

# UCUG2603 (L01) - East Asian Popular Music

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[Course Title] **East Asian Popular Music**

[Course Code] **UCUG 2603**

[No. of Credits] **3 credits**

[Any pre-/co-requisites] **N.A.**

**Course Instructor:** Sean Shaoren REN (seanshaorenr@hkust-gz.edu.cn)

**Course Coordinator:** Noah Bo FANG (bofang@hkust-gz.edu.cn)

**Office Hours:** E2 Room 608, Monday 8am – 9am; 4:30pm – 5:30pm

Appointment should be made through the Instructor-Student Appointment Making System (<https://klms.hkust-gz.edu.cn/>)

**Teaching Assistant:** Handi YIN (hyin335@connect.hkust-gz.edu.cn)

## Course Description

UCUG 2603: East Asian Popular Music is an immersive journey into the dynamic and diverse world of popular music in East Asia, with a focus on Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. This course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the historical, cultural, and social contexts that have shaped the development of popular music in these countries and regions. The course is structured to combine theoretical lectures with practical workshops, performance sessions, and interactive discussions. Each week, students will engage with a specific theme, exploring the unique music genres and performance styles of the matching country or region.

## Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1 Knowledge Acquisition: articulate in both written and verbal form, the distinct features, performance contexts and pertinent sociocultural issues of the popular music genres studied in class;
- 2 Artistic Sensitivity and Aesthetic Appreciation: explain basic musical, ethnomusicological and critical theory terms and concepts, and the background information of each studied popular music culture;
- 3 Analytical Skills: identify aurally the characteristics of each of the popular music genres studied and discussed;

4 Cultural Understanding: critically analyse the relationship between music and culture.

### Course Weekly Topics and ILOs

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>   | <b>ILOs</b>         |
|-------------|-------------|--|---------------------|
| 1           | 26/1        | Introduction to East Asian Popular Music   | ILO1, ILO2          |
| 2           | 2/2         | Popular Music in China, part 1: Mainland China (1920 – 1949)                             | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 3           | 9/2         | Popular Music in China, part 2: Hong Kong and Taiwan (1950 – 1970)                       | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 4           | 28/2        | Popular Music in China, part 3: Mainland China (1950 - 1970) and Hong Kong Cantopop      | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 5           | 2/3         | Popular Music in China, part 4: Taiwan Campus Folk Song and Mainland China (After 1980)  | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 6           | 9/3         | Special Topic 1: Rock Music in Mainland China + Mid-term Individual Presentation Group 1 | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 7           | 16/3        | Mid-term Individual Presentation Group 2   | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 8           | 23/3        | Special Topic 3: Voice in Popular Music + Mid-term Individual Presentation Group 3       | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 9           | 30/3        | Miscellaneous Japanese Popular Music   | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 10          | 13/4        | Special Topic 4: Ryuichi Sakamoto  | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 11          | 20/4        | Special Topic 5: Music Language of Popular Music   | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 12          | 27/4        | K-Pop & Korean Wave + Quiz   | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |
| 13          | 11/5        | Final Project Presentation   | ILO1,ILO2,ILO3,ILO4 |

## Teaching Methods

- Pop Music and Society Themed Teaching: Each week focuses on a specific region's popular music, integrating historical, cultural and social contexts.
- Music Creation and Performance Themed Teaching: In-depth exploration of music theory, production, and performance practices.
- Expert Lectures and Interactive Workshops: Providing insights into the music industry, and interactive workshops offer hands-on experience.
- Projects: Students initiate their own projects to actively learn the knowledge and performative experiences.

## Assessments:

| Assessment Task           | Contribution to Overall Course grade (%) | Due date  |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|
| Participation             | 15%                                      | 11/5/2026 |
| Quiz                      | 15%                                      | 27/4/2026 |
|                           |  | 9/3/2026  |
| Mid-term presentation 20% |  | 16/3/2026 |
|                           |  | 23/3/2026 |
| Album/Concert Review      | 20%                                      | 27/4/2026 |
| Final Project             | 30%                                      | 11/5/2026 |

## Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

| Assessed Task | Mapped ILOs      | Explanation  |
|---------------|------------------|--|
| Quiz          | ILO1, ILO2, ILO3 | This task assesses students' ability to apply the knowledge of certain musical products (ILO 1), develop their artistic sensibilities (ILO 2) and analytical skills. (ILO 3) |

|                       |                        |   |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---|
| Album/Concert Review  | ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4 | This task assesses students' ability to apply the knowledge of certain musical products (ILO 1), develop their artistic sensibilities (ILO 2), analytical skills (ILO 3), and cultural awareness (ILO 4)  |
| In-class Presentation | ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4 | This task assesses students' ability to apply the knowledge of certain musical products (ILO 1), develop their artistic sensibilities (ILO 2), analytical skills (ILO 3), cultural awareness (ILO 4), and attempt to cultivate their creativeness through performance practice and multiple ways of artistic presentation (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4)            |
| Final Project         | ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4 | This task assesses students' ability to apply the knowledge of certain musical products (ILO 1), develop their artistic sensibilities (ILO 2), analytical skills (ILO 3), cultural awareness (ILO 4), and attempt to cultivate their creativeness through research, performance practice, and multiple ways of artistic presentation (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4) |

### **Grading Rubrics**

[Detailed rubrics for each assignment will be provided. These rubrics clearly outline the criteria used for evaluation. Students can refer to these rubrics to understand how their work will be assessed.]

### **Final Grade Descriptors:**

| <b>Grades</b> | <b>Short Description</b> | <b>Elaboration on subject grading description</b>   |
|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| A             | Excellent Performance    | Demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of subject matter, expertise in both musical sensibility and cultural understanding, and significant creativity in thinking. Exhibits a high capacity for scholarship and collaboration, going beyond core requirements to achieve learning goals. |
| B             | Good Performance         | Shows good knowledge and understanding of the main subject matter, competence in both musical sensibility and cultural understanding, and the ability to analyse and evaluate issues. Displays high motivation to learn and the ability to work effectively with others.              |
| C             | Satisfactory Performance | Possesses adequate knowledge of core subject matter, competence in both musical sensibility and cultural understanding, and some capacity for analysis and critical thinking. Shows persistence and effort to achieve broadly defined learning goals.                                 |
| D             | Marginal Pass            | Has threshold knowledge of core subject matter, potential to achieve both musical sensibility and cultural understanding, and the ability to make basic judgments. Benefits from the course and has the potential to develop in the discipline.                                       |

|   |      |   |
|---|------|---|
| F | Fail | Demonstrates insufficient understanding of the subject matter and lacks the necessary musical sensibility and cultural understanding. Shows limited ability to think critically or analytically and exhibits minimal effort towards achieving learning goals. Does not meet the threshold requirements for attendance, workshop practice or written essays. |
|---|------|---|

### **Class Attendance Policy**

After the add/drop period (first two weeks of the semester), TA will strictly record the attendance for each session. The instructor will remind the whole class to report to TA in the breaks. Each student will be automatically granted a certain score of participation. Each time of skipping the class without reasonable excuses will be deducted 1

### **Course AI Policy**

In our commitment to fostering innovation and academic excellence, students are encouraged to leverage AI tools to enhance their learning and research capabilities, provided that all uses are transparently cited and align with principles of academic integrity. It is imperative that students understand and articulate the distinction between AI-assisted work and their original contributions, ensuring that the use of AI tools enriches their educational experience without compromising the integrity of their academic achievements.

Declaration: I did/I did not knowingly use generative AI tools in this assignment task. Acknowledgment (If you did use any generative AI tools, please complete the following acknowledgment) • In this assignment, I followed the University's guidelines for students on academic integrity. No content generated by generative AI tools has been presented as my own work. I take responsibility for the work submitted. • Process: In my assignment preparation, I acknowledge the use of (generative AI tools and link to webpages of the tools) to (how they were used - e.g. to generate ideas, to paraphrase elements of texts, lines of argument, to find pieces of evidence, to create conceptual maps, to help illustrate key concepts, etc.) for (why they were used - e.g. to help you get the writing started, to stimulate thinking, to clarify language and accuracy, to translate text, etc). • Record: I have kept a record of my use of AI tools, including the specific tool(s) used, the prompts submitted, and responses generated. I understand that my teachers may ask me to provide this information.

### **Communication and Feedback**

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will include [specific details, e.g., strengths, areas for

improvement]. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

## Resubmission Policy

Students may resubmit assignments if they do not meet the required standards on the first submission. Resubmissions must be completed within 7 days of receiving feedback, unless otherwise specified by the instructor. The resubmitted work should address all the feedback provided to improve the assignment. The highest grade that can be achieved on a resubmitted assignment is a "B" (or 80%). Only one resubmission per assignment is allowed.



## Required Materials




Reading assignments will come from various sources and will be provided on Canvas.

## Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST (GZ)'s Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to Regulations for Academic Integrity and Student Conduct for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

## Course Summary:

| Date             | Details  | Due            |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| Mon Mar 23, 2026 |  <a href="https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2696/assignments/20367">Mid-term Individual Presentation (20%) (https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2696/assignments/20367)</a> | due by 11:59pm |
| Mon Apr 27, 2026 |  <a href="https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2696/assignments/20366">Quiz (15%) (https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2696/assignments/20366)</a>                             | due by 11:59pm |

| Date             | Details  | Due            |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| Mon May 11, 2026 |  <a href="https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2696/assignments/20371">Album/Concert Review (20%)<br/>(https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2696/assignments/20371)</a>           | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <a href="https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2696/assignments/20365">Attendance &amp; Participation<br/>(15%) (https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2696/assignments/20365)</a> | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <a href="https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2696/assignments/20370">Final Group Presentation<br/>(30%) (https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2696/assignments/20370)</a>       | due by 11:59pm |