

# IDS 2935 - Blues Music & Culture

"Blues Music & Culture - The Story of the Blues"

University of Florida, Spring 2024

Interdisciplinary Studies 2935-- Class #18516 / Quest 1 Identities offering (3 credit hours)

Location: Bldg/Room: Little Hall, Room 0101

Instructor: Timothy J. Fik, Associate Professor | Department of Geography

Teaching Assistant: Daun Fields, Doctoral Student



[UF Gen Ed Requirements \(Link\)](#) -- Gen Ed: H (Humanities), D (Diversity)

## Overview--

This is a **Hybrid Course**: face-to-face meetings with Independent Study on-line.

T (Tuesdays, Periods 5-6) -- "face to face" (f2f) live classroom setting;

Time: 11:45AM to 1:40PM; Location: Little Hall, Room 0101

R (Thursdays, Period 5) -- Virtual, Asynchronous Viewings of Assigned

Documentaries and Videos (Independent Study). Students are expected to review assigned course material: viewings/videos/hyperlinks.

General Education Designations of this **Quest 1 course**: *Humanities, Diversity*.

Note that a minimum grade of C is required for General Education credit. Class resources, supplemental readings, written assignments and announcements will be available via Canvas. Any major changes, edits or updates to this syllabus will be announced and brought to the attention of the class.

## **Office Location: 3137 Turlington Hall**

Office Hours: Tuesdays (2:00PM-3:45PM), Wednesdays (10:00AM-11:30AM), Thursdays (1:00PM-3:00PM), or by appointment.

Geography Department Phone: (352) 392-0494 (leave a message with staff). Feel free to contact me directly via e-mail: [fik@ufl.edu](mailto:fik@ufl.edu).

This course was designed as a traditional lecture-style face-to-face class with a focus on the written and spoken exchange of ideas and concepts relating to course material. Note, however, that the structure of this "hybrid" course will have both a live "face-to-face" (f2f) component and a virtual/Independent Study/Asynchronous viewing component.

Students will engage in a series of assigned readings, documentary viewings, and discussions (through written comments/communication with the instructor and one another). Students are also encourage to discuss material with board posts, e-mails, and group/class discussions. Weekly office hours, assignments, and term projects offer additional opportunities for personal engagement with course materials and the Instructor.

Lectures will consist of Power-point presentations given live (f2f) on Tuesdays (LIT 0101) during class periods 5 and 6; the Thursday class period will be online -- asynchronous viewing of assigned documentaries and videos... where students can view assigned materials on their own schedules. Links to viewing materials will be provided (posted on Canvas). Power-points slides of in-class lectures will also be made available for viewing on the Canvas website. Students are expected to review the Power-point lectures and open the hyperlinks contained within.

Weekly assignments will be posted...see the "Assignments" portal for details. Weekly assignments will be a combination of textbook and supplementary readings, Power-point presentations of lectures, links to material on various websites, documentaries and videos (links provided), and music listening.



### **Course Description - *Blues Music & Culture- The Story of the Blues***

This course examines the birth, diffusion, and meaning of "the Blues" as a musical form, artistic innovation, mode of personal and cultural expression, and catalyst of social change, as viewed through the life experiences of African-Americans in post-slavery era America. Focus is on intersecting cultural landscapes, the political and economic climate, and how Blues music helped the African-American community remain resilient and sustain their cultural identity in hostile settings and turbulent times. Class presentations and discussions will analyze and deconstruct Blues music and lyrics from a multidisciplinary perspective, to expose the underlying sub-text and metaphors, and reveal its power as an manifestation or embodiment of an art form and strategy that sought to deal with the human condition. Lecture material will shed light on race relations and the perceptions of how African-Americans viewed their world as they encountered forces of oppression; being part of, yet separate from, a society where racism and segregation dominated the landscape.

The Blues is represented as a community outcry that emerged to covertly confront the very forces responsible for perpetuating injustice and inequality. Course materials highlight the rise, popularity, and evolution of the Blues as an entertainment platform, along with the emergence of various regional styles. Discussion will focus on the Blues as vehicle that set into motion an early discourse on civil rights and women's rights, as well as spawned heated debates between secularists and non-secularists with its sinister label as "the Devil's music". The course will examine contributions of the Blues Matriarchy and how key figures championed feminist ideas and challenged notions of sexuality and women's roles and identities. It will be shown how the Blues set the stage for dialogue within the African-American community as it sought to find direction and develop strategies for advancement.

Through imaginative works, video, film documentaries, articles, performance and multi-media presentation, we will see how the genre of the Blues gave a voice to the African-American community, and a means for them to overtly and covertly battle hardship, discrimination and inequality, while struggling with contrasting notions of assimilation and resistance. It is argued that Blues music offered a narrative of the everyday challenges and dangers faced by African-Americans in the Jim Crow South and the harsh environs of the Industrialized cities of the North, as they dealt with adversarial agents, racism, injustice, mistreatment, and discrimination. The course will explore how the genesis of a Blues music industry, opened pathways to independence through the development of networks of community based entrepreneurial activities that supported artists, as well as African-American owned music venues and businesses; despite unscrupulous agents and promoters that sought to exploit the genre once it became commercially viable. It is suggested that to fully understand Blues music as a cultural artifact, and the evolution of its form, one must describe its deep connections to the fabric of a cultural and a community; this includes the underlying perceptions of place and space, its geo-history and the various regional manifestations that emerged. This will entail a discussion of the lineage, the advocates that promoted the music, and the pioneers and progenitors that sought to keep the music alive in its coded and non-coded forms. Paramount to this understanding is a look at the nature of conflict and social interactions on the human and physical landscapes... forces and factors that helped shape the music, the lyrics, and the movements behind the music. The Blues is/was a music that represented a culture of resistance and a catalyst for social change; yet it is also a musical form that reflected the experiences of the Black community as it struggled to combat the power structures that attempted to hold them back. The Blues continues to be embraced as an innovation and a cultural treasure with layers of hidden meanings.

This course will ultimately expose how an emotive and organic musical form with humble and spiritual-based beginnings became a *tour de force* that gave hope and a voice to an oppressed people during turbulent times--an American roots music that personified the basic human need to be free and the desire to overcome any and all adversity. All in all, the Blues is characterized as a liberating force that helped blacks to mitigated through a dangerous landscape, at a dangerous time.

**The "Big Questions" tackled in this course are as follows (Course Objectives):**

- (1) To what extent did Blues music play a role in the cultural preservation of African-Americans as they struggled to advance amidst an oppressive and socially unjust landscape?
- (2) To what degree did Blues music represent an artistic innovation that allowed for freedom of expression and communication within the African-American communities as they sought to gain a voice and control over their own destinies, and exercise their freedom(s) in a post-Emancipation America?
- (3) How and why did Blues music become a catalyst for social change?
- (4) How did the legacy of "the Blues" change the ways in which blacks and whites in America viewed themselves and each other (i.e., its impact on race relations)?
- (5) What are some of the ways in which the matriarchy of the Blues contributed to the development of the genre, its popularity, and the rise of role models that fought for equal rights, women's rights, and gender equality?
- (6) How and why did the Blues become a musical foundation and springboard for the music innovations and hybrids that followed?
- (7) How are the Blues and blues artists perceived in today's music industry and pop culture?

To address these questions, this class will proceed to analyze the legacy of the Blues historically, socially, and geographically, as well as explore various thematic aspects of the Blues based on its cultural underpinnings and the political context and human geographic setting in which it emerged.

An analysis of the Blues and its associated subject matter is by its very nature interdisciplinary. This course provides a Geo-historic account of "the Blues"-- an innovation that helped African-Americans retain their cultural identity in a landscape dominated by oppressive forces, conflict, and blatant discrimination. As a catalyst for social change, this expressive musical form covertly confronted the forces responsible for promoting injustice and inequality; and became a survival strategy as well as a call to unity for a people and a community that kept hope alive in both the pre- and post-Civil Rights eras.

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## Quest 1 Descriptions and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

### *Quest 1 Descriptions*

Quest 1 courses are multidisciplinary explorations that take on truly challenging questions about the human condition that are not easy to answer, but also not easy to ignore: for example.. What is injustice? How do we manage conflicts? What defines one's identity and influences a person's perceptions of reality or their behavior? To grapple with these types of open-ended and complex questions and intellectual challenges, they will face as critical, creative, sensitive, and self-reflecting adults navigating through a complex and interconnected world, Quest 1 students apply approaches from the arts and humanities to mine works for evidence, examine themes and constructs, create arguments, and articulate ideas. Grounded in modes of inquiry and expression, via the arts and humanities, Quest 1 courses invite students to explore questions that transcend the boundaries of any one discipline, and encourage the adoption of a multidisciplinary vision and multiple perspectives, in the analysis of phenomena and the need to understand an increasingly connected and dynamic world. Students examine phenomena and engage in critical thinking by reflecting on the implications of how history, culture, economics, politics, life experience, social systems, beliefs, and processes working at multiple geographic scales affect outcomes and mediate understandings of an interconnected world.

### *Quest 1 SLOs*

#### Quest 1 Student Learning Outcomes

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition within and across the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Content).
- Analyze and evaluate essential questions about the human condition using established practices appropriate for the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Critical Thinking).
- Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Connection).
- Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written forms as appropriate to the relevant arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Communication).

## **General Education Designations and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

Humanities Description: Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key elements, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

Humanities SLOs: At the end of a Humanities class, students will be able to...

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used in this course (Content).
- Identify and analyze key elements, biases, and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives (Critical Thinking).
- Communication knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively (Communication).

Diversity Description: In Diversity courses, students examine the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing social and cultural differences within the United States. Student engage with diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)abilities. Students critically analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints across the U.S. population. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understanding of themselves and an increasingly diverse U.S. society.

Diversity SLOs: At the end of a Diversity class, student will be able to...

- Identify, describe, and explain the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability (Content).
- Analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect opportunities and constraints of different groups in the United States. Analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate understandings of an increasingly diverse U.S. society (Critical Thinking).

## "Blues Music and Culture" Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Reflecting the curriculum structures of Quest 1 objectives and Gen Ed Humanity and Diversity designations (described above), at the end of the "Blues Music and Culture" class, students will be able to...

1. Identify, describe, and explain the history, creation, and evolution of Blues music and its meaning and significance to the African-American community in 20th-century US, with attention to ways gender, race, and natural identity intersect and dynamically interact with other identity categories such as (but not limited to) class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability (Content SLOs for Gen Ed Hum & Diversity-Quest 1)

- Assessed through Class Participation, **Reflection Papers**, and a **Final Project**.

2. Analyze and evaluate how Blues music as a form of both personal and community expression, created by a diverse set of artists in diverse settings and contexts, depict and help to construct ideals of identity and consciousness using established practices appropriate to the arts and humanities (Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed Hum & Diversity-Quest 1)

- Assessed through Class Participation, Reflection Papers, and Final Project.

3. Analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and how they in turn affect opportunities, constraints, and perceptions of different groups within and outside the African-American community in the United States, and how Blues music affected transformations of group consciousness and group identity (Critical Thinking SLO for Gen Ed Diversity)

- Assessed through Class Participation, Reflection Papers, and Final Project.

4. Analyze and evaluate on the ways in which culture and beliefs mediate understandings and perceptions of Blues music from within and outside the African-American communities in the United States, and how intersecting differences in beliefs, perceptions and life experience emerged in the formation of various identities and divisions (Critical Thinking SLO for Quest 1 and Gen Ed Hum & Diversity)

- Assessed through Class Participation, Reflection Papers, and Final Project.

5. Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions about how the Blues as a musical form, mode of expression, and vehicle for social changing affected the preservation and progression of culture and helped to form cultural identities of African-Americans in the 20th-century America (Communication SLO for Gen Ed Hum and Quest 1)

- Assessed through Class Participation, Reflection Papers, and Final Project.

6. Analyze, evaluate, and critically reflect on connections between course content on the substance and impact of Blues traditions (musical, cultural, and political) and their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Connection SLO for Quest 1)

- Assessed through Class Participation, Reflection Papers, and Final Project.

NOTE: This course requires an Experiential Component. See "List of Graded Work"

**Required and Recommended Texts**--Required books for class are available at the University of Florida Bookstore and on Amazon.com. Recommended titles are also given, and should be considered as supplemental reading or as book review options for the Final Project. Additional assigned readings will be available on the Canvas website in a Readings file (as pdfs).

**Required books for class:**

- **Required:** Giles Oakley, *The Devil's Music: A History of the Blues* (New York, NY: De Capo Press, 1997)
- **Required:** Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1998)
- **Highly recommended (a modern classic):** Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (London: Oxford, 2007)

Other **Recommended** titles (as supplemental readings, not required to purchase), but readings that may be of interest to those looking to explore the subject matter in greater detail:

- Le Roi Jones, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York, NY: Quill, 1999)
- Elijah Wald, *Escaping the Delta: Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues* (New York, NY: Amistad, 2004)
- Paul Oliver, *The Story of the Blues* (Boston, Mass: Northeastern University Press, 1997)
- William Ferris, *Blues from the Delta* (New York, NY: De Capo Press, 1984)
- Gayle Dean Wardlow, *Chasin' That Devil's Music* (San Francisco, CA: Backbeat Book, 1998)
- James Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1992)
- Lawrence Cohn, *Nothing But the Blues: The Music and the Musicians* (New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 1999)
- Francis Davis, *The History of the Blues: the Roots, the Music, the People* (New York, NY: De Capo Press, 2003)
- John Wilward, *Crossroads: How the Blues Shaped Rock 'n Roll (And Rock Saved the Blues)* (Boston, Mass: Northeastern University Press, 2013)
- Paul Oliver: *Blues Fell This Morning: Meaning in the Blues* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990)
- Gerhard Kubik, *Africa and the Blues* (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1999)
- Bruce Bastin, *Red River Blues: The Blues Tradition in the Southeast*. (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995)

**Books for consideration/Final Term Project (for students opting for the Book Review Option):**

- Adam Gussow, *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002)
- Samuel Floyd Jr., *The Power of Black Music* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995)
- Robert Palmer, *Deep Blues: A Musical and Cultural History of the Mississippi Delta* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1992)...or
- A given book of your choice (with permission from the Instructor). Note that numerous books, on various related topics to material covered in the course, will be brought to your attention during the semester. Many of these book would be good book review candidates.

**Video and Film Documentaries (Subject to change):** This course will require viewing of selected segments of several films, videos, and documentaries. Selected portions may be shown during regularly scheduled class periods; with numerous titles available through streaming services and on-line viewing.

Titles include...

1. Martin Scorsese presents: *The Blues - A Musical Journey* (2003)...
2. *Feel Like Going Home*, directed by Martin Scorsese and written by Peter Guralnick
3. *The Soul of a Man*, directed and written by Wim Wenders, on IMDb
4. *The Road to Memphis*, directed by Richard Pearce and written by Robert Gordon
5. *Warming by the Devil's Fire*, directed and written by Charles Burnett
6. *Red, White & Blues*, directed by Mike Figgis
7. *Piano Blues*, directed by Clint Eastwood
8. *The Devil at the Crossroads* (2019), Re-Mastered on NETFLIX, directed by Brian Oakes
9. *Blues Story: A Documentary* (2003) on IMDb and YouTube.com, directed by Jay Levey
10. "*Bluesland*": *A Portrait in American Blues Music* (1993) on IMDD, directed by Ken Mandel
11. *Deep Blues: A Musical Pilgrimage to the Crossroads* (1992) on IMDb, directed by Robert Muggé
12. *Can You hear the Wind Howl? The Life and Music of Robert Johnson* (2011), on Amazon Prime, directed by Peter Meyer
13. *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross (PBS special)* with Henry Louis Gates Jr. (available YouTube Subscribers and Amazon Prime)

**Music:** Assigned and suggested listening of music/songs in this class, by selected Blues artists, may be streamed through services like Apple music or Spotify, with most available on YouTube.

## **Weekly Coursework & Schedule -- See "Assignments"**

Given that this is a hybrid course, flexible modes of teaching and instruction are provided. Students have numerous options. Course materials will be available via the Canvas portal.

It is important that students visit, review, and complete their weekly assignments as outlined, and adhere to the course schedule that is found in the "Assignments" section of the Canvas website for this course.

It is also recommended that students look ahead on the reading lists and do some Internet searching to uncover additional material related to topics covered in lectures or the readings. Students can share their discoveries with the class (on line) and/or the Instructor... and generate group discussions.

## *List of Graded Work*

### **I. Four Reflection Papers (20 points each/worth 80 points total)--**

#### **Reflection Paper #1 (due Feb 6th by 4:30PM): *Reflections on the Symbolic Nature and Meaning of the Blues in the Post Civil War (Postbellum) South***

Summarize and express your thoughts as you analyze and reflect on the human condition as it pertains to the challenges faced by African Americans in a Post-Civil War America, the importance of music as a mode of cultural expression, and "the Blues" as a genre that, as Angela Davis put it, "marked a period in African American historical development when black communities seemed to open up to all sorts of new possibilities". Reflect on what the Blues as a musical form meant to African Americans as they dealt with turbulent times and a hostile landscape. What role(s) did the Blues play in a Post Emancipation period where Blacks in America were "free", yet dealing with blatant discrimination, racism, and inequality. (3-4 pages of text: approx. 700-800 words; double-space, 1" margins, standard font). **Worth 20 points**

Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,4,6

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#### **Reflection Paper #2 (due February 27th by 4:30PM): *Reflections on the Black Feminist Blues Perspective***

Summarize and express your thoughts as you analyze and reflect on the plight of African-American women during the "Classic Blues era" (a period spanning roughly 1920-1942) and the importance of gender based self-consciousness, Blues affirmations, and women's assertiveness and push toward self-reliance, liberation, sexual freedom, women's rights, and newfound identities in the context of ongoing racism, gender-based discrimination, a male-dominated music industry, spousal abuse and the threat of domestic violence; based on the insights provided by the reading and viewing material and the Angela Davis book "Blues Legacies and Black Feminism" (3-4 pages of text: approx. 700-800 words; double-space, 1" margins, standard font). Note that this may require you to read ahead on material not yet covered in class, and/or do some independent research on this topic. **Worth 20 points**

Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,4,6

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**Reflection Paper #3 (due March 19th by 4:30PM):** *Reflections on the Nature of Blues Mythology, the Intersection of Juke-Joint Culture and the Church; and the role of Music and Divergent Perceptions.*

Summarize and express your thoughts as you analyze and reflect on the controversies and conflict between secular and non-secular entities (i.e., the blues industry versus the church) during the formative periods of the Blues, and the arguments that advanced dialogue and caused tension between those following the worldly Blues impulse (juke-joint culture) versus those following the Gospel impulse (Church culture); given the myths and superstitions surrounding the Blues and its label as "the Devil's music". Reflect also on the ongoing challenges facing society at that time as members of the Black Community continued to deal with turbulent race relations, discrimination, social injustice, racist entities, and preconceived notions regarding the evils of Blues music. Do you see the music and artists playing a vital role in advancing social change? What role did the Blues play in terms of the push for civil rights, equal rights, and social awareness? Do you see "the Blues" as a force that was contrary to the mission of the Black church or was it a supportive entity that helped unify the community? (Keep your reflection paper concise and to the point: 3-4 pages of text; double-space, 1" margins, standard font).

***Worth 20 points***

Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,4,6

**Reflection Paper #4 (due April 9th by 4:30PM):** *A Personal Reflection of the Blues-- Creating a Personalized Blues Song and an Analysis of the Lyrics*

Write/Construct/Compose a Personalized Blues Song (Lyrical Content) using the tools and methods provided in the lecture notes and the music provided on the class Canvas site (see MP3/Wave files for slow blues or moderate blues songs as a guide). Provide a copy of the lyrics and a summary analysis of the lyrical content, reflecting on your personal blues and what your lyrics mean to you. The structure of your song/lyrics should follow the A-A-B stanza/12-bar Blues format... as discussed in class. Use the music files provided on the class Canvas website as a guide to assist you in the creative process. (1-page lyric sheet, plus 2-3 pages of text/discussion; double-space, 1" margins, standard font). Note that Quest requires some formal reflection where students reckon with what they think, why they think it, and what the implications of their thoughts are. Note: Reflection Paper #4 provides students with a chance to reflect on their personal Blues through the construction of lyrics and a short write-up of the interpretation of what the lyrics mean to them. Provide a synopsis and discussion of the meaning behind the lyrics. Briefly describe how this exercise made you feel...in short, did you find the process of penning a Blues song to be cathartic? ***Worth 20 points***

Advances SLOs: 2,6

## II. Experiential Learning Component (ELC) (worth 20 points; due April 2nd by 4:30PM)--

Note: this class includes a requires an out-of-classroom learning experience that offers students a different take on ideas or concepts discussed in class. This experiential learning component will count toward their Participation Grade. Students have several options:

**Option 1.** Students can attend one of the several Free Downtown or ticketed in-club Blues Concerts sponsored by the *North Central Florida Blues Society* (see the NCFBS website: <https://ncfblues.org/>) to experience a live Blues performance. Note that for ticketed performance...students are responsible for purchasing their own tickets for the show, which typically run approximately \$15-\$20. Students will provide evidence that they attended a live Blues show, attached to their write-up.

**Option 2.** (If ticket prices are cost prohibitive or shows not available)...Students may also opt to write about a recent concert performance they attended (within the last two years)... or discuss and review on-line, live concert footage of a Blues artist or group that has been influenced by the Blues.

To document this experiential learning component, students must write and submit a 2-3 page personal narrative about their experience (a description of what the audience was like, how the music/artist and the live music concert experience affected or change them.

Note that option 2 is an alternative virtual (on-line) experiential learning assignment for students unable to attend a live event, or for students with a disability or for hardship cases where attending such an event is not possible due to other concerns (e.g., financial or logistical concerns).

**Option 3.** Students may either (a) view and review a video documentary of their choosing on the Blues or a Blues artist, or (b) engage in the focused study of a Blues Artist of their choice; reflecting on the contribution of this artist (living or deceased). Students choosing this Alternative ELC are required to submit a 2-3 page narrative describing the extent to which the experience of viewing this documentary... or learning about the contributions of the Blues artist in question... affected them in ways not expected.

Advances SLOs: 2,6

ELO write-ups or narratives should be doubled-spaced, 1" margins, 12-point Times-Roman font.

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### III. Final Term Project Proposal (worth 20 points, due Feb 21st by 12:00PM noon)

The Formal Proposal should consist of a 1-2 page synopsis or outline of a Proposed Final Project for this course. Note that this course requires that each student write an Analytical Essay. Before proceeding, each student must submit a project proposal...which must be approved by the Instructor. Note that there are three options for the Final term Projects:

**Option 1.** Book Review Proposal: Provide a brief 1-2page summary of a book you wish to read and review (with permission from the Instructor), and how you intend to present and analyze the subject matter of that work in relation to the class material and course objectives...as defined through the various topics, themes, and methodologies covered in lecture, discussions, and readings, and as outlined in the initial sections of this syllabus. Your chosen topic must be somehow related to the Blues. (Note that numerous titles have been suggested under recommended readings in this syllabus). **Worth 20 points**

Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,5,6

**OR**

**Option 2.** Term Paper Proposal: Provide a brief 1-2page summary of a topic you wish to research and review (with permission from the Instructor), and how you intend to present and analyze the subject matter in relation to the class material and course objectives...as defined through the various topics, themes, and methodologies covered in lecture, discussions, and readings, and as outlined in the initial sections of this syllabus. **Worth 20 points**

Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,5,6

**OR**

**VERY POPULAR Option 3.** Overview of **Virtual Blues Trip**-- Provide a brief 1-2 page summary of an itinerary of Virtual Blues Trip you will take via the Internet using historic blues markers (see details on Final Project requirements on next page of this syllabus). **Worth 20 points**

Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,5,6

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#### **IV. Final Project / Analytical Essay (worth 100 points; due April 23rd by 4:30PM)--**

As part of the requirements for this course, students must write an Analytical Essay. Students have three choices or options when it comes to submitting an Analytical Essay for their Final Term Project (as consistent with their Instructor approved proposals). The Analytical Essay may take the form of a traditional Book Review (Option 1), on a book that is relevant to the legacy of the Blues (with permission from Instructor); a Term Paper (Option 2) on a Blues Music related theme, artist, innovation, city, and/or sub-genre (with permission from Instructor); or a Narrative of a *Virtual Blues Trip* using the Internet and historical Blues markers (Option 3). See details below. NOTE: The Final Project is to be submitted by or before the posted due date and time.

**Option 1 or 2 (as proposed/accepted by the Instructor in Part III):** An Analytical Essay (15-20 pages of text, double-spaced, 12-pt font, 1-inch standard margins), with a title page and bibliography (not counted as pages of text) that explores and analyzes an approved book, topic, or subject matter as it relates to the Blues, as discussed in this course, couched from a multi-disciplinary perspective that borrows on traditions and methodologies in the Arts and Humanities.

**Option 3:** An Analytical Essay in the form of a narrative or journal of a **Virtual Blues Trip** based on the Historical Blues markers at important Blues sites located throughout the United States [for more information see [http://msbluestrail.org/blues\\_marker\\_list](http://msbluestrail.org/blues_marker_list)

[Links to an external site.](#)] and/or the many other geographic locations that serve as focal points or epicenters of the Blues (using Google search). The Analytical Essay will provide a summary of what students encountered along the way and the geo-historical significance of the sites or locations to Blues culture.

Students must map out and summarize a virtual trip itinerary, choosing approximately 25 to 30 Blues markers/sites/locations/regions, and discuss and analyze the contributions of the people, places, events, innovators, or innovations associated with those sites and their meaning to the Blues community; and in what ways the key innovators or locations contributed to the legacy of the Blues.

Students who choose Option 3 must submit a map or trip itinerary of their virtual travels along with a 15-20 page summary of the Virtual Blues Trip in essay form (double-spaced format, 12-pt font, 1-inch standard margins). Note that the Analytical Essay for this option may alternatively be embedded within the 25-to-30-slide Power-point presentation, with written summaries presented as notes and/or text within each slide; with graphics and text that highlight and analyze the significance of the markers/locations visited.

**Option 1, 2, 3: Worth 100 points** Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,4,5,6

## V. Other (worth 40 points total)-- Class Participation and Attendance

(i) Discussion and Interaction: Consistent, informed, thoughtful, attentive, courteous, and professional engagement and interaction with class materials, fellow students, and the instructor (in class and/or office hours or by way of virtual engagement) requires students put forth the effort to complete weekly reading and viewing assignments, as well as graded written assignments. In addition, students are encouraged to engage in discussion of the course materials presented via posts or correspondence with the Instructor.

NOTE: If you have personal issues that prohibit you from joining freely in class discussion, e.g., shyness, language barriers, etc., let the instructor know as soon as possible to discuss alternative modes of participation. Assessment is based on the Participation Grading Rubric contained in this syllabus (with maximum of 5 point per category). *Worth 20 points.*

(ii) Engagement & Attendance: Note that a large portion of the class participation assessment is based on virtual learning and independent study. Formal attendance sheets will not be distributed as the course has multiple sections (with physical face-to-face sections as well as virtual attendance). As such, the Instructor will rely on weekly statistics and analytics on student attendance/participation as provided from the Canvas portal to keep track of the time students allocate to this course as well as the number of pages viewed, etc. Students are encouraged to use the *discussion posts* available on Canvas, take advantage of office hours, and/or regularly use e-mail to communicate with the Instructor. Engagement in these components will be counted toward class attendance and participation. *Worth 20 points.*

Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,4,6

***Total Possible Points (Parts I through V): 260 points***

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The Final Course Grade is based on a percentage of total points earned from the four Reflection Papers, the Term Project Proposal, the Analytical Essay, Class Participation, and Attendance--

***(Earned Points / Total Possible Points) x 100%*** ...in accordance with the Grading Scale posted in this syllabus (see below).

**Grading Scale -- [(Points earned / 260) \* 100%]:**

A	94 – 100% of possible points	C	74 – 76.9%
A-	90 – 93.9%	C-	70 – 73.9%
B+	87 – 89.9%	D+	67 – 69.9%
B	84 – 86.9%	D	64 – 66.9%
B-	80 – 83.9%	D-	60 – 63.9%
C+	77 – 79.9%	E	< 60%

## **Course Policies and miscellaneous**

### **Attendance--**

Requirements for class attendance and make-up assignments and other work in this course are consistent with University policies that can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

[Links to an external site.](#)

**NOTE: Students do not have my permission to make digital recordings of the live lectures or performances.**

### **Use of Electronic Devices and Technology--**

The personal use of cell phones, I-pods, droids, etc., are not permitted in the "face-to-face" class meetings. They should be silenced and put away during the scheduled class period. If and when you MUST take or make a phone call during class time in case of an emergency, discuss this with your instructor in advance, or ask to be excused. The use of PCs/laptop computers are permitted in class, but students should not be using them for personal web surfing or social media. Students are allowed to research key words, concepts, and/or people and places, as long as the Internet searches pertain to subject matter discussed in lecture. Should you, despite these policies, become engaged with the personal use of electronic devices, you will be asked to put your device away. Second offenders will be asked to leave the class and points will be deducted for class participation. A third offense will result in two-thirds of a letter grade off your final grade for the semester (e.g., B+ becomes a B-; B becomes a C+, etc).

**Course Evaluation Policy/ UF Evaluation Process:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via **GatorEvals**. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> ([Links to an external site](#))

Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from **GatorEvals**, in their Canvas course menu under **GatorEvals**, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> ([Links to an external site.](#))

Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/> ([Links to an external site.](#))

**Email and Communication--** The instructor of this course uses email and Canvas to communicate with the class as a whole as well as with individuals, and University policy requires that we use our official UF e-mail address. It is your responsibility to obtain and use a **Gatorlink** account.

## **Vocabulary/Language--**

This course covers material from earlier times as well as contemporary "mainstream" popular culture. As a result, texts--and class discussion of them-- may include language you may perceive as archaic, distasteful, or even offensive. This class acknowledges that terminologies fluctuate and are contested; we are studying the changes in social norms (and will acknowledge the work of advocacy groups) that reflect and help to construct changes in scientific understandings of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, etc., which in turn lead to changes in vocabulary and usage. Within this framework, this class strives for respectful language that reflects current mainstream scientific understandings of the body, gender, race, and sexuality.

A good overview of today's rapidly evolving gender/sex terminology can be found in the New York Times "ABCs of LGBTQIA+" glossary. For a discussion of the evolution of terminology related to racial identity, see NPR's "The Journey from 'Colored' to 'Minorities' to 'People of Color.'"

## **Grading Policies and Scales--**

The maximum possible points that can be earned/assigned for each graded component is highlighted in the List of Graded Work section of this syllabus. Deadlines for assignments (Reflection Papers, Proposal, and Final Term Paper/Analytical Essay) will be posted on Canvas and are due at the start of class for the due dates shown (unless the syllabus specifies otherwise). Late assignments will be marked down. For Reflection Papers or the Proposal, a point total equivalent to one-third of a letter grade will be deducted for each late day. Be sure to save your work as you go, and make sure you are uploading the correct version of your work to the Canvas portal. Should Canvas be down due to a technical glitch or maintenance, you may turn in your assignment directly to the Instructor's e-mail. Otherwise, assignments, proposals and projects should only be submitted through Canvas.

## **Grading Final Projects / Analytical Essays--**

Point values are assigned to each of four levels of achievement, to assess the level reached in each of the following areas:

I **Content & Ideas** (the thoughtfulness, originality, substantive quality and insight of the paper/project)

**40 possible points**

II **Development** (its continuity and progression from one idea to another based on an assessment of the paper's organization, coherence, and support)

**40 possible points**

III **Style** (the clarity and flow of the language and the presentation)

**10 possible points**

IV **Usage** (mechanics of grammar, spelling, citation, formatting, and punctuation)

**10 possible points**

**Grading of Final papers** (i.e., the Analytical essays) is based on the total number of points earned out of a possible 100 total points, with respect to the sum of the component scores for each of the categories shown above. Written comments on your papers will help explain the numerical score you receive in each of these four areas (See Final paper Rubric, shown below).

## Grading Reflection Papers--

Reflection Papers are worth a total of 20 points each. The following example represents a breakdown of the scores possible in each category I - IV shown above:

0-1= incomplete or complete but superficial and wanting and/or incorrect

2-3= complete and/or correct but careless, thin, unoriginal; "phoning it in", uninspired

4-5= complete and/or correct as well as thoughtful, carefully and thoroughly done, original

Note: Earning a score of 5 points in each of the four categories will yield a total of 20 points (the maximum for a given Reflection Paper).

Grade Ranges: Points earned on each assignment and letter grades are based on the Grading Scheme outlined in this syllabus, and is consistent with UF policies as posted at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

[Links to an external site..](#)

**Analytical Essay Rubric** (out of 100 possible points earned) from the four categories below.

	<b>A: 90-100</b>	<b>B: 80-89</b>	<b>C:70-79</b>	<b>D:60-69</b>	<b>E: &lt;60</b>
<b>Content &amp; Ideas (40 pts)</b>	Excels in quality and is dense and rich with content. Central ideas are clearly communicated and complexity of ideas are presented.  <b>(36-40 pts)</b>	A fairly solid paper and statement of ideas, with only minor issues or incomplete discussions. Shows careful readings and interpretation of sources, though lacking somewhat in sophistication.  <b>(32-36 pts)</b>	Paper has central ideas, but arguments are weak, and ideas are not sufficiently described and/or communicated. Very general in its overall content, and average in terms of critical discussions.  <b>(28-32 pts)</b>	Paper fails to present a clear idea and/or the central idea is vague and its presentation is somewhat confusing, requiring much effort on the part of the reader to interpret what is being said.  <b>(24-28 pts)</b>	Lacks a central idea or a central focus, and is essentially ineffective in communicating to the reader. A cursory examination at best, with little or no real serious content.  <b>(0-24 pts)</b>

<b>Development</b>  <b>(40 pts)</b>	Logically structured paper that flows well and guides the reader through the progression of ideas. Evidence or arguments are used appropriately and effectively.  <b>(36-40 pts)</b>	Demonstrates a logical progression of ideas and uses solid transitional devices to achieve that end. Some logic links are absent or faulty. Makes some connections between ideas and evidence  <b>(32-36 pts)</b>	Lists a set of ideas or central idea, but not well organized in terms of its overall structure. Some lack of coherence in sentences or explanations. Uses generalizations and assumptions to support key points. <b>(28-32 pts)</b>	Random in its organization, with unstructured, with a basic lack of coherence. Not all paragraphs are supportive of the central idea. Clichés and generalizations are relied upon, with little reference or connection to evidence.  <b>(24-28 pts)</b>	No organization. Total lack of coherence and structure. No semblance of organization.  <b>(0-24 pts)</b>
<b>Style</b>  <b>(10 pts)</b>	Chooses words with precision and uses specificity. Sentences are clearly structured and carefully focused.  <b>(9-10 pts)</b>	Uses words accurately and effectively but not necessarily with precision. All in all sentences are focused and clear, though awkward and incomplete in places. <b>(8-9 pts)</b>	Uses vague words, generalizations, and improper language. Sentences are structured correctly, but are largely unfocused, repetitive or confusing. <b>(8-9 pts)</b>	Vague, abstract, and personal in content, with awkward sentence structure, and a style that fails to facilitate understanding.  <b>(6-7 pts)</b>	Uses irrelevant details and is entirely lacking in terms of supporting evidence and coherence.  <b>(0-6 pts)</b>
<b>Usage</b>  <b>(10 pts)</b>	Largely, free of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.  <b>(9-10 pts)</b>	Contains a small amount of errors that challenge the reader, but do not interfere with basic understanding.  <b>(8-9 pts)</b>	Several obvious errors that interfere with meaning and translation of some ideas, but don't necessarily impeded overall understanding.  <b>(8-9 pts)</b>	Numerous mechanical errors that challenge meaning, making it difficult to understand what is being presented.  <b>(6-7 pts)</b>	Many mechanical errors, making it virtually impossible to comprehend.  <b>(0-6 pts)</b>

## Participation Rubric--

Class Participation evaluations for students are based on the Grading Rubric shown below for the semester at large. Note that a total of 20 Class Participation Points is possible if a student receives 5 points for each of the Participation Categories listed below.

### Participation Grading Rubric

Participation Category	High / Highest Quality	Average or Better	Needs Improvement
Informed: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.	4-5 pts	2-3 pts	0-1 pt
Thoughtful: Shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised.	4-5 pts	2-3 pts	0-1 pt
Considerate: Takes the perspective of others into account and is respectful of alternative views	4-5 pts	2-3 pts	0-1 pt
Engaged: Shows enthusiasm for course material and regularly adds to class discussion	4-5 pts	2-3pts	0-1 pt

### Students Requiring Accommodations--

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565) <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

[Links to an external site.](#) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

## **Course Evaluations--**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing UF's standard online evaluations (summary results will be available to students) as well as a course-specific evaluation that focuses on course content and the experience of the Quest curriculum. Class time will be allocated for the completion of both evaluations.

## **Class Demeanor--**

For face-to-face class meetings...Students are expected to arrive to class on time, stay the full class period, and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be kept to a minimum.

**Materials and Supplies Fees--** There are no additional fees for this course.

**University Honesty Policy--**UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

**The Honor Code** (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

**Counseling and Wellness--**Counseling and Wellness Center Contact Information for the Counseling and Wellness Center (Link): <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>

Phone number: 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

**The Writing Studio--**The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the UF writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

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Instructor PHOTO GALLERY

Tim Fik performing live on stage / Summer Tour Bridget Kelly Band (July, 2019)



Tim Fik performing on Beale Street, Memphis TN (January, 2016)

Photo credits: Louis Blackwell



Bridget Kelly Band

JAX beach "Springin' the Blues" festival (2022)

Left to Right: Greg Mullins Sr., Bridget Kelly, Tim Fik, Curtis Lyons, Jr.



Beale Street, Memphis, TN (2022)



### *About your Instructor...*

A scholar, teacher, author, and musician, **Dr. Timothy Fik (Tim Fik)** is a tenured *Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Florida*...with over 35 years teaching experience in the social sciences.

He is also the Lead guitarist for the **Bridget Kelly Band** -- a Blues-Rock band based out of North Central Florida.

[www.bridgetkellyband.com](http://www.bridgetkellyband.com)

Tim Fik earned a Ph.D. in Geography & Regional Development from the University of Arizona (1989), an M.A. in Economic Geography (1986), and a joint Bachelor's degree in Economics & Geography (1980) from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Tim Fik was awarded the **Charles M. Tiebout Prize** in Regional Science (1987) and recipient of numerous Teaching and Academic awards in a career spanning 1986 to 2023. These include *Anderson Scholar Honoree (1996)* and *University of Florida Honors Program, Elizabeth Wood Dunlevie Honors Professor (2012-2013)*, and *University of Florida, CLAS Term Professor (three-year award 2019-2022)*.

Tim Fik was recognized as one of the top scholars in his field during the decade of the 1990's by the **International Regional Science Association** (ranked #16 in terms of articles published and citations in Regional Science journals). He has conducted research on various social and spatial science topics and published over 40 papers in scholarly peer-reviewed journals, as well as two textbooks on Economic Geography (with Wiley & Sons and McGraw-Hill publishers), including a solo-authored text entitled "The Geography of Economic Development: Regional Changes, Global Challenges" (2000). Dr. Fik was a co-principal investigator on numerous projects with team members from Florida Sea Grant (from 2001 through 2009).

Dr. Fik has been teaching classes in Quantitative Methods and Econometrics for over three decades, and has given countless Seminars and Workshops on various topics including the Geo-history of Blues Music in America. His "Popular Music and Culture" course (Fall 2007-2018) focused on American Roots music, with a spotlight on the Blues as both a musical genre and as vehicle for social change. This led to the creation of the IDS 2935 -- "Blues Music & Culture: The Story of the Blues". He has recently completed a draft of a manuscript tentatively titled "***The Devil and Mr. Blues: Post-Modern Reflections on the Meaning of Blues Music in America***", a work that is now undergoing a final edit. This 500+ page manuscript will likely be in print by the Winter of 2025.

Tim Fik is an accomplished artist/songwriter, and producer; as well as founding member of **Alpha Sun Records**, an Independent Record Label based out of North-Central Florida. He is a charter member of the **Bridget Kelly Band**-- a nationally touring, #1 Roots Music Radio (RMR) charting "Blues-Rock" band (formed in 2012), with seven all-original music albums/CDs to their credit. As three-time **International Blues Challenge (IBC) Semi-Finalists** in 2015, 2016, and 2023, and IBC participant in 2018 (Memphis, Tennessee), the Bridget Kelly Band has carved out a niche for themselves within the American Blues community and expanded their global fan

base. The group's "Bone Rattler" CD was #1 on the RMR "Electric Blues" chart for 24 weeks in 2017. The band's 2018 release "Blues Warrior" rose to #3 on the RMR "Blues Rock" chart in July of 2018, hit #1 in the State of Florida music chart, and was the most-downloaded Blues album on the AirPlayDirect Global Radio Indicator chart in May of 2018. The band's follow-up album "Dark Spaces" (released in the summer of 2020) also reached #3 on the RMR Blues Rock chart, hit #12 on the Australian Blues Music chart in August 2020, and #1 on the RMR State of Florida Music Album chart in July 2020; with radio airplay in hundreds of stations around the world.

The latest BKB release "Winter's Coming" (November of 2022) was #1 on the RMR "Blues Rock" Album chart for 11 weeks from November 2022 through February of 2023; reached #5 on the RMR U.S. Album chart in mid December of 2022; was #10 on the Most-Played Album chart of the International Blues Broadcasters Association (IBBA) in November of 2022... and was the #12 ranked RMR Blues-Rock release of 2023. The Bridget Kelly Band's music, co-written and produced by Tim Fik and wife Bridget Kelly, can be heard on Spotify, Pandora, Jango, and Sirius-XM satellite radio (B.B. King's Bluesville channel 74), as well as terrestrial, Internet and syndicated radio stations around the globe, with airplay in 88 cities on five continents (from statistics compiled by WARM music charting).

As an artist and musician, Tim has been performing semi-professionally since the mid-1970's, playing clubs, concerts, and festivals throughout North America, and was featured as Tim La Fik in *Guitar Player* magazine in May of 1984-- *Spotlight on New Talent*. He also took honors as Western New York's Top Guitarist in 1984/5 (while with the band "Watchers"), as voted by readers of Buffalo Backstage Music magazine. During the 1980's, his group Watchers opened shows for a host of New Wave bands including the Romantics, Talk Talk, and the Psychedelic Furs. Unfortunately, the band broke up in 1986, and Tim decided to finish his MA and pursue a Ph.D. after receiving a scholarship offer from the University of Arizona.

Dr. Fik resided as Voting Member of the *Recording Academy* -- Producer's & Engineering Wing of the Grammys from 2014-2018. Tim was a **2018 recipient of a prestigious "Keeping the Blues Alive" (KBA)** award from *The Blues Foundation* in Memphis, Tennessee ([www.Blues.org](http://www.Blues.org)) -- an award which acknowledges lifetime achievement and one's commitment in supporting/preserving Blues Music through education and awareness. He is a fervent advocate of the Arts and Humanities, and resides on the board of the *National Women in Blues (2016-2023)*. Tim and the Bridget Kelly Band were recently featured in the December 2021 and November 2022 issues of *Jazz and Blues Florida* magazine. In recent years, Tim has been an invited judge for the International Blues Challenge (IBC), and has actively participated as MC for the *Women in Blues* showcase celebration at Alfred's on Beale Street in Memphis. Tim's hobbies include studio production, artist development, and writing poetry. He is currently seeking a publisher for his book on the Blues and has recently completed a book of poetry--a compilation of selected works entitled "Playgrounds & Mood Swings".

If you would like to see your Instructor rockin' out some electric Blues-Rock guitar.. check out this live performance from the BKB summer tour of 2019 (click on the YouTube link below)... from the 2019 Summer Concert (Tuesday Night Blues) series at the band shell in Eau Claire, Wisconsin: [Tim Fik of the Bridget Kelly Band Burns Up the Stage](#)