

Course Content - Introduction to Country Music

History of Country Music

- For almost 100 years now, Country music has been written and performed across the United States and the world. Based on simple concepts and stories about everyday life, Country music is written and performed by some of the best singer-songwriters.
- By 1949, the genre of “hillbilly music” changed to the current Country and Western genres.
- Bob Willis is often referred to as “The King of Western Swing” because of his work as one of the main forerunners of Cowboy and Western Swing music.
- Over the next few decades, Bluegrass and Folk music began to spread from the southern U.S. states to the rest of the country.
- Two of the most important pioneers of Country music were Jimmie Rogers and The Carter Family.
- Jimmie Rogers combined hillbilly, gospel, jazz, blues, pop, cowboy, and folk to make records that sold over a million copies.
- The Carter Family started recording songs in 1927. Over the following 17 years, they collectively released over 300 records! The Carters’ music truly represents America's southeastern stories and customs.
- Country musicians from all over the United States took the simple idea of “3 chords and the truth” and turned it into one of the most popular and stylistically diverse genres of music in the world.
- Today, the term “Country music” can refer to a vast number of genres and subgenres that originally derive from hillbilly music roots from the Southern states in the U.S.

Instruments and Styles

- Instruments that are prominent in Country Music include the Acoustic Guitar, Banjo, Fiddle (Violin), Mandolin, Dobro, Pedal Steel Guitar, and the Voice
- Styles of Country music include Classic Country (Jimmie Rogers), Bluegrass (Bill Monroe), Honky Tonk (Hank Williams), Nashville Sound (Patsy Cline), Outlaw Country (Johnny Cash & The Highwaymen), and Modern Country (Garth Brooks & Shania Twain)

Music in Life Lesson:

The Music in Life lesson is a moment to engage in active listening. The Music in Life lesson song for this course is "You Can't Roller Skate in a Buffalo Herd" by Roger Miller. Students are invited to think about how the music makes them feel, think and move. Music is an individual experience; active listening encourages students to choose their own musical path.

Featured Historical Musicians of Country: The Carter Family, Roy Acuff, Loretta Lynn, George Jones, Tammy Wynette, Johnny Cash

Featured Modern Country Stars from the 1980s to Present Day: Miranda Lambert, Garth Brooks, Dolly Parton, Brooks & Dunn, Emmy Lou Harris, Taylor Swift, Carrie Underwood, Luke Bryan