

Better Note Taking, Better Grades: A Student Workshop

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Writing Across the Curriculum Fellows
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Intro Activity

- Take notes as you normally would

David Blight, Yale University, *The Civil War and Reconstruction Era, 1845-1877*, Lecture 2 - Southern Society: Slavery, King Cotton, and Antebellum America's "Peculiar" Region

Follow-up Discussion

- Together with your neighbor, discuss how you took notes. Describe your method/style.
 - Identify the most important parts of the lecture.
 - How do you signify on your notes that these are important?
 - How many of you take notes during most of your lectures?
 - How helpful is note taking to your success in a class?
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Thoughts on Note Taking

- Note taking is a cognitive skill
 - Not dictation
 - “Encoding” vs. “external storage”
- Note taking is a form of writing
 - Requires practice
 - Initial effort = improved results
- WAC Fellows: brief personal experiences

Science demonstrates the power of note taking

- Neuroscience suggests handwriting – in comparison to typing - *stimulates brain activity, enhances learning* (James & Englehardt 2012)
- Notes by hand vs. laptop note taking: handwritten notes *improved conceptual understanding over long-term* (Mueller & Oppenheimer 2014)
- Comparison of 'guided notes' vs. Cornell method of note taking: Cornell method leads to *higher-level understanding* (Jacobs 2008)

Note taking “best practices”

1. Write it down!
2. Question/Contextualize
3. Reflect/Summarize

1. Write it down

- Differentiate between important and supporting materials
 - Humanities vs. sciences
- Paraphrase/Use your own words
 - Don't write down *everything!*
 - Simplify!
- Use symbols, abbreviations, arrows, lines
 - Spatially organize
 - Use layout to indicate importance, corollary thoughts, hierarchy
 - e.g., i.e., ∴, b/c, w/, w/o, texting language (b4, WTF, IMO)

2. Question/Contextualize

- Write down questions that you have
- Write your own thoughts about the material separate from lecture
- Indicate feelings/thoughts/events that occur during lecture to act as guideposts during review

Levine: Highbrow - Lowbrow

- the sense that folk melodies needed to be used in art music in order to i. . . +
- "Americanist" works vs. American works ^{of} /k materials.
- if American music is hybrid → do we consider that the sources of hybridity are themselves hybrid?
 - ↳ i.e. Gaelic music ^{it's} is itself a hybrid, and not just a timeless, "history-less" music.

1920s question by Henderson: Why No Great American Music?
↳ partly because they were searching for the "Great" word.
Moses: Yankee Blues

3. Reflect/Summarize

- How does this fit in to what I already know/prior knowledge?
- What is the main theme of this particular page of notes?
- This should be done AFTER the lecture, but before you go to sleep that night.

How is this done?

- “Cornell Method”

**QUESTIONS/
REFLECTIONS**

NOTES

SUMMARY

Lecture 2 - Southern Society: Slavery, King Cotton, and Antebellum America's "Peculiar" Region

Cue	Note
Where is this professor from? Brazil?	<p><u>Similarities</u> between South + North (^{40 yrs. before} the civil war)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- similar geographic size- common language" heritage- Protestant Christianity- ideologies<ul style="list-style-type: none">↳ Republicanismindividual libertyNationalism<ul style="list-style-type: none">↳ "American nationalism"localism ("attachment to place")states' rightsprogram<ul style="list-style-type: none">↳ ex: Westward movementCapitalism<ul style="list-style-type: none">↳ both had oligarchies<ul style="list-style-type: none">↳ based on different things↳ (slavery in the South)
* * * *	
John C. Calhoun.	
What is going on in the west at this point? 	
Summary	<p>In the period before the Civil War the South and North had many similarities. The key difference was what their economies were based on.</p>

Try it out!

- Watch another lecture

- Ronald B. Smith, Yale University, *The Atmosphere, The Ocean, and Environmental Change*, [Lecture 4 - Vertical Structure of the Atmosphere; Residence Time](#)

Recap

- Was this harder than the original note taking?
- Practice!!
- Don't worry about missing out!
- If using your computer, write notes in your own words.

Taking notes on reading

- If it's a book, you can do the same thing, however...
 - Beware of reliance on highlighting/underlining
- Add comments to highlighting – helps you remember why you highlighted it
 - Your notes in the margin are the same as the left-hand column in Cornell method
- Take notes on PowerPoint slides from your professors



Although Kirkpatrick never wrote an editorial policy for Ruggles, this passage can easily serve as de facto was to arrive at a final version that did not conjure up a particular historical moment in the listener's ear—and the way to do that was to rein in the dissonance, and let the inner voices 'tie things together'. The specific revisions that he and Ruggles undertook help to show how a dynamic relationship between sounds and ideas informed their editorial collaboration.



Furthermore, Kirkpatrick writes of Ruggles: the elision of meanings. In the final words 'timeless' and 'undated' when it comes to Ruggles's music, conceptual fluidity to colour and overlaps in the critical discourses such as universal. McMahan called 'Ruggles's rigorous typology of the critical vocabularies' is appropriate to continue about the 'test of time' re



THE PUBLIC CAREER (AND SUBSEQUENT RETIREMENT) OF THE 'INFINITE' RUGGLES
As Carol Oja has shown, attention to Ruggles's position in 1927, Rudhyar argued 'ecstasy', which for Rudhyar quoted the say there is fine literature the workmanship and of possibly an interesting Ruggles was among the instead seeking to craft rebels who did not join Tonality, and are moulded

By contrast, Charles Seeger's 1932 article on Ruggles centred around a concern with his position in history.¹⁵ Ruggles's misfortune to an unusual number of the a

Might it not be that if he had been able to make his grandiose dreams more palpable, turn out a bulk of work that would compel the acceptance of

¹¹ Robert McMahan, review of Ziffrin, *Carl Ruggles*, in *American Music*, 13 (1995), 494–7 at 495.

¹² Rudhyar, 'Carl Ruggles, Pioneer: As Seen by a Fellow Modernist', *Musical America*, 27 Aug. 1927, pp. 3 and 20. See discussion in Carol Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (Oxford, 2000), 111–26.

¹³ Machen, quoted in Rudhyar, 'Carl Ruggles, Pioneer', 3.

¹⁴ Ibid. 3.

¹⁵ Charles Seeger, 'Carl Ruggles', *Musical Quarterly*, 18 (Oct. 1932), 578–92.

Although Kirkpatrick never wrote an editorial policy for Ruggles, this passage can easily serve as de facto for his edition of *Evocations*. The goal, in Kirkpatrick's mind, was to arrive at a final version that did not conjure up a particular historical moment in the listener's ear—and the way to do that was to rein in the dissonance, and let the inner voices 'tie things together'. The specific revisions that he and Ruggles undertook help to show how a dynamic relationship between sounds and ideas informed their editorial collaboration.

Furthermore, Kirkpatrick's letter exemplifies a trend present in other writings on Ruggles: the elision of a variety of concepts that, strictly speaking, have different meanings. In the final sentence of Kirkpatrick's letter, he seems to suggest that the words 'timeless' and 'undated' are, if not interchangeable, both more or less applicable when it comes to Ruggles's music. Kirkpatrick was not alone in allowing a certain conceptual fluidity to colour his writings on Ruggles. Ruggles's idea of durability collides and overlaps in the critical discourse not only with 'ancient' music but also with themes such as universality and his all-encompassing 'sublime', a word that Robert McMahan called 'Ruggles's favorite adjective'.¹¹ It may be impossible to achieve a rigorous typology of the thicket of terms commentators have used in an effort to describe Ruggles's music, but their circulation hints at the permeable boundaries of the critical vocabularies with which writers have sought to describe Ruggles's music. It is appropriate to continue, therefore, with a consideration of how Ruggles's comment about the 'test of time' resonates with the views of these contemporary observers.

THE PUBLIC CAREER (AND SUBSEQUENT RETIREMENT) OF THE 'INFINITE' RUGGLES

As Carol Oja has shown, Dane Rudhyar was among the first to give extended consideration to Ruggles's position within American and European musical culture.¹² Writing in 1927, Rudhyar argued that Ruggles's significance lay primarily in his access to 'ecstasy', which for Rudhyar was a mystical, universal, and necessary feature of great art. Rudhyar quoted the Welsh author Arthur Machen: 'If ecstasy be present, then I say there is fine literature; if it is absent, in spite of all the cleverness, all the talent, all the workmanship and observation and dexterity... then, I think we have a product—possibly an interesting one—which is not fine literature'.¹³ Rudhyar found that Ruggles was among the handful of composers who had avoided vacant historicisms, instead seeking to craft lasting, forward-looking compositions: 'Ruggles is one of these rebels who did not join the march into the past, who refused to revive the corpse, Tonality, and are molding the musical substance of tomorrow'.¹⁴

By contrast, Charles Seeger's 1932 article on Ruggles centred around a concern with his position in history.¹⁵ The account effectively takes the form of a lament for Ruggles's misfortune to live in contemporary America. 'Here is a man who has an unusual number of the attributes of genius', Seeger wrote. He continued:

Might it not be that if he had been born at another time or in a different place he would have been able to make his grandiose dreams more palpable, turn out a bulk of work that would compel the acceptance of his notions of beauty as the standard of his day, and fix him in the

Questions/Comments

- If you want to review this presentation, visit our web page:
<http://tinyurl.com/CityTechWAC>

(...but make sure you take notes on it!!)

Some Interesting Links

- Cornell Method of note taking
 - http://lsc.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Cornell-Note_Taking-System.pdf
 - <http://www.wyzant.com/resources/lessons/study-skills/cornell-notes>
 - <https://shp.utmb.edu/asa/Forms/cornell%20note%20taking%20system.pdf>
- Relevant studies
 - (James & Engelhardt 2012) <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211949312000038#>
 - (Mueller & Oppenheimer 2014) <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159.full>
 - (Jacobs 2008) http://absentprof.missouristate.edu/assets/WritingCenter/Wichita_and_Cornel_L.pdf
- Other:
 - <https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/writingacrossthecurriculum/2014/09/02/notetaking-by-hand-writing-to-learn/>