

Haden Capps
Songwriting Reflection

Songwriting is something that brings out the inner creativity in some people, the story teller in others, and the pain from the rest. This semester taking the songwriting course has brought out all sides and forms from all of the class including myself. I chose to write songs that were funny as well as songs that have helped me get through some the lower points in my personal life. There are many aspects of songwriting that apply not only to my major field of study, but to every field of study and even personal life in general. The class not only taught the correct form of writing songs, it opened up people to express themselves through a medium that the entire world can relate to, music.

Songwriting directly correlates to what I want to do with my career, which is teaching music, perform, and compose music. One of the lessons I would pull from this class to use in my music teaching would be to really focus on how a piece flows. In the class we had to create a song that flowed well on its own, and in turn create a memorable song. I would explain to a student that their piece they are playing, or writing, has to flow well on its own before anything else can be added. It is a great teaching tool that really helped me in my own writing. In performance, the songwriting class has helped me overcome some of my performance anxiety. The largest part of performing is enjoying yourself and losing yourself in your music, or whatever medium you perform in. Being able to perform something I had to write has left me with more creative freedom as well as a new approach to my own musical performance. I learned that just because a piece is written a certain way, that doesn't have to be the way it is performed. The best part is that through this class, I am enjoying performing so much more and my nerves are not getting the best of me. The final aspect of my major that this class has helped sharpen is

composing. This class took many non-music majors and showed them the power of writing out their own music and showed music majors how important it is to write everything down. I used to approach writing with an idea in mind but I could never elaborate because it was a small idea. The songwriting approach to that is to set out your lyrics, or your ideas, first and solidify those, then start adding more and more music to it until you have the complete product. This opens up so many different opportunities to complete compositions that I was stuck on.

Even though songwriting has a strong connection to music and music-major oriented studies, there are many core related skills that also came out of this class. Songwriting directly correlates with English. Many songs are grammatically incorrect and it is difficult to understand them, but when you're forced to make sure your grammar is correct as well as spelling and punctuation, a songwriting course can easily become an English class. We studied different lyrics just to see how they were written and also pointed out the grammatical mistakes. This is very helpful to students who aren't able to see certain English mistakes. Another core class that songwriting directly correlates with is History. Many say that if you do not learn from the past you are doomed to repeat it. In songwriting, we learned repetition isn't always a bad thing. In class, we took a look at some of the first lyrical songs written as well as some more up to date songs. We studied how styles have changed as well as how the people changed with the music changing. There is a lot to be said on how music has influenced the past generations.

Many things learned in songwriting can be applied to everyday life and living. The biggest thing we learned would probably be deadlines are sure things and you want to be prepared before you do anything. Many times this semester, some of the class was not prepared for what we were going to do that day, and they felt very bad especially when it wasted time. It is a problem that everyone will face at some point and I hope to learn from the times I was

unprepared for class as well. Another big thing I learned personally is that you have to let your superior know if you are going to be missing any class or work. Communication is key, if you don't let someone know that you have a commitment or a school related absence, then you have failed. Many people lose their jobs because they make plans and do not inform their superiors and intern are scheduled to work and then do not show up. Then they are in trouble. This class forced me to talk to my professor and let them know about things I had to do and made sure that they were reminded of the things I had to do. That is a great skill to keep on hand, communicating.

All of these learning experiences are connected. Everything I have learned this semester that correlates to my major, core classes, and life, are all connected to one thing, songwriting. This class has helped me learn to apply all of these skills to every part of my life. During the class I wasn't thinking how all of these things I am learning correlate to every part of my life, I was thinking, holy cow I have to write this song by next week. But now that I can reflect on the semester, I see how these things can be applied in my everyday life and how all of the things I learned are connected.

A big part of understanding the songwriting process was to understand the history of the song written at different times. When we studied these songs, we looked at what was happening historically during those times to bring about why the song was written. We looked into songs of today and tried to determine what made these songs relevant and what message are they portraying. Many songs are a political statement against a government or governments. So we examined why these governments were being written about. The class helped me get back into watching global news and studying how the world is going about its day. It has also shown me that a single song can unite an entire country when the time for it is needed.

In closing, this class has been a lot of fun. There are so many things that I learned that I didn't realize applied to so many different parts of life. Many people don't realize the power of the songwriter, they can make you laugh, cry, or even just sympathize with an experience. This class has produced many new writers as well as introduced people to anew calling in their life. It was a real experience.