Purpose and Description

This course surveys the rich musical, cultural, and commercial history of country music in the United States. Since its inception, country music has embodied a tension between tradition and progress. Whereas the industry has consistently highlighted tradition as a value (through lyrical, musical, graphic, and other means), it has nevertheless constantly embraced new technologies in order to maintain market share and commercial viability. Country music thereby reflects a basic feature of the American story, valorizing our history while valuing social and technological development. Throughout the course, we will consider this tension as it affects the musical content and cultural meaning of country music.

You will gain a broad knowledge of country music on three levels:

1) Through assigned listening examples and directed listening exercises, you will develop the ability to aurally identify different eras in the history of country music, different sub-styles (western swing, the Nashville Sound, Alt-Country, etc.), and different instruments that are used in the performance of various country music styles.

2) Through powerpoint lectures and reading from a central text and a weekly scholarly essay (a book chapter or journal article), you will learn the important concepts, people, and terminology associated with the musical styles of country music as well as the commercial recording/performing industry that has fostered country music since the 1920s.

3) Through weekly blogs on assigned papers you will synthesize your ability to recognize and analyze the sound of country music with their awareness of the cultural and economic forces that helped determine the style, sound, and form of those recordings.

Music 406 fulfills the Fine and Performing Arts category in the Discovery Program. I have selected the content and designed the structure of the course to reflect the goals of Discovery. Among other principles the following statement on disciplinary breadth from the Discovery Web site applies strongly in this course:
“Each course in the Discovery Program fulfills an obligation not only to its own field but also to the others that make up the organization of modern knowledge. Courses in the proposed categories introduce students to the primary questions, methods and perspectives of the field or discipline; and they encourage students to understand the connections among different disciplines and fields of study.”

Texts and Materials
As this course is conducted entirely on-line, you will need reliable access to a computer with broadband or DSL connection. You may also need to download some apps (Java, Shockwave, etc.) to fully engage all of the features of Canvas and streaming media.

There is a required textbook for the course:

This book is only available in a print edition; there is no ebook version. It can be purchased from Amazon.com, Barnes&Noble.com, or directly from the publisher. Copies may also be available from the Durham Book Exchange and the UNH Bookstore.

All listening will be available through the course Youtube playlist, and all reading outside the textbook will be available either as pdf files on the Canvas course site or accessible through web links.

Some videos will need to be purchased or rented from a vendor like Amazon or Netflix. The movies we will view are:

- *O, Brother, Where Art Thou?*  May be available on Youtube
- *The Women of Rockabilly: Welcome to the Club*  Available on Youtube
- *Tender Mercies*  Not available on Youtube
- *Urban Cowboy*  Not available on Youtube

Requirements

**General:** You should understand that this five-week summer course will cover the same amount of material that would normally be covered in a 15-week semester course. Logistically, therefore, you will be expected to do three times more work in a given week on this course as you would for a semester-long one.

**Reading/Listening:** Each day during the five week course you are to listen to a brief powerpoint lecture that focuses on the main points from the assigned reading and briefly introduces one or more listening examples mentioned in the text. You will also listen to a selection of related recordings (usually @ eight per day) and read a selection from the textbook. Each week there will also be an assigned essay from outside the textbook. Although I have assigned specific
pages from the textbook for specific days, there are always one or two days at the ends of weeks with no textbook assignment, and it may be possible to spread your reading throughout the week.

**Viewing:** For each of the first four weeks of the course you will view a movie on a country music theme. When possible, these will be made available through Youtube, but you may need to rent or purchase one or more of these movies. For each movie, I will assign a related reading from outside the textbook.

Additionally there will be one assigned informational video to watch each week, also via Youtube. Some of these will be instructional demonstrations of particular instruments or country music styles. Others will be performances that I will discuss in the PowerPoint Lectures. All of the assigned Youtube videos will be made available through the course Youtube playlist.

**Song Blog-Posts:** At least once a week (usually twice) you will choose one of the assigned listening items and write a “blog” of 250-500 words on it. (Blogs will take the form of “Replies” to a Discussion thread in Canvas.) Your post should highlight the distinctive features of the song for which it is representative of the daily or weekly styles being studied. Among the issues on which you might comment are: recording quality; instrumentation; vocal style and accent; song type; melodic style; rhythm; etc. You might also relate the song to issues (musical, cultural, etc.) raised in the reading for the week. Additionally, each time you post a blog, you are required to post comments on the posts of two of your classmates. A more complete description of the blog post assignments and how they will be graded is available under Assignments on the Canvas site.

**Field Reports:** At least three times during the course, I will conduct an on-site visit and interview with an individual connected to country music. These reports will stream live and will be archived for later viewing as well. You will be required to watch at least one of these live in real time and submit a question to the interview subject. As much as possible, I will vary the day of the week and the time of these live events (including weekends and evenings) in order to fit a variety of schedules. Material from these field reports will be incorporated into the short paper assignments and/or the exams.

**Short Paper Assignments:** There are two short (2-3 page) papers assigned in the course. These will allow you to apply what you are learning to material not covered in the textbook or other assigned readings, listening, or viewing.

**Exams:** There will be a “mid-term” and a final exam, both to be taken on line. These will include a mixture of short identifications and essays.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog Posts</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Papers</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Structure**
Canvas (mycourses.unh.edu) is the learning management tool we use for this course. The course is online and asynchronous, and it is organized by modules.

**My Schedule**

I will be active in the Canvas class area daily, Monday through Friday. I login early in the morning and again in the evening. If you post a question for me in a Forum on a weekday, anticipate a response within twelve hours. On Weekends, I may not login at a regular time. If you post late on Friday or anytime Saturday, I might not respond until Sunday evening. I will be traveling to Nashville for a conference during week three of the course (June 5-9), and may be off-line for longer stretches of time then.

**How to Reach Me:**

Questions related to the reading, listening, or assignments should first be asked, if possible, in the respective discussion forums. I will, however, try to respond to emails on the same day they are sent.

**Academic Honesty**

(from the UNH 2012-13 Handbook on Student Rights, Rules, Responsibilities)

Honesty is a core value at the University of New Hampshire. The members of its academic community both require and expect one another to conduct themselves with integrity. This means that each member will adhere to the principles and rules of the University and pursue academic work in a straightforward and truthful manner, free from deception or fraud. Any attempts to deviate from these principles will be construed as acts of academic dishonesty and will be dealt with according to the rules of due process outlined below. The value of honesty and the expectation of conduct that goes with it are intended to reinforce a learning environment where students and faculty can pursue independent work without unnecessary restraints. At the same time, the University recognizes its responsibility to encourage and inculcate values and standards of conduct that will guide its students throughout their careers.

For the purposes of this course, please note section 09.1 “Written Classroom Examinations.”

**UNH Office of Disability Services for Students**
The University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you must register with Disability Services for Students (DSS). Contact DSS at (603) 862-2607 or disability.office@unh.edu. If you have received Accommodation Letters for this course from DSS, please provide me with that information so that we can review those accommodations.
# COURSE OUTLINE

## Introduction

Introduction and overview | Outlines of the course and the text; listening skills | Neal: xxiv-xxix,

## Week 1: Origins and expansion (Neal Part I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T 5/23</td>
<td>The Big Bang of Country Music</td>
<td>Carter Family, “Keep on the Sunny Side”&lt;br&gt;“Wildwood Flower”&lt;br&gt;“Can the Circle be Unbroken”&lt;br&gt;Jimmie Rodgers, “Blue Yodel (T for Texas)”&lt;br&gt;“Waiting for a Train”&lt;br&gt;“In the Jailhouse Now”&lt;br&gt;Uncle Tupelo, “No Depression”</td>
<td>Neal: 37-51&lt;br&gt;Video: <a href="#">Carter Picking</a> Live Stream with Old Hat (Steve Roy and Whitney Kent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Post World War II Boom (Neal Part II)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 5/29</td>
<td>Memorial Day: No course materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| T 5/30 | The Birth of Bluegrass | Bill Monroe, “Blue Moon of Kentucky”  
OE Osborne Brothers, “Rocky Top”  
Flatt and Scruggs, “Foggy Mountain Breakdown”  
Alison Krauss and Union Station, “Mama Cried”  | Neal: 127-156  
Video: Mandolin and Five-String Banjo |
| W 5/31 | Bother Acts and Duets | Delmore Brothers, “Blues Stay Away From Me”  
Blue Sky Boys, “Katie Dear”  
Stanley Brothers, “Angel Band”  
Louvin Brothers, “When I Stop Dreaming”  
Lilly Brothers, “Are you Tired of me my Darling”  
Kasey Chambers and Shane Nicholson, “Wildflower”  | McDonald, “Principle Influences on the Music of the Lilly Brothers” |
| TH 6/1 | Rockabilly and Teen Romance | Doug and Rusty Kershaw, “Diggy Diggy Lo”  
Elvis Presley, “Blue Moon of Kentucky”  
Johnny Cash, “Blue Train”  
Carl Perkins, “Honey Don’t”  
Wanda Jackson, “I gotta Know”  
Patsy Cline, “Turn the Cards Slowly”  
Mark Chesnut, “It’s a Little too Late”  
Dale Watson, “Down, Down, Down”  | Neal: 157-186 |
| F 6/2 | Rockabilly Genders | Film: *The Women of Rockabilly: Welcome to the Club*  
Sanjek, “Can a Fukiyama Mama be the Female Elvis?” |  |
## Week 3: The Business of Country (Neal Part III)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Expansion from Country to Rock and Back (1970s and 1980s) (Neal Part IV)

<p>| F 6/9 | Film: Tender Mercies | Bracket” Banjos, Biopics, and Compilation Scores,” pp. 247-250 and 273-277 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 6/12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| T 6/13 | Outlaw Country and Southern Rock Rebellion | Waylon Jennings, “Good Old Boys”  
Willie Nelson, “On The Road Again”  
Johnny Cash, “Sunday Morning Coming Down”  
Jerry Jeff Walker, “L.A. Freeway”  
Guy Clark, “Desperados Waiting for a Train”  
David Alan Coe, “London Homesick Blues”  
Allman Brothers, “Ramblin’ Man”  
Hank Williams Jr., “Whiskey Bent and Hell Bound” | Neal: 279-310 |
| W 6/14 | Urban Cowboys and Countrypolitan | Ronnie Millsap, “Pure Love”  
Eddie Rabbitt, “Drivin’ My Life Away”  
Anne Murray, “Could I have This Dance”  
Johnny Lee, “Lookin’ For Love in all the Wrong Places”  
Kenny Rogers, “The Gambler” | Neal: 311-342  
Video: [Line Dancing](#)  
More |
| TH 6/15 | New Traditionalists | George Strait, “Does Fort Worth Even Cross Your Mind?”  
Rocky Skaggs, “Highway 40 Blues”  
Dwight Yoakam, “Johnson’s Love”  
Alan Jackson, “Don’t Rock the Jukebox”  
Randy Travis, “On The Other Hand”  
K. D. Lang, “Three Days”  
Mark Chesnutt, “Somebody Save the Honky-Tonks” | Neal: 343-369 |
| F 6/16 | Film: *Urban Cowboy* | | Bracket” Banjos, Biopics, and Compilation Scores,” pp. 259-263 |
## Week 5: Neal Part IV (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Lee Ann Womack, “I Hope You Dance”  
Brook and Dunn, “Neon Moon”  
Martina McBride, “Independence Day”  
Faith Hill, “The Kiss” | Live Stream with the Jimmie Allen Band |
| M 6/19 | Alternative Country and Americana | Uncle Tupelo, “Still Be Around”  
Whiskeytown, “Midway Park”  
Son Volt, “Tear Stained Eye”  
Ryan Adams, “My Winding Wheel”  
Gillian Welch, “Orphan Girl”  
Hank Williams III, “Straight to Hell” | Neal: 371-406 |
| T 6/20 | Return of Roots and Rednecks | Gretchen Wilson, “Redneck Woman”  
Miranda Lambert, “Gunpowder and Lead”  
Big and Rich,”Save a Horse, Ride a Cowboy”  
Little Big Town, “Little White Church”  
Luke Bryan, “Rain is a Good Thing” | Neal: 407-440 |
| W 6/21 | Modern Country Politics: The Dixie Checks and Toby Keith | Dixie Chicks, “Wide Open Spaces”  
“ “ “Landslide”  
“ “ “Without You”  
“ “ “Goodbye Earl”  
“ “ “Not Ready to Make Nice”  
Toby Keith, “A Little Less Talk”  
“ “ “Beer for My Horses”  
“ “ “I Love this Bar”  
“ “ “Who’s That Man”  
“ “ “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue” | Neal: 441-445  
Watson and Burns, “Resisting exile and asserting musical voice: the Dixie Chicks are ’Not Ready to Make Nice’” |
| TH 6/22 | | | |
| F 6/23 | Final Exam | | |