

A - New Course Proposal V. 7.2022 : Entry # 3603**DEAN Decision**

Approved

Date

10/08/2025

Is this course intracollegiate or intercollegiate?

Intercollegiate

SCHOOL EPC Decision

Approved

Date

11/14/2025

GEC Decision

Approved

Date

04/10/2026

APIRC Decision

Approved

Date

04/17/2026

Begin Form**Today's Date**

09/26/2025

Your Name:

Melody Emerson

Your Email:memerso1@highpoint.edu**Are you a Department Chair?**

No

Department Chair Name

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John Mims

Email address of your Department Chairjmims@highpoint.edu**By checking below, I certify that my department chair has seen and approved the new course that I am proposing.**

Yes

Please select the appropriate school overseeing this proposal:

Communication

When should this proposal take effect?

Fall 2026

Information for the Registrar**Choose the department designator from the list below.**

STC

Proposed Course Number?

3866

Is this course cross listed?

No

Does this course replace a current course?

No

What is the title of the new course?

Lyric, Media & Meaning

Write the catalog description of your proposed course:

This course interrogates how lyrics function as public messages that shape identity, culture, and community in contemporary media ecologies. Students apply communication theory and rhetorical analysis to understand how artists, platforms, and audiences co-create meaning; how technology (from recording to streaming/video) reframes interpretation; and how lyrical discourse intersects with social issues, power, and protest. The course supports departmental goals in strategic communication/media literacy by strengthening critical analysis, message evaluation, and applied presentation skills while engaging culturally relevant texts and audiences. Prerequisite: STC 2225. Four credits.

How many credit hours will this course be?

4

How will the course be graded?

Letter grade

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Not repeatable for credit

What is the offering cycle for this course?

Fall semester

Does your course have any prerequisites?

Yes

Please list all prerequisites this course requires:

STC 1225

Is this new course being proposed because of a new or revised major or minor proposal?

No

Gen Ed and Academic Programs**Is this course part of Gen Ed?**

- Yes

Does your course count in the general education core (one of the core classes that cannot be double-dipped in your major or minor)?

None of the above

Does your course count in any general education categories that can be double-dipped in the core or in a major/minor?

- Integrative Learning
- Diversity

Please provide a rationale for how your course is integrative. Please explain how you weave in different disciplines or fields of study. If your course is housed within one discipline, please explain how the epistemologies you integrate within the course are different from one another.

Though housed in Strategic Communication, this course is intentionally integrative across the humanities, social sciences and professional practice. Students read songs as texts using rhetorical criticism and semiotics (humanities), study how media technologies and platforms shape reception (media/STC), examine identity, culture, and social movements (sociology/cultural studies), and engage law/policy and ethics around censorship and platform governance. Basic empirical methods (thematic/content coding of audience comments) alongside visual analysis of music videos (film/visual studies) and applied public writing (journalism/PR) are also introduced.

Epistemologically, the course weaves:

- Interpretive/constructivist inquiry (close reading, discourse analysis of lyrics),
- Critical lenses (feminist, race/ethnicity, and queer critiques of power/representation),
- Empirical description (small-N coding of reception data; triangulation with texts and visuals) and
- Practice-based knowledge (op-eds, presentations, facilitation, and field observation).

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Assignments operationalize the integration: a Music Video Semiotic Decode integrates textual and visual rhetoric; a Comparative Analysis connects theory to genre/era; an Annotated Playlist curates with scholarly justification; quizzes/midterm/final require cross-field synthesis; and an optional Community/Field project uses ethnographic observation to link lyrical meaning with lived audience practice (which this component could allow the course to be experiential). By design, students learn to move fluently among different kinds of evidence and ways of knowing, explaining how meaning is co-constructed by text, image, technology, policy and publics.

Will this course be team-taught?

No

Does this course count towards a major or a minor?

Yes

Please list the Major / Minor and if it is Required or Elective

STC Major/Minor - elective; SME Major/Minor - elective

Is this course part of an academic program?

- This course does not fulfill academic program requirements

Does this course include any community engagement?

No

Does this course participate in the GoGlobal Program?

No

Information for Curriculum Review**Rationale and evidence for new course's consistency with departmental mission:**

This course interrogates how lyrics function as public messages that shape identity, culture, and community in contemporary media ecologies. Students apply communication theory and rhetorical analysis to understand how artists, platforms, and audiences co-create meaning; how technology (from recording to streaming/video) reframes interpretation; and how lyrical discourse intersects with social issues, power, and protest. The course supports departmental goals in strategic communication/media literacy by strengthening critical analysis, message evaluation and applied presentation skills while engaging culturally relevant texts and audiences.

List all student learning outcomes for this course.

Interpret song lyrics as communicative texts using rhetorical and semiotic methods.

Apply communication theories (ex. symbolic interactionism, framing, media effects) to explain how songs produce meaning, identity and community.

Evaluate the influence of media forms (recording, video, social platforms) on the reception of lyrics and artist/audience discourse.

Analyze how lyrical narratives engage issues of race, gender, sexuality, power, censorship and social movements.

Produce clear, evidence-based written and oral arguments about songs/albums using scholarly sources and data from media

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contexts.

Create a multimedia analysis that integrates lyrical rhetoric with video, platform and audience reception insights.

Reflect on ethical communication and civil discourse when engaging contested or sensitive content.

List any units or content areas that will be required for all sections of this course.

The Rhetoric of Music & Lyrics (communication models; rhetoric/semiotics)

Media, Technology & Platforms (recording → streaming; music video; social media reception)

Identity & Representation (race, gender, sexuality; self/other; looking-glass self)

Culture, Power & Protest (censorship; social commentary; movements)

List any assignments, tests, or other assessments that will be required for all sections of this course.

Lyric Rhetoric Papers: Two short close-reading essays that analyze figurative language, narrative, appeals, and implied audience.

Comparative Analysis: A deeper paper comparing how two songs address a common theme, highlighting rhetorical strategies and evidence-backed contrasts.

Op-Ed: A public-facing argument in AP style that takes a clear ethical stance on a lyric and supports it with sources.

Music Video Semiotic Decode, Presentation: A narrated slide/video connecting lyrical meaning to visual rhetoric (shots, scenes, symbols), with clear annotations.

Annotated Playlist: A 10-track, research-backed curation with brief annotations and an intro explaining the organizing theme.

List any readings or other materials that will be required for all sections of this course.

N/A (Keep flexible across instructors.) Each section must assign sufficient scholarly readings to support outcomes and include primary lyrical texts; see sample syllabus for a recommended list structure.

List any course policies that will be required for all sections of this course.

Professionalism. A The NQSC is committed to preparing students for workplace success by emphasizing professionalism and effective communication. Because we feel our responsibility strongly – and because it is essential to the career growth of our graduates – the NQSC takes professionalism seriously.

Professionalism in general is the expectation that you will abide by the standards expected of your chosen profession. This means that you will:

behave in an ethical manner;

familiarize yourself with, and abide by the regulations that govern this institution in general, and which govern your position as a student in the School of Communication;

will take responsibility for your own actions;

work to the highest level of competence;

treat all those with whom you interact in a collegial, respectful, and professional manner;

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familiarize yourself with and abide by the regulations that govern each course you take, as detailed in the course syllabus.

This includes but is not limited to things such as

arriving to class on time

attending mandatory components of the course,

reading assigned materials, o coming prepared for course activities,

submitting work in the format and medium designated by the instructor

A positive learning environment relies upon creating an atmosphere where diverse perspectives can be expressed, especially in a course that focuses on pressing and controversial social and political issues. Though you might be unfamiliar with or uncomfortable with some topics, ideas, and activities in class, each of you is encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and activities. My job is to help you navigate through difficult topics and challenging experiences— your job is to participate in the process. Honest and respectful dialogue is expected. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is encouraged. Hostility and disrespectful behavior are not acceptable.

Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our own views, we must reciprocate and listen to others when they speak, especially when we disagree with them. In the school of communication, our emphasis is on engaging in the mutual exploration of issues as presented in the course readings as scholars rather than in defending points of view we have formed outside the classroom.

Incidents of unprofessional behavior will be documented in Starfish and might affect your participation grade in class or in group assignments.

Professional Conduct and Communication. In the NQSC, we want you to be successful after college and work to prepare you for the norms of conduct that will be expected of you. Therefore, during your study within the NQSC, faculty will require you to adhere to the professional standards described below:

Email: This is one of the most common ways we communicate, so it is important that we follow proper etiquette with everyone we email. This means our messages should always include a clear subject line; should begin by addressing the target recipient appropriately, using correct titles; briefly explain the issue or ask the question; and be sure to start and end the email with a proper salutation (for example: Good morning & thank you). Also, unless this is someone you know well, avoid using slang (“totes”, “facepalm”, etc.) and text language (LMK, TBH, etc.), and always read your email to make sure you are using proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Forms of Address: The way we address others is important. In professional settings, including university, you want to make sure you use the correct form of address when speaking to or emailing someone. Generally, when communicating with someone who is in a different role than you, you should use the person’s specific title and last name (Dr., Professor, Mr., etc.). Unless invited to do so, it is not appropriate to address them by their first name or nickname. Your instructors will work very hard to call you by the name you prefer and to pronounce it correctly. If you don’t know how to address the person, it’s OK to ask.

Presentations Dress Code: You will likely be asked to give presentations in front of an audience. This includes in-class presentations in your various courses on campus. It is important that you demonstrate that you understand the norms of presenting in public and give thought to how you dress and present yourself. To do that, adhere to a business casual attire, unless you are instructed otherwise by your supervisors (professor, director, boss, etc.). Refer to your specific discipline’s dress code guidelines to make sure you are dressed appropriately for your presentation. (And if you have questions, see section below or visit

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career services for tips and suggestions).

Notes:

When you stand before our class to present, you should be dressed in business casual. This means no: short skirts or dresses (should be longer than your fingertips), sleeveless shirts, hats of any kind, flip flops, ripped jeans, leather/pleather pants, open-backed shirts, graphic t-shirts, sweats of any kind, athleisure clothing, or pajamas. Dark denim, button down shirts, sweaters, casual dresses, pants, slacks, are accepted. Jackets, blazers, suits, or ties are not required for business casual.

If we present to a client, to guests in class or make final presentations to the communication school faculty and guests, business professional is required. This is job interview-worthy clothing. Suits, dresses or skirts, dress shoes, dress slacks, ties qualify as business professional.

If you are not dressed appropriate for any presentation, you will not be allowed to present and will receive the appropriate point deduction.

Participation. Participation is distinct from attendance and is also an essential part of courses in the School of Communication. In-class discussions, participation in class activities, etc. will be factored into your participation grade. Engaging with the classroom space — including by helping to create an environment where all of us can learn, helping others on productions, and being an active and engaged audience for presentations — will also be factored into participation. Please note that certain class meetings might be required for you to earn points toward your participation grade. Missing these required class meetings might result in your being dropped from the class or your assignment/final project grade being reduced.

It is important to remember that we all have different styles of expression. If you have not been able to participate in a class discussion for any reason, including being remote, but want to demonstrate your active engagement, please send your instructor an email after class with a comment or an idea you had that you would have liked to share but were not able to during class.

Please note: It may be that illness or other unexpected situations will require you to be away for class in excess of the number of allowed absences, necessitating that we consider the possibility of withdrawal.

Written Work and Deadlines. Do not confuse “due dates” with “deadlines”. Assignments are due the moment they are assigned. Deadlines are the very last moment you can hand something in for full credit. If you wait until the deadline (“due date” according to Blackboard), and have any issues at all- technical, including- that is your fault for waiting until the last moment.

Unless otherwise announced, all assignments are due at the time directed in your syllabus and in the format required for that assignment. Work turned in late but within 24 hours of the deadline will receive an automatic one-letter grade penalty (10% of the possible points); work turned in between 24 and 48 hours will receive a two-letter grade deduction; work turned in between 48 and 72 hours will receive a three-letter grade penalty. After 72 hours, assignments will no longer be accepted for credit and you will receive zero (0) points for that assignment.

Files should be named appropriately using your last name, first name, class name & section, and assignment title (i.e. EmersonMelody_STC4800_01_LyricPresentation).

It is your responsibility to confirm that your assignment has been uploaded to Blackboard. If you are having a problem uploading your files, contact HPU's technical support. Emailed copies of assignments will not be accepted unless the instructor has preauthorized this method of communication. Check that all submitted files display properly. Files submitted that are corrupted or in the wrong format will not be accepted. Please submit word documents or PDFs, unless otherwise specified. I will not accept links to Google Docs.

Just as in the work world where attaching the wrong file can get you fired, you should always double-check your submissions to

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Blackboard and your attachments prior to submitting.

It is YOUR responsibility to check for missing assignments. Any assertions that a submission was made, contrary to the professor's visible or digital evidence ("I thought I handed it in", etc.) must be accompanied by PROOF (receipt of submission attempt), as the professor reserves the right to contact I/T to see when a submission was attempted or made. Any dishonesty will be treated as an honor violation.

Assignment deadlines can only be modified for the following reasons:

University-sanctioned events (documentation required)

Illness or injury (documentation needed by student health & by healthcare provider)

Religious absences (prior notification required—within the first two weeks of class so that presentation schedules and group projects can be aligned)

Death in the immediate family (documentation required)

If you know you will miss class for a university-sanctioned event or religious observance reason, you must notify me before missing class. In circumstances of health or loss of a loved one, you must talk to the instructor at the latest on the first day you are back in class. Documentation is required from the office of academic services or student life before or at the time of absence (not after). You are also expected to make every effort to notify the instructor prior to the date of the assignment.

Requests to reschedule a final exam can only be approved by the Dean of the School of Communication.

Classroom use of electronic media. Cell phone use during communication classes is prohibited. This includes voice, text, video, data or any other current or future transmission technology. Please silence your phones and put them out of view prior to the start of class.

Any audio, video, or photographic recording in the class, including the instructor's lecture/discussion, or other classroom activity, is strictly prohibited unless authorized by OARS. This includes the unauthorized recording and screenshots of online classes and discussions and online breakout rooms. Requests that are not related to a learning accommodation require the permission of the instructor and other students in the class.

Inappropriate use of a laptop, desktop or other electronic computing device during class will result in you being asked to leave the room. An absence will be recorded for that day's class and you will not be readmitted to class until you have met individually with the Dean of the School of Communication.

Please be respectful of each other, the instructor, and any guest presenters while in class. We are all here to learn.

Food/Drink. You may bring food and beverages to class, but please avoid anything messy, loud, or otherwise distracting. Please appropriately discard all trash before leaving the classroom.

Writing Style. This course requires you to write in the latest version of the Associated Press (AP) Style Manual for print and broadcast. Grammar and spelling are paramount when it comes to effective communication. I will enforce a rigorous grading standard when it comes to technically correct writing.

Attendance Policy. Attendance plays an essential role in learning and is important not only for your learning but also for our ability to build a community together and maintain a sense of connection and commitment to one another (especially important as we emerge from a pandemic). Your presence in class matters.

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We recognize that there are unavoidable circumstances that sometimes make it impossible for you to attend class, so each instructor has indicated the number of class sessions that can be missed before you are dropped from the class or your participation grade is reduced. We trust that you will use your absences wisely, so please note, there are no “excused” absences, only absences.

Plan your absences. Unless otherwise noted, for classes meeting one day a week, the student will be allowed (2) absences. For classes meeting two times a week, each student will be allowed four (4) absences. For classes meeting three times a week, each student will be allowed six (6) absences. A subsequent absence means you will have missed 20% of the class meetings, and may result in the student being dropped from the class. In addition, if you miss 4 classes before Fall Break, you may be dropped. Please keep track of your absences. If you will not be in class for any reason, it is your responsibility to inform your instructor in advance via email.

In addition, there is an arrive late/leave early policy. Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Each time you are more than 10 minutes late, you will be counted as absent. It is your responsibility to get the absence changed to tardy. Three tardies = one absence.

Also, if you leave early without discussing it with me prior to the class meeting, you will be marked as absent.

Your participation grade will be affected if you are not in class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from your classmates and find out what you missed.

An absence will be excused in three situations ONLY: (1) personal or immediate family health conditions, certified by a physician or counselor AND approved by the professor; (2) personal or immediate family legal conditions warranting your attention during class time, certified by an attorney or judge AND approved by the professor; or (3) university business certified by a university official AND approved by the professor.

Attendance and Participation Overview. There are no excused or unexcused absences, only absences. If you miss four classes, you will receive an attendance flag in Starfish. If you miss more than six classes, I will drop you from the course.

Students are expected to arrive to class on time. It is your responsibility to keep track of absences and let the professor know of any discrepancy on Blackboard. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late, I will count you as absent. If you leave early without discussing with me prior to the class meeting, I will count you as absent.

In-class participation is mandatory. While Blackboard may only be labeled “Attendance,” I grade in-class participation.

You don't have to be a prolific public speaker, but I expect students to speak up and further our discussion when and where appropriate. You cannot receive full credit in this section if you don't add anything to our general dialogue. You will also lose points if you violate our class's Technology Policy.

Starfish. This course is part of a HPU initiative that utilizes Starfish Connect, a communication tool for students and faculty. Through Starfish, instructors, coaches, and advisors provide feedback to you about course progress by emailing you about your academic performance. The emails are designed to be helpful by identifying strategies that increase your success in courses. Be sure to open any emails you receive and follow the recommendations.

Your instructor, coach, or advisor may also recommend that you contact a specific campus resource, such as the Learning Lab or Counseling Center. If an instructor makes a referral, you may also be contacted directly by this campus service as a follow--up.

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Starfish also allows you to schedule appointments with various offices and individuals across campus and request help on a variety of topics.

Online Communication & Technology Policies. You are responsible for checking your own High Point University email account and ensure the account is up to date. Please make this a priority.

We will also use Blackboard in this course for assignment submission and other class-related materials. Please be sure you can log in to Blackboard. If you have a question about a deadline or assignment instructions, you should check Blackboard and the syllabus first.

It is your responsibility to resolve any technical issues that interfere with your successful participation in and completion of this course. The IT Help Desk is your source. <http://www.highpoint.edu/i>

If you have trouble with Blackboard, your first call is to IT. The instructor is not able to troubleshoot on their and excuses for late assignments that relate to IT will not be accepted.

Online Access/Remote Learning. I do not offer online access to this class unless you receive temporary accommodations from the university requiring you to be online. (Remote learning is only available for students with university approval.) This is only provided in extreme instances; such accommodations are no longer given for COVID. If you have an illness (including COVID), the current recommendation from the CDC is to stay home until you are without fever for 24 hours. If you are too sick to attend class, I would recommend taking time to rest and recover. Again, there are no excused or unexcused absences in this class, so only miss class when necessary.

For regular meetings of online or remote synchronous class meetings, faculty may ask (and sometimes require) students to turn on their webcams. Students attending remotely should respond regularly to questions, participate in class discussion, and otherwise engage in class activities via audio.

Faculty may record synchronous online class sessions. These recordings might be shared with students but will only be viewed by the faculty member and students enrolled in the class during the semester in which they are enrolled.

Faculty may ask students to activate their webcams during online proctored tests and exams.

Online Test Taking. Honorlock may be used to proctor your exams this semester. You do not need to create an account, download software, or schedule an appointment in advance. Honorlock is available 24/7 and all that is needed is a computer, a working webcam, and a stable Internet connection. To get started, you will need Google Chrome and the Honorlock Chrome Extension. You can download the extension at www.honorlock.com/extension/install.

When you are ready to test, log into Blackboard, go to your course, and click on your exam. Clicking "Launch Proctoring" will begin the Honorlock authentication process, where you will take a picture of yourself, show your ID, and complete a scan of your room. Honorlock will be recording your exam session by webcam, as well as recording your screen. Honorlock also has an integrity algorithm that can detect search-engine use, so please do not attempt to search for answers, even if it's on a secondary device. Good luck! Honorlock support is available 24/7/365. If you encounter any issues, you may contact them via live chat.

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Working in Groups. Strategic communication professionals frequently work in groups/teams, therefore, learning and working effectively as part of a team or group is an extremely important skill, and one you will use and refine throughout your working life. You will be assigned a group early in the semester. Your group is expected to work together and each member must take part in any and all group assignments.

The time to deal with group issues is in the present and the instructor should not be your immediate go-to when problems within the group arise.

Groups will be expected to work together to develop ground rules and roles. The goal is for your group to function as a team. Your team will set up and sign a group contract.

If the group determines an individual is in violation of the contract, the team will hold an in-person meeting where they can discuss the individual's behavior/contribution. Address your concerns directly and politely. Explain what you take issue with and how you would like to move forward. Work with the group member to decide a course of action.

If the problem persists, the group must send a memo (via email – not text!) specifying how the individual continues to fail to meet the terms of his/her group's contract and are failing to meet the expectations agreed upon in your in-person meeting. If a meeting with me is desired, I will request to see the email correspondence that has been sent. Some form of warning must be given to the group member(s) stating you are unhappy/unsatisfied with their performance if you plan to rate them poorly in the group evaluation, described below. In short, you can't "throw someone under the bus" without them knowing you are upset.

Unless the student can prove serious extenuating circumstances causing them to violate the contract, the individual will be fired from the team and must undertake the assignments alone or drop the course.

Strategic communication professionals frequently work in groups/teams. I will assign you a team early in the semester. Your team will work together on each component of this semester's development of a press kit and other related materials.

Final Exams. All students are expected to attend final exams. Do not schedule events that will require you to miss final exams or expect a faculty member to move a final to accommodate your plans. This includes attending vacations arranged by parents (do not get plane tickets that depart before your last final exam); do not buy tickets to concerts that occur during final exams; do not plan to get married during final exams; do not schedule internship or job interviews during final exams, and do not expect to have car troubles during final exams. The only person who can allow you to reschedule your final exams is the Dean and she will only for a medical emergency or the death of an immediate family member.

Course Evaluations. You are expected to complete course evaluations in the week preceding final exams. These evaluations, which are delivered online, are an important part of High Point University's assessment program, so your cooperation in completing them is greatly appreciated. As the end of the semester or academic session draws near, you will receive information from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment about how to complete the online evaluations.

If you would like to specify how requirements for contact hours must be met for all sections of this course, please indicate below. (e.g., if any experiential learning activities will replace seat time)

N/A

Sample Syllabus

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- [Emerson-STC-3881.pdf](#)