflix. The professor recommends students to secure access to Netflix in case they want to consult documentaries on Latin American music.

EVALUATION

8 HOMEWORKS (8 POINTS EACH)	64%
ESSAY 1 and 2 (18 POINTS EACH)	36%

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Course Delivery Mode

The course will be delivered in a remote mode, which means that students will be responsible for studying independently the class materials and submit their assigned homework on the dates indicated in canvas. If students have questions or need to meet with the professor, they could schedule a meeting in the office hours of the instructor.

Course Assignments

For this class, students will complete two kinds of assignments: 8 homeworks and 2 essays. Please verify the section on Assignments,

Homeworks:

Students will submit their homework using the assignments section of the canvas site. Each homework is available in canvas with information about its due date and instructions for their completion. Each homework will have two parts: a short written statement and an oral statement that students could record as an audio or video file. Student will be expected to upload the written statement as a word file in the assignment page. For the video or audio statement, student could upload a media file as part of the assignment. If students have difficulties uploading audio or video files, they can create a personal youtube channel with videos of their assignments and share a private link with the professor. They could also use the media recording app in canvas to submit the oral part of the assignment.

Assignments are based on class readings and course materials, as well as materials collected by the student through independent research. For some assignments, the professor has assigned one or two readings that will be the point of departure of the homework. For other readings, the professor will give students the option of selecting a reading to complete their assignments. The professor will

indicate which assignments need to be completed after reading all required chapters for that week and when students have the option to select a reading to complete the assignment.



2 Essays:

Essay 1 (Due Thursday, July 16, 2026): Students will complete a 500 words essay. Please consult the assignment page for more specific instructions on the options available for this assignment. Students have the choice to select the topic of the essay among the following options: Afro-Caribbean Music, Bolero, Bachata, Merengue, Salsa, Timba.


Essay 2 (DUE THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2026): Students will complete a 500 words essay. Please consult the assignment page for more specific instructions on the options available for this assignment.

Students have the choice to select the topic of the essay among the following options: Nueva Trova, Nueva Canción, Cuban Rap, Reggaetón (Puerto Rico, USA, Cuba).

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code>  (<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code>) / or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18>  (<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18>). Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>  (<http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>), as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.


Individual Work

Students should complete all homework assignments and projects by themselves unless otherwise notified by the instructor. In this class, student will not be expected to complete group assignments.


Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

Late assignments receive no credit, unless the student requests an extension due to a medical emergency or participation in a GT official activity.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement: At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22>  (<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22>) for an articulation of some basic expectation that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek.

Campus Resources

Georgia Tech offers many resources for students in need including counseling services, personalized research assistance, tutoring, and academic support. Please check out http://ctl.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/documents/campus_resources_students.pdf  (http://ctl.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/documents/campus_resources_students.pdf) for more details, and feel free to ask me if you need any assistance in finding these resources.

CALENDARIO

JUNE 29-30: CARIBBEAN MUSIC

Readings: (you need to read both texts to complete assignment):

Chapter 1 "Introduction" en *Music in the Hispanic Caribbean*, 1-29.

JULY 1-2: AFRO-CARIBBEAN RHYTHMS (TOQUE DE GÜIROS, BOMBA) AND CREOLIZED DANCE MUSIC (SON AND PLENA)

Readings: (you need to read both texts to complete assignment):

Chapter 3 "Cultural Legacies of the Slave Trade" en *Music in the Hispanic Caribbean*, 52-82. (Toque de Güiros and Bomba songs)

Chapter 4 "Creolized Dance Music" en *Music in the Hispanic Caribbean*, 83-120.

(Son cubano and Plena songs)

OPTIONAL Reading: "Ay, Dios, Ampárame: Sacred Music and Revolution" de Robin Moore (Afro-Cuban Santería Music)

JULY 6-7: BOLERO AND BACHATA IN THE CARIBBEAN

Reading (required):

Chap. 5 "Transnational Caribbean Musics" (Bolero and Bachata songs)

JULY 8-9: MERENGUE MUSIC IN THE ISLANDS AND THE DIASPORA (JULY 4 NO CLASS)

Readings (required):

"Juan Luis Guerra and the Merengue: Toward a New Dominican National Identity," de Raymond Torres Santos

JULY 13-14: SALSA MUSIC IN THE ISLANDS AND THE DIASPORA

Readings (choose one of the following texts to complete the assignment):

"New York, Puerto Rico and Cuba's Latin Music Scenes and the Emergence of Salsa Music: A Comparative Analysis" de Omar Ruiz Vega

"Cultural Struggles for Hegemony: Salsa, Migration and Globalization" de Angel Quinero Rivera

JULY 15: TIMBA MUSIC IN CUBA AND ABROAD

Readings (required):

"Chapter 4: Dance Music and the Politics of Fun" de Robin Moore

JULY 16: ESSAY 1

JULY 20-21: NUEVA TROVA IN THE CARIBBEAN AND NUEVA CANCION IN LATIN AMERICA

Readings (choose one of the following texts to complete the assignment)::

Chapter 6 "Political Song" en *Music in the Hispanic Caribbean*, 147-176.

Chapter 5 "Transformations in Nueva Trova" de Robin Moore

JULY 22-23: RAP CONSCIENTE (CUBAN HIP HOP) AND REGGATON IN THE CARIBBEAN

Readings (choose one of the following texts to complete the assignment):

"Introduction: Reggaetón's Sciosonic Circuitry" de Rivera and Marshall and "From Música Negra to Reggaetón Latino" by Wayne Marshall

"Cuba Rebelión: Underground Music in Havana" de Geoffrey Baker

"La Habana que no conoces: Cuban rap and the Social Construction of Urban Space" de Geoffrey Baker

"Kruda Knowledge, Kruda Discourse: Las Krudas Cubensi, Transnational Black Feminism, and the Queer of Color Critique" de Tanya L Saunders

"Calle 13 and Ana Tijoux Joyous Rebellion: Transnational Protest Through Lyric and Song" de Ryan Pinchot

"Introduction" and "Conclusion" de Tanya L Saunders

"Introduction" de Geoffrey Baker

JULY 27-28: BAD BUNNY (TBA)

JULY 30: ESSAY 2

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR ASSIGNMENTS AND ESSAYS

ARGUMENT: Clear statement of the thesis or argument that will be developed in the essay. Avoid generalizations, as well as simple, superficial or trivial arguments.

COHERENCE OF THE COMPOSITION: Organized, well structured, and coherent discussion of ideas. Avoid unnecessary digressions.

EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS, CATEGORIES, ISSUES AND PROBLEMS DISCUSSED IN

CLASS: Adequate selection and explanation of relevant concepts, categories, issues or problems. Provide definitions and explanations based on bibliographical sources. Establish connections between concepts or categories and issues or problems discussed in class.

APPLICATION OF CONCEPTS AND CATEGORIES TO THE ANALYSIS OF ISSUES AND

PROBLEMS: Adequate application of concepts and categories to the analysis of issues and problems. Discuss the connection between concepts or categories and the examples and quotes you include in your analysis of issues and problems.

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES AND PROBLEMS BASED ON SPECIFIC CASES AND CONCRETE

EXAMPLES: Explain and analyze the specific issues and problems related to Latin American music by elaborating a discussion of specific cases. Provide examples and quotes to support your analysis. Take into consideration the historical context of the cases and examples you discuss.

IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION OF EXAMPLES AND QUOTES TO SUPPORT ANALYSIS AND

ARGUMENT: Include in your analysis an in-depth discussion of examples and quotes. The role of examples and quotes is to support your argument: select carefully these examples and quotes; avoid choosing examples or quotes that would not contribute much to your discussion. Avoid also superficial observations about and generalizations based on the material you discuss.

IMPACT, CONSEQUENCES AND/OR IMPLICATIONS: In your concluding remarks, explore the impact, consequences and/or implications of the cases, examples, problems or issues you discuss and connect them with your argument.

ORIGINALITY: The essay develops an original idea that brings into perspective an innovative view on the issue.

CORRECT USE OF SPANISH: Adequate selection of vocabulary, verb conjugation; correct use of articles and prepositions.

GRADING

ESSAYS 1 AND 2 (18% EACH)

CRITERIA	Total value	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Average	Below average	Poor	Very poor
Argument	2	2-1.9	1.89-1.8	1.79-1.7	1.69-1.6	1.59-1.5	1.49-1.4	1.39-1.2	1.19-1.0
Coherence	2	2-1.9	1.89-1.8	1.79-1.7	1.69-1.6	1.59-1.5	1.49-1.4	1.39-1.2	1.19-1.0
Concept: explanation	2	2-1.9	1.89-1.8	1.79-1.7	1.69-1.6	1.59-1.5	1.49-1.4	1.39-1.2	1.19-1.0
Concept: application	2	2-1.9	1.89-1.8	1.79-1.7	1.69-1.6	1.59-1.5	1.49-1.4	1.39-1.2	1.19-1.0
Analysis: problems, cases	2	2-1.9	1.89-1.8	1.79-1.7	1.69-1.6	1.59-1.5	1.49-1.4	1.39-1.2	1.19-1.0
Examples: evidence to support argument	2	2-1.9	1.89-1.8	1.79-1.7	1.69-1.6	1.59-1.5	1.49-1.4	1.39-1.2	1.19-1.0
Impact, consequences, implications	2	2-1.9	1.89-1.8	1.79-1.7	1.69-1.6	1.59-1.5	1.49-1.4	1.39-1.2	1.19-1.0
Originality	2	2-1.9	1.89-1.8	1.79-1.7	1.69-1.6	1.59-1.5	1.49-1.4	1.39-1.2	1.19-1.0
Use of Spanish	2	2-1.9	1.89-1.8	1.79-1.7	1.69-1.6	1.59-1.5	1.49-1.4	1.39-1.2	1.19-1.0

HOMEWORK

CRITERIA	Total value	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Average	Below average	Poor
Argument	1	1-.95	.94-.90	.89-.85	.84-.80	.79-.75	.74-.70	.69-.60
Coherence	1	1-.95	.94-.90	.89-.85	.84-.80	.79-.75	.74-.70	.69-.60
Concept: explanation	1	1-.95	.94-.90	.89-.85	.84-.80	.79-.75	.74-.70	.69-.60

Concept: application	1	1-.95	.94-.90	.89-.85	.84-.80	.79-.75	.74-.70	.69-.60
Analysis: problems, cases	1	1-.95	.94-.90	.89-.85	.84-.80	.79-.75	.74-.70	.69-.60
Examples: evidence to support argument	1	1-.95	.94-.90	.89-.85	.84-.80	.79-.75	.74-.70	.69-.60
Impact, consequences, implications	1	1-.95	.94-.90	.89-.85	.84-.80	.79-.75	.74-.70	.69-.60
Use of Spanish	1	1-.95	.94-.90	.89-.85	.84-.80	.79-.75	.74-.70	.69-.60