Chapter Outline

A. Goals
   a. Listen closely to popular music
   b. Learn about popular music history and the people and institutions that produced it
   c. Cover a wider range of music from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first century

B. What is popular music?
   a. Sometimes defined by differences to “art music,” “classical music,” and “folk music”
   b. Defined in text as
      i. Mass-produced
      ii. Disseminated via the mass media
      iii. Listened to by a large number of Americans
      iv. Typically drawing upon a variety of preexisting musical traditions
   c. Popular music must be seen in relation to a broader musical landscape

C. Theme 1: Listening critically
   a. Consciously seeking out meaning in music
   b. Drawing on some knowledge of how music is put together
   c. Understanding music’s cultural significance and historical development
   d. Formal analysis
      i. Listening for musical structure
      ii. Common forms include the twelve-bar blues and AABA
   e. Analysis of musical process
   f. Studying interpretations by particular performers
   g. Riff: repeated pattern designed to generate rhythmic momentum
   h. Hook: memorable musical phrase or riff
   i. Groove: term that evokes the channeled flow of “swinging” or “funky” or “phat” rhythms
   j. Timbre: quality of sound, sometimes called “tone color”
      i. Plays a role in establishing the “soundprint” of a performer
   k. Dialect
      i. Musical genres are strongly associated with particular dialects
      ii. “Crossover” ability often predicated upon the adoption of a dialect widely used in the mass media

D. Theme 2: Music and identity
   a. Pop music provides images of gender identity, ethnicity, and race
   b. Popular music in America is closely tied up with stereotypes
      i. Ex. women as sexual objects, African American men as playboys and gangsters, southern white musicians as “rednecks”
   c. Music plays an important role in bringing personal narratives to life
d. Some popular performers undermine the “commonsense” association of certain styles with certain types of people
   i. Ex. black country singer Charley Pride and the white blues musician Stevie Ray Vaughan

E. Theme 3: Music and technology
   a. Technology has shaped popular music and has helped disseminate it
   b. Technology is usually associated with novelty and change
   c. Older technologies often take on important value as tokens of an earlier—and, it is often claimed, better—time
   d. Rejection of electronic technology functions as an emblem of “authenticity” (ex. MTV’s *Unplugged* series)
   e. Technology can encourage more involvement (ex. DJs’ use of multiple turntables and karaoke machines)
   f. Games like *Guitar Hero* help promote musicians

F. Theme 4: The music business
   a. Popular music typically involves the work of many individuals performing different roles
   b. From the nineteenth century until the 1920s, sheet music was the principal means of disseminating popular songs
      i. Composer and lyricist wrote the song
      ii. Publishing company bought the rights to the song
      iii. Song pluggers promoted the song and convinced big stars to perform it
      iv. Performing stars who worked in shows
      v. Circuit of theaters controlled by other organizations
      vi. Consumers bought sheet music and performed it at home
   c. The rise of radio, recording, and movies added complexity to the business
   d. Composer and lyricist write music to compliment a performer’s strengths
   e. Arranger decided which instruments to use and other details
   f. A&R (artists and repertoire) personnel seek out talent
   g. Producer arranges financing, shapes new talent, and often intervenes in the recording process
   h. Engineers work in the studio
   i. Publicity department plans advertising and public relations
   j. Digital distribution challenges music industry’s fundamental modes of operation
   k. The music business has always been unpredictable
   l. Today concerts bring in the majority of profits, and the sale of recorded music is an important, but secondary source

G. Theme 5: Centers and peripheries
   a. “Center” is where power, capital, and control over mass media are concentrated (including New York, Los Angeles, and Nashville)
   b. “Periphery” is inhabited by smaller institutions and by people who have historically been excluded from the political and economic mainstream
c. The stylistic mainstream of American popular music was oriented toward the tastes of white, middle- or upper-class, Protestant, urban people until the mid-1950s
d. “Peripheral” musical impulses come from African Americans, poor southern whites, working-class people, Jewish and Latin American immigrants, adolescents, gays, and others
   i. Sometimes those most responsible for creating quintessentially American music do not reap an equitable share of the profits

H. European American stream
   a. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, American popular music was almost entirely European in character
   b. In the late eighteenth century, strophic ballads based upon traditional melodies were circulated on large sheets of paper called *broadsides*
   c. Balladmongers sold and sang broadsides
   d. Pleasure gardens became one of the main venues for the dissemination of printed songs by professional composers
   e. English *ballad operas* were extremely popular in America during the early nineteenth century
   f. Storytelling and “high lonesome sound” come from Anglo-American traditions and are common in country music
   g. Thomas Moore’s collection of *Irish Melodies* was popular in the United States
   h. Italian bel canto singing effected American popular singing styles
   i. European dances like the contra dance, quadrille, reel, and square dance influenced American country and western line dances and contra dances
   j. European couples dances like the waltz, polka, and fast step influenced American dances
   k. European folk styles including Jewish klezmer music, Cajun fiddling, and the Polish polka contributed to mainstream popular music
   l. European religious traditions lead to musical expressions like call-and-response singing and gospel music
   m. Jewish klezmer music and chanting influenced Jewish Tin Pan Alley composers
   n. “Old-time music” (including string band music, ballad songs, sacred songs, and church hymns) was influenced by music from the British Isles

I. British ballad tradition
   a. One of the main roots of American music, including urban folk music, country music, and rock ’n’ roll
   b. One of the most widely performed songs is “Barbara Allen,” first definitively documented in London in 1666
   c. Ballads tell a story in a series of verses sung to set melody

J. String band tradition
   a. British tunes with black fiddle styles
b. Often used the banjo, a plucked stringed instrument of African American invention based upon African prototypes

c. By the early twentieth century instruments such as the guitar, mandolin, autoharp, and double bass were used

d. “Soldier’s Joy” (also known as “The King’s Head”) is one of the most venerable old-time fiddle tunes

e. The Skillet Lickers were one of the very first southern string bands to appear on commercial recordings
   i. Lead by James Gideon (Gid) Tanner (1885–1960)
   ii. Known for technical skill, dance-oriented sound, and comedy skits based upon country stereotypes

f. Tommy Jarrell (1901–1985) was an influential old-time fiddler and banjo player from the mountains of North Carolina

K. The African American stream

a. By 1860 there were almost 4 million slaves in the United States

b. Local geographic and social conditions helped to shape the development of African American music

c. Music, dance, and linguistic creativity were critical elements in the slaves’ struggle for cultural survival

d. In the nineteenth century, African American music included work songs, lullabies, game songs, story songs, and instrumental music

e. The most impressive repertory created by the slaves was the Black Spirituals

f. Black preachers developed a style of semi-improvised, musically intoned sermonizing that shaped the performance styles of popular musicians such as James Brown and Ray Charles

g. Call-and-response forms are a hallmark of African and African American musical traditions

h. Interlocking, repeating patterns (polyrhythms) are an aesthetic focus

i. Rhythm (the musical organization of time) is an important focus for performers and listeners

j. Syncopation is a unifying feature for many African musical genres

k. African and African American instrumentalists make use of buzzing sounds and singers frequently use growling and humming effects

l. African and African American music emphasizes improvisation

m. The African American instrument the diddley bow is an adaptation of the African one-stringed zither

n. The African akonting is related to the American banjo
   i. Dink Roberts (1894–1989), African American banjo player and songster

o. African American work songs coordinated the work of individuals, increased efficiency, and helped avoid physical danger (ex. “Long John”)

p. African American ballads of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries celebrated the exploits of black heroes and “bad men” (ex. Stagolee)
i. **Mississippi John Hurt** (1892–1966), African American guitarist and representative of the songster tradition

q. The origins of a distinctively American style of popular entertainment lie in the minstrel show of the mid-nineteenth century

r. In the early twentieth century African American ragtime and blues profoundly shaped the mainstream of American popular song

s. The “jazz age” of the 1920s and the “swing era” of the 1930s and 1940s involved the reworking of African American dance music

t. Some of country music’s biggest stars have been black

u. 1950s rock 'n’ roll was, in large part, rhythm & blues (R&B) music

v. The influence of 1960s soul music, rooted in gospel music and R&B, is heard in the vocal style of practically every pop singer

w. The tone and texture of hard rock and heavy metal are influenced by the electric urban blues of Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf

x. Rap music, based on African-derived musical and verbal traditions, continues to provide many white Americans with a vicarious experience of “listening in” on black urban culture

L. Latin American stream

a. The first Latin American style to exert a major international impact was the Cuban *contradanza*

   i. *Contradanza* was later called the *habanera*

   ii. Eduardo Sánchez de Fuentes’s “Tú” (1892) uses the *habanera* rhythm and is widely considered the first Cuban hit song

   iii. *Habanera* influenced late nineteenth-century ragtime music and popular blues compositions

b. Tango had a big influence in the early twentieth century

   i. Associated with sexuality, recklessness, and danger and with the romantic image of the *gaúcho*

   ii. Popularized in the United States by dancers Irene and Vernon Castle as well as movie star Rudolph Valentino

   iii. Often expresses *mufarse*—the ability to reflect upon one’s destiny with bittersweet satisfaction

   iv. **Carlos Gardel** (1890–1935)

      1. Legendary French-born superstar of tango

      2. International film and recording star

      3. Inspired operatic bel canto singing and the *criollo* songs of the Argentine *gauchos*

v. **José (“El Negro”) Ricardo** (1888–1937)

   1. Guitarist who worked with Carlos Gardel

   2. Demonstrated the importance of Afro-Argentine musicians in the tango tradition

   3. Used the guitar to accompany tango

vi. **Francisco Canaro** (1888–1964)

   1. Uruguay-born violinist and bandleader

   2. Led the group Quinteto Pirincho

   3. Promoted tango in Paris
c. Ballroom rumba
   i. Reached a height of popularity in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s
   ii. Succeeded by Cuban-based dance fads the mambo and the cha-cha-chá

d. Afro-Cuban rumba
   i. Part of an Afro-Atlantic tradition that manages tension within an aesthetic framework
   ii. Originally suppressed by Cuban authorities
   iii. First recorded in the 1940s
   iv. Emerged in the town of Matanzas, a center for African culture in Cuba
   v. Focuses on three single-headed drums
      1. Other important instruments include the palitos, claves, and shekere
   vi. Often involved three sections
      1. La Diana, an opening, improvised melodic passage
      2. El Canto, “the song,” in which the lead singer sings verses
      3. El Montuno, a final climactic section
   vii. Vocal parts alternate between solo singing and call-and-response patterns
   viii. Accompanies dances featuring sexual role-playing

e. Brazilian music
   i. Samba is a Brazilian dance style with African roots
   ii. Carioca (a samba style) emerged in Rio de Janeiro and was popularized by Carmen Miranda in the United States during the 1940s

f. “Enique Nigue”
   i. Performed by Grupo AfroCuba, one of the leading contemporary proponents of traditional rumba
   ii. The Diana section is brief
   iii. In the Canto the lead singer is joined in harmony
   iv. Quinto drum provides crisply articulated rhythmic interjections
   v. The Montuno section is initiated with a vocal “call” by the lead singer that is answered by the chorus

g. Mexican music
   i. Country and western music has been influenced by Mexican styles since the 1930s
   ii. Mexican immigrants in California played an important role in the development of rock music
      1. Exemplified by Ritchie Valens’s 1959 hit “La Bamba”
      2. Carlos Santana’s mixture of salsa and guitar-based rock in the 1960s
3. Linda Ronstadt’s recordings of traditional Mexican songs

iii. In Southwestern cities *conjunto acordeon* and *mariachi* musicians play at social events, festivals, parties, and marriages

h. “La Negra”
   i. Performed by Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, the best-known mariachi group in Mexico
   ii. By 1957 the group expanded to include a trumpet, four violins, two guitars, a *viheula*, a *guitarrón*, and a harp
   iii. The song’s text is in a poetic form brought to the Americas from Spain called the *copla*
   iv. Makes use of polyrhythms derived from Spanish music
   v. The guitar and viheula players use a technique called *rasqueado*, strumming their instruments vigorously to create a scraping sound