

## Writing for Analysis 2 MUS 211 (Attas)

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### **Deadlines & Format:**

*By class time on Tuesday Oct.20:*

post a thesis statement and bullet points of musical examples to support the thesis on Eli Review

*By class time on Thursday Oct.22:*

complete peer review of assigned students on Eli

*By 9:30am on Friday Oct.23:*

email a first draft of WA2 to Dr. Attas

*Week of Oct.26:*

Meet individually with Writing Center Fellow to discuss revisions to your draft.

*By class time on Tuesday Nov.3:*

Submit hard copy of WA2 to Dr. Attas.

This assignment should be 300-350 words in length (include a word count).

### **The Question: *What do you find most interesting about the organization of phrases in a pop song, and why?***

#### **How to answer the question:**

First, choose a pop song. Send the song to me as an MP3 (my preferred option), or send me a YouTube link.

Then, analyze your song's phrase structure. To do this, you might need to do some or all of the following:

- **figure out the chords** in your piece, by listening while playing on an instrument (piano, guitar); and by comparing with online chord charts (e.g. [www.ultimate-guitar.com](http://www.ultimate-guitar.com), [www.guitaretab.com](http://www.guitaretab.com), [www.guitartabs.cc](http://www.guitartabs.cc))—but beware these are not always accurate
- **come up with a rough transcription of the melody**, including a time signature
- **listen for closure**: are there resting places? what creates them? are some more final than others?
- **listen for repetition**: are there motives that are repeated or varied? melody that repeats? chord progressions that repeat?
- **compare with what you know about form already**: are there structures that are reminiscent of Classical phrase structures? are there structures that are similar to ones we discussed in class for pop music? is there some unique structure in your piece that is used over and over?

Next, come up with a thesis statement: a single sentence that encapsulates what you think is interesting about ***your song's*** phrase organization. Once you have that, make a list of musical examples that support your thesis.

## Grade Rubric

### Minimum threshold:

*If the paper does not meet this minimum standard, a failing grade will be assigned.*

- Length (must be within the upper and lower limits):
  - WA1: 200-250 words
  - WA2: 300-350 words
  - WA3: 450-500 words
- Formatting: 1.5 spacing, title, page numbers
- Citations: Cite specific bar numbers in the score or track timings on a recording, and identify musical events appropriately.
- Comprehensible (if I can't understand it, I can't grade it)
- Complete draft and final version submitted (no draft submission means your final grade will be reduced by one letter)

### Average threshold:

*If the answers to all of these questions is "yes," a grade of C or better is possible.*

*If the answers to one or more questions is "no," a lower grade will be assigned.*

- Does the paper have a thesis statement that clearly addresses the prompt?
- Does the paper substantiate claims through use of evidence, with at least three specific references to the assigned music?
- Are the ideas organized logically, including an introduction and conclusion and topic sentences for most paragraphs?
- Is the writing mostly polished (very few spelling/grammar/word choice issues) and in a scholarly style?
- Does the paper use music theory terms discussed in class?
- Does the final version demonstrates substantial revision from the draft version?

### Going Above and Beyond

*If all of the above criteria are met, papers can qualify for a B or A grade by meeting some of the following criteria.*

- Does the paper have a clear and original thesis statement?
- Is the argument clearly supported by compelling evidence described in detail, with many specific analytical references to the assigned music?
- Does the paper have an argument that flows logically from start to finish?
- Does the paper use clear, concise, powerful, and complex language?
- Does the paper integrate concepts and terminology from class into a detailed musical discussion?