Introduction for Faculty Colleagues

This assignment is for GST 372OL (soon to be COR 372), an Interdisciplinary Capstone Seminar titled "Music in Contemporary American Culture." This course is offered online during the summer session, which is about four weeks long. As with every Capstone Seminar, this course requires a Capstone Project. This specific project takes advantage of the online environment to require students to submit a multimedia research presentation. The research topic and question the student chooses must encapsulate the musical content of the course, their field of study (or major degree program), and have a global context to tie their core curriculum studies together. On Moodle, I provide four previous students’ projects in different presentation mediums as models, and have two thorough feedback sessions before the final project is due. Previous capstone projects have included such interdisciplinary themes as:

- **Music’s effects on physiological function and its uses in treatment of PTSD and Depression**
- **The Beats That Make You Eat: An In-Depth Look at the Psychological Effects of Music in Restaurants**
- **Gangsta’s Paradise: The Societal Impact of Gangsta Rap**
- **A Pre-natal Sense: An Investigation of Music’s Influence on Life Before Birth**

The rubric, detailed description, and specific features of implementing this multi-faceted project are below. I’ve learned that the technological learning curve is much steeper than one would expect with these digital natives, and so I now over-emphasize some of those aspects so students are encouraged to give themselves extra time to troubleshoot those issues. I’ve modified this assignment substantially to add in points to the preliminary and final research rationale deliverables, and required an annotated bibliography for the final research rationale as well. More specifics are included throughout as well, and I revised the rubric as well.

Anecdotally, I’ve been humbled to have students come back to me years later and say this was the single most meaningful project in their entire undergraduate experience. Of course, I don’t doubt there are many more who take the opposite point of view and still curse my name because of this project!
The Assignment I Distribute to Students
COR 372 – Music in Contemporary American Culture
Final Project

This capstone research project acts as the final exam for this course and is the GST capstone for your degree. You’ll tie in the course content with your entire core curriculum studies across your Elon career. This research can be historical, active (such as a survey or questionnaire), or experimental (such as hypothesis testing or field observation). Whatever type of research you choose to do, it should be aimed at answering a central question and rooted in a rigorous literature review. You should choose a topic that bridges music in America and your own intended career field or major area—not only will it make it more meaningful and interesting to research, but you can benefit directly from the research for your future. This could include a SURF or NCUR presentation, graduate school application supplement, or even possible publication!

First, you will decide on a topic and a research question, which should encapsulate music, your field of study (or major degree program), and have a global context to tie your core curriculum studies together. In deciding what your topic and question are, you should consider why you are choosing it and how you will accomplish the research and present it. Then email Dr. Buckmaster your proposed topic and question with a short description and rationale of the research (about 1-2 paragraphs) and what medium you intend to use to present it (website, Prezi, video, etc.). Just emailing this in by the due date will earn you full credit; for each day it is late, there will be a 20% deduction. You’ll then receive feedback to hone your topic/question and research focus, and revise your rationale appropriately.

Second, you will begin your literature review to locate at least 20 scholarly sources (more details on this below). You will then write an annotated bibliography of these sources. You can find appropriate examples of annotated bibliographies in the three major citation styles at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/. All you need to do is write one paragraph summarizing the main point and general concepts covered in each source, so altogether the annotated bibliography should be about 5-6 single-spaced pages in length. Also include a formal title for your project, a revised version of your rationale and question, and confirm your presentation medium. Again, emailing all of this in by the due date will earn you full credit (the same 20% deduction for each day it’s late).

After a final round of feedback, you’ll be ready to create your final presentation. Depending upon which medium you choose, your writing will take on different genres. A website will be similar to a formal research
paper, while a video may take on a documentary-style or other narrative media format. A Prezi or PowerPoint could be a blend between the two, depending on whether you include a voiceover recording or not. Your presentation will be viewed for evaluation a total of three times: by Dr. Buckmaster and by two anonymous classmates. You will also view and evaluate two classmates’ projects. In addition to the graded components, everyone in the class will be able to view your project for our last few days of discussion, so your audience will be inclusive.

Below you’ll find logistical details and the rubric for the project, as well as suggestions and tips for getting your research underway. On Moodle, you’ll find several examples of successful projects from previous students across multiple mediums, which will be very helpful in designing your own Final Capstone Project. Above all, make sure your project topic is meaningful to you!...both you and your audience will enjoy this intense process much more if you’re researching something that’s interesting to you. Throughout the process, never hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns.

Due Date Schedule for Final Capstone Project Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points Each</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Research Rationale</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Rationale &amp; Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Capstone Project</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project Assessments</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>250 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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All student evaluations will be assessed for validity and thoroughness. The entire project is worth 250 points, or 25% of your overall course grade. The grade breakdown of these evaluations is below, along with the instructions and evaluation rubric.

Final Project Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Research Rationale</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Rationale &amp; Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Buckmaster’s Evaluation of Your Project</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Evaluations of Your Project (2)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Evaluations of Others’ Projects (2)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>250 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A basic timeline for your research project

1. Choose a preliminary research question/topic, presentation medium, and write a short rationale (due 6/12 via email to Dr. B). You’ll receive feedback on this to develop and revise your research question.

2. Begin formulating and initiating your research, starting with a literature review of your local library, the Belk online holdings, or internet resources.

3. Based upon your literature review and feedback from Dr. B, decide whether you want to tweak your research question. Then write an annotated bibliography of your 20 scholarly sources and submit it, your revised rationale and topic, title of your project, and presentation medium (due 6/19 via email to Dr. B). You’ll receive feedback again for final revisions before you begin to create your presentation.

4. Complete your research and structure your thoughts into an outline, concept map, or other organizational structure. Use this to write a first draft of your presentation in an appropriate genre—i.e., formal paper for a website, narrative script for a video or PowerPoint, or multimedia essay for a Prezi. This would be an excellent time to contact the Writing Center to review and strengthen your project.

5. Using your first draft and annotated bibliography, create your final research presentation, including appropriate citations and embedded audio and/or video. Remember that it should be able to be viewed within 15-30 minutes, so you may need to trim down your first draft for conciseness. This is a second excellent opportunity to contact the Writing Center for feedback; they can help with both traditional text-based writing and multimedia presentations like this!

6. Troubleshoot your project for viewing issues on Mac and PC platforms and multiple browsers. Ask friends and family members to help you with this and provide feedback for both the content and structure of the project and any technological issues they encountered. Revise as appropriate and double-check links and embedded media afterwards, and upload to Dropbox or identify the permalink.

7. Email Dr. B the link for your presentation, or that it’s on Dropbpx (due 6/30).

8. Using the rubric, view and evaluate the two projects Dr. B assigns you (due 7/2).

Here are some excellent online resources for your research process:

- Belk Library “Start Your Research”:
  - http://elon.libguides.com/academic_research
  - Off-Campus VPN Login:
    - https://webvpn.elon.edu/+CSCOEF/+logon.html

- RefWorks:

- Elon Writing Center: http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/special_programs/writing/

- Music E-Journals: http://journalfinder.uncq.edu/elon/search-subj.asp?subj=34
Many of Belk's resources are not available from off-campus unless you log in using the VPN login at the link above. In particular, you need to do this if you want to use RefWorks, a very helpful tool for collecting your sources in a bibliography. If you have trouble logging in, contact the very helpful library staff via text, IM, email, or phone (http://www.elon.edu/e-web/library/askus.xhtml). But you shouldn't rely solely on the internet for your research—visit Belk if you're close enough, or your local library. Just browsing through the periodicals or the appropriate literature section will turn up more sources than you would think, some of which aren't available online or don't turn up readily in a card catalog search.

You may use any citation style you choose (APA, MLA, etc.), but make sure you stay consistent with that style throughout the presentation. Every assertion of “fact” in your presentation must have a citation to back it up. **Your works cited list should include no less than 20 scholarly sources.** A “scholarly” source is written by experts in a particular field and serve to keep others interested in that field up to date on the most recent research, findings, and news. You can find an excellent guide to scholarly vs. popular sources here: http://elon.libguides.com/content.php?pid=126393&sid=2446855. There should be no web pages or blogs used (online journals or scholarly articles are OK).

Length to view the presentation should take no less than 15 minutes and no more than 30 minutes to view in its entirety, including audio/video clips. To test this, have a friend or relative view your presentation while you time them. No matter what the length is of your finished project, the research should be thorough and the presentation concise. Keep this in mind when preparing the presentation.

As classmates, you will be evaluating each other using the rubric below, so keep in mind that your audience will not just be your professor, but your peers as well. Your presentation style will factor in to your grade; but not nearly as much as the content and substance of your research. The final capstone project should reflect nearly two weeks of intense research and study on your chosen topic/question—make sure the presentation clearly exhibits this rigorous research process.

**Presentation Medium**

After completing your research and organizing your thoughts into a presentation outline, you will be faced with the difficult choice of an online presentation medium. This can be daunting if you've never done anything
like it before, so you’ll want to choose an option and try it out well before the final due date (6/30). Remember that any user must be able to view your presentation (PC or Mac), so a universal method is crucial.

Here are some suggested options:

- Create a website with text and audio and/or video. This could be the best option for those who want to use a great deal of text in a research paper-like format. All of these free web hosting sites offer an integrated design software that is easy to use:
  - http://sites.google.com
  - http://www.webs.com/
  - http://www.wix.com/ (Flash-enhanced websites)

- Create a documentary-style video using Microsoft Movie Maker, iMovie, or other software. If video is integral to your project, consider this option and upload your movie to the class DropBox.com site. Please note that you can use copyrighted images, video, or audio with this option since it is for educational purposes only...however, if you do so it is unlawful to use the video for any other purposes except this presentation. If you don’t use copyrighted material, you can also upload to YouTube or Google Video.
  - https://www.dropbox.com/ (we’ll all sign up for this free sharing site)

- Render a PowerPoint video. If you’re comfortable with this software, you can try this option. But I’d caution that PowerPoint has been buggy when used for an online presentation (as opposed to an in-class presentation, where it works great). It’s easily been the least successful option for past students, so think twice before choosing this one. The most efficient way to use PowerPoint for our purposes is to download a screen capture program, such as Jing. This program will capture video and audio as a video file you can upload to Dropbox or YouTube. Visit the Jing website for a tutorial and to download it for free: http://www.jingproject.com

- Create a Prezi at http://prezi.com/. This is like a PowerPoint, but is designed to live in the cloud so it works better for the purposes of this project. It’s based on zooming and changes in perspective, and can be an engaging way to present your project. But while video can be embedded fairly easily, audio can be a challenge to include. And if you zoom around too much, your viewer may end up slightly nauseated by your presentation!...so be careful to avoid “over-zooming” if you design your project using Prezi.

Your choice of presentation is your own; just remember that two anonymous classmates will view and evaluate your work, so it needs to be functional for them. I can’t stress strongly enough that you absolutely must check that your presentation is viewable after uploading it for both Mac and PC and different browsers (Chrome, Safari, Firefox, and Internet Explorer at least). Then you can rest assured that no issues will pop up in the presentation grading. If you skip this step (as some past students regretfully have), you
may find that your grade is adversely affected because of it—your three evaluators will only be able to assess what they can see and hear, and if they can’t see and hear what you intended then it’s out of their hands when using the rubric to evaluate. Be sure to leave extra time to anticipate these issues and troubleshoot the inevitable technological issues that pop up.

Lastly, music is integral to your research, so at least three appropriate musical audio clips should be included in your presentation (in addition to any narration or other audio). You may also choose to integrate video, although that is not a requirement. Appropriate visual aids, such as pictures or clip art, should be included as well. Above all, remember that the presentation is simply a conduit for the research—*make certain the substance is there!*

**Final Capstone Project Evaluation Rubric:**
*Please note: Presentation will be evaluated based upon how it is viewed; make sure it is viewed as you intend it to be!*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points (20 total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>The research question is clearly presented. Depth of the research is evident, and clarity of concept is well-planned. An obvious attempt at answering the research question is offered, with logical supporting facts. Research is meaningful and appropriate to the musical content of the course.</td>
<td>8 possible/ _____ earned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference List</td>
<td>At least 20 sources are included in a reference list, none of which are web pages or blogs (online journals or scholarly articles are OK). Consistent style is used when asserting facts and figures to cite these sources.</td>
<td>5 possible/ _____ earned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Elements</td>
<td>At least three appropriate audio/video clips are included. Presentation is neat and well organized. A logical flow is evident through-out the project.</td>
<td>3 possible/ _____ earned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar/Spelling/Syntax</td>
<td>Proper grammar, spelling, and syntax are observed throughout the presentation. Slang and curse words are avoided.</td>
<td>2 possible/ _____ earned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Time to view the entire presentation is between 15 and 30 minutes (including audio/video clips).</td>
<td>2 possible/ _____ earned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td>_____ out of 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments: Write at least three sentences detailing your rationale for your evaluation here.

(Please note: You will remain anonymous to the peer whose project you are evaluating. But your evaluations will also be assessed by Dr. B for validity as a part of your own overall project grade! So be sure you follow the rubric criteria appropriately and justify your evaluation with the explanation here...don’t give a high grade just because you want to be nice, because it could adversely affect your own grade. Be fair, use the rubric that we’re all being assessed with, and give the project the grade it deserves.)

Name: ____________________________________________ (will be removed before forwarding on)_______

Date: __________/__________/2014

Dr. Buckmaster’s evaluation will be the same criteria, just altered in point values (120 total instead of 20).