

Topics: Blues & African American Literature

AAST 2990/ENGL 2490

Online-Synchronous

Tuesdays/Thursday: 9:35-10:50 am



Do you know who these musicians are? If so, take this class! If not, take this class!

In this course we will examine blues music as the first form of African American popular music in tandem with the early recording industry and we will investigate the influence of this music on culture from the early 20th century to the near present. This class is composed of blues history, studies of specific artists, labels, blues revivals, blues and feminism, and the adaptation of blues to various literary and film texts. We will look specifically at Robert Johnson, B.B. King and Jimi Hendrix for their contributions to the blues and the mythology surrounding these figures. Because this is an interdisciplinary course, we will utilize a vast range of materials from documentary film to fictional film, visual culture, literature, scholarship and criticism, and of course the music itself to draw conclusions about the medium. An underlying thread that binds all of the above texts together is the idea of authenticity. We will question this notion about the music and how its meaning has been constructed and played out as it has evolved as an international phenomenon.