Course Title: Understanding Music Theory Through Popular Music
Course Code: MUS 177
Quarter: Fall 2016
Instructor Name: Lisa Sanchez
Course Schedule: Thursdays, 7:00-8:50 PM

Grade Options:

No grade requested: This is the default option; just show up for class!

Credit/Letter grade: Write a short paper (2-3 pgs.) analyzing a popular song of your choice using concepts we have discussed in class. Due on last class meeting (11/3/16). Students must attend at least 4 out of 6 classes for letter grade or Credit.

Weekly Outline

Week 1 – 9/29/16
- The raw materials of form: measures, repeat signs, endings, musical indications
- Song form: The major popular song forms
- Song examples/analysis

Week 2 – 10/6/16
- Scales and chords: how scales are constructed, how chords are built from scales
- Chords in a key and chord progressions
- Song examples/analysis

Week 3 – 10/13/16
- Melody: the anatomy/construction of a melody
- How melody works with harmony (chord progressions)
- Song examples/analysis

Week 4 – 10/20/16
- The Blues – an overview of styles
- Harmonic/melodic construction of various types of blues
- Song examples/analysis

Week 5 – 10/27/16
- Rhythm: the beat, time and counting, time signatures
- The “underlying feel” of rhythm in music: the rock and roll “backbeat”, “swing” in jazz
- Song examples/analysis

Week 6 – 11/3/16
- Demonstration/performance with instructor and guest musician
- The role of various instruments in a popular music performance
- What does a popular music improviser do?
- Song examples/analysis