

The Blues Project 2017: Mississippi Blues Assignment Sheet

Throughout February (Black History Month), we'll be doing a study of African-American culture and music, something I call "The Blues Project." Every year, we focus on a slightly different theme within the blues, and this year our theme is "Mississippi Delta Blues." The Mississippi Delta is holy ground when it comes to American music. Blues, Country, and Rock and Roll, can all trace their roots to the fertile land in the shared flood plain between the Yazoo and Mississippi Rivers in the Northwest corner of the state of Mississippi. It has been described as "the Most Southern Place on Earth" because in many ways it represents the stereotypical American South with its extreme income inequality, clear racial divisions, and traditional southern culture. This is the land where the blues began, and by digging into the land, its people, and its sounds, we can learn a lot about why African-Americans from this small piece of Mississippi earth would change the face of American music.

For 40 points, your job is to write a one-page report on a specific topic relating to the blues. Each student will be assigned a different topic with a specific due date. Check the blues project website (<http://thebluesproject.weebly.com/2017---mississippi-delta-blues.html>) to learn more about your topic and then listen to the song that goes along with it. Be sure to address the prompt for your topic and answer any questions asked. Refer to the classroom calendar to see when your topic is due. Remember, the report should be about the topic, not the song. On the day your report is due, you will read it aloud at the beginning of class before turning it in. For an additional 20 points of extra credit (maximum), you may also bring in an original full-color piece of artwork (drawing/painting/sculpture) relating to your report as a visual aid. You will be penalized 10 points for each day your report is late. These reports should be typed, double-spaced, using 1 inch margins, and 12 point, Arial font. A bibliography in MLA format must be included (remember to refer to your assignment notebook or the Purdue OWL website on how to format your sources).

I will pick the best of these reports to be displayed and/or read aloud at the Blues Project concert finale on March 18th, in front of hundreds of people. If your report is chosen to be read or displayed at the concert finale, you will receive 20 bonus points. With that in mind, please keep them approximately one page in length and include any interesting facts that you feel an audience would enjoy hearing. Please use your own words, and if you want to quote an outside source, remember cite the source appropriately in your report.