

**AI 286 / SNC 194**  
**New Orleans in Song, Story and Struggle**  
**Winter 2018**  
**Late start**

Faculty: John Kimsey, Ph.D.

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Day/Time: Wednesdays 1/10 – 3/7, 2:15-5:30 PM

Location: Loop campus, DePaul Center C103

**Course Description:**

The tapestry of New Orleans culture is tremendously rich and varied. This course will concentrate on two strands in that tapestry — music from New Orleans and fiction about it. Students will learn about music forms which originated in the city or its environs and which have gone on to dazzle the world, including jazz, r&b, zydeco and funk. We will situate these art forms in social and historical context and examine the complex creative processes which have shaped them. We will become familiar with innovators and icons such as Louis Armstrong, Professor Longhair, Clifton Chenier, the Neville Brothers and Dr. John. We will also read and/or screen works by literary artists who have a background in or fascination with New Orleans, including *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin; *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams; and *Mumbo Jumbo* by Ishmael Reed. Moreover, we will consider the role played in American history and imagination by New Orleans as well as the role played by images and fantasies of New Orleans in struggles for social justice at the local and national level.

**Faculty:**

John Kimsey received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Illinois at Chicago and is an Associate Professor in DePaul's School for New Learning (SNL). He teaches and writes about modern literature, popular culture and intersections between the two and has also worked extensively as a professional musician. His writings have appeared in scholarly journals such as *Popular Music & Society*, *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, *The Journal of Popular Music Studies* and *The Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, as well as academic anthologies such as *Reading the Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism and the Fab Four* (SUNY Press, 2006), and *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles* (Cambridge U Press, 2009). His song cycle, *Twisted Roots*, has been described by jazz composer/historian Ben Sidran as “an ingenious way to integrate social and political concerns into a musical architecture”. Not only that, but he has played “Iko Iko” with Dr. John the Night Tripper. In 2014, he received DePaul's Excellence in Teaching Award. He is currently working on a book on Popular Music Studies for the

University of Massachusetts Press.

**Note:**

This course is offered by DePaul University's School for New Learning (SNL). It can be taken by SNL students for as many as two SNL competencies. It can also be taken by non-SNL students for Liberal Studies credit in the Arts & Literature Domain.

**If you are an SNL student taking this course for competence credit, see the boxed section directly below, with the title highlighted in yellow.**

**If you are a non-SNL student taking this course for Liberal Studies credit, see the boxed section on the following page with the title highlighted in green.**

**Competences Offered (for SNL students):**

SNL students may register for as many as two of the following competences.

- A1X:** Can interpret an expression of New Orleans culture in terms of form, content, and/or sociohistorical context.
- A5:** Can define and analyze a creative process.
- H4:** Can analyze power relations among racial, social, cultural or economic groups in the United States.
- H1X:** Can describe and analyze an aspect of New Orleans culture in terms of social context, social stratification and/or social justice dimensions.

The A-1-X competence is addresses the course focus on vernacular music and literature of New Orleans in terms of form, content and sociohistorical context. The A5 competence addresses the course focus on the complex creative processes that inform such musical and literary works. The H4 competence addresses the course focus on social stratification and struggles for social justice as they relate to New Orleans music and literature. The H1X competence addresses the course focus on how such phenomena are bound up with cultural difference, cultural exchange and struggles for hegemony in New Orleans, the American South and the larger US.

### **Liberal Studies Credit (for Non-SNL students registered on the SNC 192 roster)**

Students from colleges within DePaul other than SNL may register for 4 credit hours in this course and thereby fulfill an Arts & Literature requirement in their Liberal Studies program. **Learning Outcomes for the Liberal Studies / Arts & Literature domain are as follows:**

-- Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a work of art is about and/or how it was produced (i.e., they should be able to explain the content of that work and/or its methodology of production).

--Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.

--Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.

--Students will be able to contextualize a work of art. They will be able to do so with respect to other works of art in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre. They will also be able to contextualize a work of art in terms of contemporaneous aesthetic, social or political concerns, discussing how these might shape the work's reception and how that reception might differ amongst various people and historical periods.

#### **How the course addresses these Liberal Studies Arts & Literature outcomes**

These outcomes relate directly to the course focus on vernacular music and literature of New Orleans in terms of form, content and sociohistorical context, as well as the course focus on the complex creative processes that inform such musical and literary works.

#### **The Liberal Studies Program's description of the Art & Literature domain:**

Courses in the Arts and Literature Domain ask students to extend their knowledge and experience of the arts by developing their critical and reflective abilities. In these courses, students interpret and analyze particular creative works, investigate the relations of form and meaning, and through critical and/or creative activity come to experience art with greater openness, insight, and enjoyment. These courses focus on works of literature, art, theatre, or music as such, though the process of analysis may also include social and cultural issues. Students who take courses in this domain choose three courses from such choices as literature, the visual arts, media arts, music, and theater. No more than two courses can be chosen from one department or program

#### **Learning Experience:**

A variety of learning strategies will be employed, including listening sessions; classroom lectures and discussions; print readings; journals of the readings; group exercises; and short papers.

**Overall Course Outcomes:**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- 1) demonstrate an understanding of New Orleans as the site of certain unique and profound cultural expressions;
- 2) describe and analyze some specific creative processes which have informed such expressions;
- 3) discuss, in critically thoughtful fashion, ways in which such cultural expressions are bound up with factors such as race, class, gender, literacy, aurality and folk tradition;
- 4) describe and engage with debates surrounding at least one of the following topics: creolization; the carnivalesque; literacy and aurality; conservatory versus vernacular musical practice; sensuality and repression in American society; exclusion and assimilation of minority groups in 19th and 20th century New Orleans; the Apollonian and the Dionysian; the causes of the Katrina disaster.
- 5) identify some basic concepts of African American vernacular musical practice and genre and the historical development of same;
- 6) identify some basic concepts of literary form and genre;
- 7) analyze and discuss the interplay between form and content in such works;
- 8) use close reading techniques as applied to musical and literary texts.

**Required Texts (available at DePaul Barnes & Noble bookstore):**

***Hard Copy Books:***

Brothers, Thomas. *Louis Armstrong's New Orleans*. Norton, 2007. ISBN 03933001X

McKinney, Louise. *New Orleans: A Cultural History*. Oxford UP, 2006. ISBN 019530136-6.

Reed, Ishmael. *Mumbo Jumbo*. Simon & Schuster, 1996. ISBN 9780684824772

Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire*. New Directions, 2004. ISBN 9780811216029

**Free e-book:**

Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening* (on our Ares electronic reserve list)

***Sound Recording:***

Dr. John. *Goin' Back to New Orleans*. CD. Warner Brothers/WEA. B000002LTW  
[Note: This album can be obtained in digital download form. However, I recommend

picking up the CD because the booklet that comes with the CD is superb.]

***Readings Posted on Electronic Reserve:***

Several readings for this course are posted at the DePaul University Library website as Electronic Reserves in the Ares system. Just go to [library.depaul.edu](http://library.depaul.edu) and click on the Services tab in the banner across the top. That will take you to the Services page, where on the left you'll find the heading Course Reserves. Click on that and you'll arrive at the Course Reserves Services page. Under the Ares Course Reserves heading there, click on the blue tab "Login to Ares Course Reserves". That will take you to the login page for the Ares system. Log in using your Campus Connect User ID and password. You will then get a page listing the courses in which you're enrolled that have readings posted in Ares. Click on the title of this course and the list of our electronic reserve readings will be displayed.

**Recommended (as opposed to required texts):**

***Sound recordings:***

Louis Armstrong, *Louis Armstrong: Ken Burns Jazz Collection*. CD or download. Sony.  
<http://www.amazon.com/Louis-Armstrong-Burns-JAZZ-Definitive/dp/B000050HVM>

Wynton Marsalis and Eric Clapton. *Wynton Marsalis & Eric Clapton Play the Blues*. CD or download. Warner Brothers. [Note: the DVD of this concert is also excellent.]  
<http://www.amazon.com/Wynton-Marsalis-Eric-Clapton-Blues/dp/B005DZMODI>

**Evidence students will submit:**

*Class participation.* Students are expected to do the appropriate reading for each class session in a timely fashion. They are also encouraged to demonstrate that they have done so by participating in class discussion. In addition, students will submit the following pieces of written work:

*Journal entries.* Each week (excepting week 1), students will submit a journal entry (about a typed page in length) on a reading chosen from the list of readings scheduled for that week. This will make for a total of 9 journal entries by course's end. These journal entries will be collected each week and returned the following week. A suggested format for journal entries is presented later in this syllabus.

In addition:

--*SNL students registered for two competences* will submit a short paper (5-7 pages long) addressing each of the competences for which they're signed up. They will submit one such paper (addressing one competence) at midterm time (week 6) and another such paper (addressing another such competence) at finals time (week 11). This totals up to two short papers by the end of the course. For information on paper topics, see below.

--*SNL students registered for one competence* will submit one short paper addressing that competence at either midterm time (week 6) or finals time (week 11); the choice is up to the student. This totals up to one short essay by the end of the course. For information on essay topics, see below.

--LA&S students taking the course for Liberal Studies credit will submit two short papers (5-7 pages long). They will submit one such paper at midterm time (week 6) and another such paper at finals time (week 11). This totals up to two short papers by the end of the course. For information on paper topics, see below.

*Re topics for papers:* Students will choose topics from an array of essay questions prepared by the instructor. The instructor will provide one array of such questions for the midterm paper and a second array of such questions for the final paper. The instructor will see to it that the essay questions are attuned to the needs of students. SNL students will be provided with questions attuned to specific SNL competences. LA&S students will be provided with questions attuned to the Arts & Literature requirements of the Liberal Studies program. Also, it's always possible for a student to write on a topic of his/her own choosing, providing the instructor approves it.

In sum, the evidence requirements for the course are: class participation; journal; one short paper; and, for students registered for two competencies (4 credit hours), another short paper. Point-wise, the breakdown is as follows:

Class participation	10 %
Journal	30 %
Short paper (midterm)	30 %
Short paper (final)	30 %

### **Criteria for Assessment:**

#### **Journal entries**

A **single journal entry** is worth a maximum of 3 points, with 3 points indicating excellent work; 2 points indicating average work; and 1 point indicating work that is somehow lacking.

#### **Short papers**

##### **Assessment Rubric for Short Papers**

**A** designates work of high quality. An **A paper** (27-30 pts)

develops an argument cogently and creatively across the length of an essay;

reflects thorough understanding of and engagement with pertinent texts (audiovisual and/or print) and the issues at hand;

draws insightful connections and/or generates thoughtful questions concerning the topic and the specified materials;

cites sources consistently in appropriate citation style;

is virtually free of grammar lapses.

**B** designates work of good quality. A **B paper** (24-26 pts)

develops an argument effectively across the length of an essay;

reflects adequate understanding of and engagement with pertinent texts (audiovisual and/or print) and the issues at hand;

draws clear connections and/or generates apt questions concerning the topic and the specified materials

cites sources consistently in appropriate citation style;

is mostly free of grammar lapses.

**C designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment.**

**A C paper** (21-23 pts pts)

develops some ideas but does so in a superficial or simplistic manner;

reflects limited understanding of or engagement with pertinent texts audiovisual or print) and the issues at hand;

draws connections, some of which are unclear, and/or raises questions, some which are inapt, concerning the topic and the specified materials;

cites sources inconsistently and/or occasionally uses appropriate citation style;

contains several grammar lapses.

**D designates work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment. A D paper** (18-20 pts)

shows little development of ideas;

reflects little or no understanding of pertinent texts (audiovisual and/or print) and the issues at hand;

does not draw clear connections or raise coherent questions concerning the topic and the specified materials;

does not cite sources appropriately;

contains numerous grammar lapses.

Such work is expected to conform to college-level standards of mechanics and presentation.

In assessing such work, your instructor strives to be clear, flexible, forthright and empathetic.

**Policy on Attendance:**

You are expected to attend all class sessions. If you miss a class, it is incumbent on you to check with the instructor or a fellow student about any information or handouts you may have missed. Students who miss more than two class sessions will not have met the requirement for a passing grade.

**Policy on Late Submissions**

Written assignments that are submitted late will receive reduced points. Written assignments that are more than a week late will receive zero points.

**Policy on Pass/Fail Grades:**

It is assumed you are taking the course for a letter grade (A, B, C, etc.). However, it is possible to take the course on a Pass/Fail basis if you wish to do so. If you do wish to take the course on a Pass/Fail basis, you must inform the instructor of your wish to do so by the beginning of Week Three.

**Policy on Academic Integrity:**

This course abides by the university's strictures against plagiarism and its policies on Academic Integrity as described in the DePaul Student handbook. All work done for this course must observe the Guidelines for Academic Integrity as outlined in the *Code of Student Responsibility* (in the *DePaul Student Handbook*). The code's Plagiarism Policy reads as follows:

*Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's; copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with proper acknowledgement; submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else; and the paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment.*

*Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion. Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the college or the university taking further punitive action including dismissal from the university.*

**Policy on Incompletes:**

It is expected that students will complete course assignments by specified due dates within the quarter. In circumstances that the instructor determines to be exceptional, when the student is unable to complete required coursework by the established due dates, the student may request that a grade of Incomplete (IN) be issued. This request must be made formally, in writing, by completion of IN Request Form that the student signs. The form specifies the final date by which all outstanding coursework must be completed. Failure to submit outstanding work by the specified due date will result in a grade change

from IN to W or FX for each enrolled competence, along with serious academic and/or financial consequences. After the final submission deadline, the student will have no further opportunities to submit work for a passing grade.

### **Schedule of Topics and Readings**

**Note:** The symbol [E] after a reading below indicates that the reading is posted on Electronic Reserve at the DePaul Library website in the Ares system. Just go to [library.depaul.edu](http://library.depaul.edu) and click on the Services tab in the banner across the top. That will take you to the Services page, where on the left you'll find the heading Course Reserves. Click on that and you'll arrive at the Course Reserves Services page. Under the Ares Course Reserves heading there, click on the blue tab "Login to Ares Course Reserves". That will take you to the login page for the Ares system. Log in using your Campus Connect User ID and password. You will then get a page listing the courses in which you are enrolled that have readings posted in Ares. Click on the title of this course and the list of our electronic reserve readings will be displayed.

#### **Week One 1/10**

Introduction to the course; Creolization as cultural phenomenon; Screening of excerpt from *Make It Funky: the Music That Took Over the World*

#### **Week Two 1/17**

Early history; French, Spanish, Caribbean, Native American and African influences; The Louisiana Purchase and the Battle of New Orleans

##### **Readings:**

McKinney, 1-29

Remini, "New Orleans" (E)

Chopin, *The Awakening*, chapters I - XXV (E)

#### **Week Three 1/24**

Social stratification; The latter 19<sup>th</sup> century; Women and power: Kate Chopin and Marie LaVeau

##### **Readings:**

Chopin, *The Awakening*, chapters XVI - XXXIX (E)

McKinney, 86-101

Reed, "Shrovetide in Old New Orleans" (E)

#### **Week Four 1/31**

Louis Armstrong and the Birth of Jazz; Musical Forms and Social Context; Guest musicians

##### **Readings:**

Brothers, Introduction; Chapters 1-3

McKinney, 31-41; 109-116

##### **Listening:**

Dr. John, tracks 1-9

### **Week Five 2/7**

The French Quarter; French Carnival & the Carnavalesque; More on Armstrong & Vernacular Music; Opening discussion of *A Streetcar Named Desire*

#### **Readings:**

McKinney, 51-82; 201-228  
Gill, "The Rise and Fall of French Carnival" (E)  
Brothers, Chapters 4 & 7  
Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, pp. 2-84

### **Week Six 2/14**

New Orleans Imaged as a Woman: Poetic truth or pernicious stereotype?

#### **Midterm paper due**

#### **Readings:**

Adler, Foreword (in McKinney), v-vi  
McKinney, "Preface & Acknowledgments" vii-xi  
Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, pp. 85-179  
Brothers, Chapters 6 & 8

### **Week Seven 2/21**

Louisiana flood, 1927: Screening of *Huey Long*; Introducing *Mumbo Jumbo*; Screening of excerpt from *Divine Horsemen*

#### **Readings:**

Barry, Excerpt from *Rising Tide* (E)  
Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo*, chapters 1-20 (pp. 1-74)  
Reed, "Neo-HooDoo Manifesto" (E)

#### **Listening:**

Dr. John, tracks 10-18

### **Week Eight 2/28**

Discussion of *Mumbo Jumbo*; New Orleans r&b: Screening of *Piano Players Rarely Ever Play Together*

#### **Readings:**

Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo*, chapters 21-47 (pp. 74-148)  
Lichtenstein & Dankner, Excerpts from *Musical Gumbo* (E)

### **Week Nine 3/7**

Conclusion of *Mumbo Jumbo*; New Orleans as Metaphor for Multiculturalism; Hurricane Katrina; Screening of excerpt from *When the Levees Broke, Part I*

#### **Readings:**

Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo*, chapters 48-Epilogue (pp. 149-218)  
Horne, "An Imperfect Storm" & "Real Ugly, Real Fast" (E)

### **Week Ten 3/14**

Media Portrayals of the Crisis; The Politics of Emergency; Newman's "Louisiana 1927" as Post-Katrina Anthem

#### **Readings:**

Grunwald, “Par for the Corps” (E)

Welch, “They Shoot Helicopters, Don’t They?” (E)

Listening:

Newman, “Louisiana 1927” (download)

**Submit Final paper**

### **Format for Journal Entries**

For a given reading, fill up about a page responding to the following questions:

1. What is the reading about? (Try to be concrete and literal at this point; don’t jump to “interpretation”.)
2. Describe something from your own experience you are reminded of by the reading.
3. What is the most important passage in the reading? Why?
4. Which other reading seems to most agree with this one? Which other reading seems most to disagree? Explain your choices.
5. Pretend the reading is *not* about whatever you said it was about in #1. Pretend it’s about something else, something hidden or unstated. What is this other thing that the reading is “really” about?

### **Appendix**

#### ***For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability***

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter, preferably within the first week of class, and make sure you have contacted:

PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 in the Schmidt Academic Center, room 220 or;

The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-7290, DePaul University Student Center, room 307.

### ***Writing Help***

For help with organizing your ideas, grammar, citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, sample SNL assignments and much more, see the [Writing Guide for SNL Students](http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html) at <http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html>. For on-campus and online tutoring, see the [DePaul University Writing Centers](http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/) at <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/>.