

Online creative writing project: Finding your voice

The blog post (available March 26-April 15) introduces you to how a group of musicians used music to show their place in the world: Scott Joplin, Duke Ellington, and William Grant Still. It also will introduce you to musicians with more-established classical careers who used the same musical styles that their less acknowledged peers developed: George Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein. You'll use their stories as a point of inspiration to launch your own creative writing in the form of a poem/song, dialogue, or journal entry.

You can use the three weeks that the blog post is live to bounce ideas off each other, ask questions, and develop your writing—just as you would any other online discussion in Mu 101. You are not required to do so, but, as always, particularly insightful comments or exchanges will earn extra credit (up to +10 on this assignment).

Project Timeline and Due Dates (all via email)

<i>Task</i>	<i>Section H2 (Tuesdays)</i>	<i>Sections H3 and L3 (Wednesdays)</i>
<i>Blog post to introduce a group of musicians and their concerns</i>	March 26-April 15	March 26-April 15
<i>First draft due (optional)</i>	April 3, by 11:59pm via email	April 4, by 11:59pm via email
<i>First draft returned with instructor via email</i>	By April 10	By April 11
<i>Final draft due via email</i>	April 17 by 11:59pm	April 18 by 11:59pm

Late assignments

Final drafts will lose 1 point per day, up to 14 days. After that, late assignments will not be accepted. Assignments are marked as “submitted” the day that I receive them according to the date stamp on an email. If a final draft is submitted via email but does not follow the submission requirements below, I will not accept it and it is still late until it is properly submitted.

Formatting and submission

Because this is a creative writing prompt, you may craft your piece in any manner you choose, and there are more acceptable formats for submission. Bear in mind that your final product must be something that is visual and that can be attached to an email.

- Acceptable file formats: .doc, .docx, .pdf, .jpg, .png, .tiff. I will not accept a file that is a Google Drive, OneDrive, or other cloud service link. You must attach your essay directly to the email you send to me.
- Naming files for email submission: LastName, FirstInitial. – Assignment – draft version (example: Jones, A. – Creative Writing – final draft)

Beyond that, you are free to choose your own fonts, font sizes, colors, margins, images—anything that captures the spirit of your writing. This is, after all, a *creative* prompt!

A revision reflection is not required for this assignment, although you may include one if you choose.

Prompt

After reading the blog post, create a piece of creative writing that responds to one of the three prompts below:

1. Using Langston Hughes's poem "I Too" as a guide, write a poem or write words to a new, original song that captures how you feel in the world.
2. Create a dialogue between a famous, popular musician and a less well-known musician whose musical style the famous musician has borrowed (and been celebrated for). Your dialogue can be between real or imaginary musicians, and you may be one of the characters in your dialogue if you choose.
3. Write a journal or diary entry of a musician (real, imaginary, or yourself) who is struggling to find their place in the world or to be acknowledged or appreciated for the music they make.

Your grade will be determined by the vividness of your writing, your attention to evocative detail, the inventiveness of your approach and ideas, and your demonstrated awareness of musical realities and history based on our course content.

Creative Writing Project – Rubric

Student: _____ Section: _____

Title	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
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A strong/good title is engaging, accurate, avoids clichés, and is not too long.

Use of technical vocabulary and musical awareness	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
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A strong/good writing uses discipline-specific vocabulary appropriately and accurately. Any musical examples are accurately described.

Written skill	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
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A strong/good piece generally contains grammar, punctuation, and spelling that are appropriate to its context. A strong/good piece demonstrates appropriate and effective word choice and style that capture the experience being conveyed. A strong/good piece presents a flow of ideas that feels natural and makes sense (e.g., order of ideas, use of paragraph, and transitions that are appropriate to the style).

Ideas and topic	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/20
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A strong/good piece tells an interesting story; a strong/good piece presents ideas that are profound or insightful rather than cliché or superficial.

Prompt requirements and author's voice	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/20
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A strong/good piece fulfills and goes beyond the minimum requirements of the prompt. A weak/OK piece fulfills the minimum requirements of the prompt. A strong/good piece conveys the author's understanding of a unique perspective and identity by capturing the author's personal voice. A weak/OK essay has an inconsistent voice or is borrowed from another author.

Formatting	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
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A strong piece presents its material on the page in a manner that is surprising, captivating, and appropriate to the story being told; it enhances the experience of the words rather than detracting.

Total points _____/80

Letter grade: _____