



COURSE DESCRIPTION

## 2016 Winter Session (2016-2017 Academic Year)

### ENGL 464A-002: The Poetics of Pop Music - Bo Earle

#### **Twentieth-Century Studies**

#### **Term 2**

**MWF, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.**

This course traces the development of popular music from the blues through some of the many varieties of rock n roll, folk, rhythm and blues, disco, punk, hip-hop, edm and house. Throughout our focus will be on the interplay between the poetics of lyric and music themselves, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the political issues raised in pop music by, for instance, racial and cultural assimilation, sexual objectification, and the economics and technology of performance and distribution. An aim of the course will be to at least begin answering the question if and how the *apparent* democratization of the means producing and accessing music, and the increasing ascendancy of dance music within pop music, represent *actual* democratization; that is, if and how pop music is what the blues began as, a means of giving voice to the voiceless, giving 'power to the people.' The main course texts will be the music itself, supplemented by some theory and history and modernist poetry. Students will be strongly encouraged to draw on personal musical interests in class discussion and coursework. The latter will consist of take home essays and, depending on class size, class presentations.