

**MUSI 406:**  
**COUNTRY MUSIC**

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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 listening and related material 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:

Jocelyn Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*. Oxford University Press, ISBN 9780199730599

This book can be purchased in hard copy from Amazon.com, Barnse&Noble.com, or directly [from the publisher](#). Copies may also be available from the Durham Book Exchange and the UNH Bookstore. An ebook is available through [redshelf.com](#).

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:

<i>O, Brother, Where Art Thou?</i>	May be available on Youtube
<i>The Women of Rockabilly: Welcome to the Club</i>	Available on Youtube
<i>Tender Mercies</i>	Not available on Youtube
<i>Urban Cowboy</i>	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. Past students’ experiences dictate that it will be very hard to keep up if you are holding down a job or taking another class during the course.

**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. Most weeks 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 occasional informational video to watch, 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 (sometimes twice) you will either choose one of the assigned listening items or find a similar song and write a “blog” of 250-500 words on it. Blogs will take the form of “Replies” to a Discussion thread in Canvas. 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, how to find non-assigned songs, and how the blogs will be graded is available under Assignments on the Canvas site.

**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. You will have the option of taking a final exam in place of the second paper.

**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, listening tasks (identifying style traits, etc.), and essays. You will have the option of writing a second paper in place of the final exam.

### Grading

Exams	40%
Blog Posts	30%
Short Papers	30%

### 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.

### 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](mailto: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: xv-xxii
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### Week 1: Origins and expansion (Neal Part I)

	Topic	Assigned Listening	Reading
M 6/24	The early years of Country Music	Fiddlin' John Carson, "Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane" Uncle Dave Macon, "Way Down the Old Plank Road" "Aunt" Samantha Bumgarner, "and Eva Davis "Big Eyed Rabbit" Ernest and Hattie Stoneman, "Mountaineer's Courtship" Moonshine Kate, "My Man's a Jolly Railroad Man"	Neal: 1-33
T 6/25	The Big Bang of Country Music	Carter Family, "Keep on the Sunny Side" " " " " "Wildwood Flower" " " " " "Can the Circle be Unbroken" Jimmie Rodgers, "Blue Yodel (T for Texas)" " " " " "Waiting for a Train" " " " " "In the Jailhouse Now" (Uncle Tupelo, "No Depression")	Neal: 37-59 Video: <a href="#">Carter Picking</a>
W 6/26	Innovation and Change	Delmore Brothers, "Brown's Ferry Blues" Roy Acuff, "Great Speckled Bird" Patsy Montana, "I want to be a Cowboy's Sweetheart" Bob Wills, "New San Antonio Rose" " " " " "Stay All Night" Tex Ritter, "Get Along Little Doggies" Sons of the Pioneers, "Tumbling Tumbleweed" (The Time Jumpers, "New Star Over Texas")	Neal: 65-92
TH 6/27	Early Country Music at the Movies	Film: <i>O, Brother, Where Art Thou?</i>	Sean Chadwell, "Inventing that 'Old-Timey' Style: Southern Authenticity in O Brother, Where art Thou?"  Neal: 424-426

### World War II And After (Neal Part II)

	Topic	Assigned Listening	Reading
F 6/28	Honky Tonk	Eddy Arnold, "Bouquet of Roses" Lefty Frizzell,, "If you've got the Money" Webb Pierce, "Slowly" Hank Thompson, "The Wild Side of Life" Kitty Wells, "It Wasn't God who Made Honky-Tonk Angels" Hank Williams, "Hey Good Lookin'"  " " " " "Jambalaya" Patsy Cline, "Turn the Cards Slowly" (Hank Williams III, "Pills I took")	Neal: 97-118; 133-134

## Week 2 World War and After (Neal Part II; cont.)

M 7/1	Rockabilly Revolution	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" (Dale Watson, "Down, Down, Down")	Neal: 118-132; 137-139
T 7/2	The Birth of Bluegrass	Bill Monroe, "Blue Moon of Kentucky" " " "Walls of Time" Osborne Brothers, "Rocky Top" Flatt and Scruggs, "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" (Alison Krauss and Union Station, "Mama Cried")	Neal: 145-170  Video: <a href="#">Mandolin</a> and <a href="#">Five-String Banjo</a>
W 7/3	Brothers and Sisters	Delmore Borthers, "Blues Stay Away From Me" Blue Sky Boys, "Katie Dear" Stanley Brothers, "Angel Band" Louvin Brothers, "When I Stop Dreaming"	Neal: 92-95  McDonald, "Principle Influences on the Music of the Lilly Brothers"
TH 7/4	<b>No Assignments: Fourth of July</b>		
F 7/5	Rockabilly and Gender	Film: <i>The Women of Rockabilly: Welcome to the Club</i>	Neely, "Charlene Arthur: The Unmaking of a Honky-Tonk Star."

### Week 3: Coast to Coast (Neal Part III)

	Topic	Assigned Listening	Reading
M 7/8	The Nashville Sound and Musical Innovation	Patti Page "Tennessee Waltz" Patsy Cline, "Walkin' After Midnight" (1957) Patsy Cline, "Walkin' After Midnight" (1961) Jim Reeves, "He'll Have to Go" Ray Price, "Night Life" Marty Robbins "El Paso" Faron Young, "Hello Walls"	Neal: 175-200
T 7/9	Bakersfield and Country Rock	Buck Owens, "Under Your Spell Again" " " , "Crying Time" Merle Haggard, "Lonesome Fugitive" " " , "Mama Tried" The Byrds, "Hickory Wind" Poco, "You Better Think Twice" The Eagles, "Ol' 55"	Neal: 211-233 Video: <a href="#">Pedal steel guitar</a>
W 7/10	Classic Country	George Jones, "The Race is On" Johnny Paycheck, "(Pardon Me) I've Got Someone To Kill" Dolly Parton and Porter Wagoner, "Just Someone I used to Know" Loretta Lynn, "Don't Come Home a Drinkin'" Conway Twitty, "Linda on My Mind" Tammy Wynette, "D-I-V-O-R-C-E" Charley Pride, "Just Between You and Me" (Amber Digby, "You Put Me Here")	Neal: 239-262
TH 7/11	<b>Exam 1</b>		
F 7/12	Cosmic American Music	The Byrds, "You Don't Miss Your Water" The Flying Burrito Brothers, "Wheels" " " , "Hot Burrito #2" Gram Parsons, "A Song for You" " " "Return of the Grievous Angel" Townes van Zandt, "If I needed You" Neil Young, "Harvest" The Rolling Stones, "Sweet Virginia" (Son Volt, "Windfall")	Allen, "I Just Want to Be A Cosmic Cowboy"

### Week 4: Neal Part III(continued)

	Topic	Assigned Listening	Reading
M 7/15	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: 271-294

### Expansion: Country Makes it Big-Time (Neal Part IV)

T 7/16	Urban Cowboys and Country-politan	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: 301-324 Video: <a href="#">Line Dancing More</a>
W 7/17		Film: <i>Urban Cowboy</i>	Neal: 324-326 Bracket" Banjos, Biopics, and Compilation Scores," pp. 259-263
TH 7/18	Neotraditionalists	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: 333-354
F 7/19	The Commercial Country Explosion	Garth Brooks, "The Dance" Lee Ann Womack, "I Hope You Dance" Brook and Dunn, "Neon Moon" Martina McBride, "Independence Day" Faith Hill, "The Kiss"	Neal: 361-387



## Week 5: Country Music Navigates Genre

	Topic	Assigned Listening	Reading
M 7/22	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: 395-413
T 7/23	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: 433-448
W 7/24	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: 458-461  Watson and Burns, "Resisting exile and asserting musical voice: the Dixie Chicks are 'Not Ready to Make Nice'"
TH 7/25	Breaking Borders	Chris Young - "Raised on Country" (2019) "Tequila"- Dan and Shay (2018) Midland, "Drinking Problem" Florida Georgia Line, "Lifer" Big Town, "Girl Crush" Jason Aldean, "Dirt Road Anthem" Hardy, "Redneck"	Neal: 469-480
F 7/26	<b>Final Exam</b>		

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