

**This is the syllabus for the class in its semester-long format as Matt Jenson teaches it at Berklee College of Music. It can be customized to a 2-3 day-long, or week-long format.**

Matt has taught it (many times!) at Jazz Camp West, The California Jazz Conservatory (aka the “Jazz School”) in the San Francisco Bay area and at Steel Grass Ranch/Studio in Kauai’I, Hawai’i.

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# The Music and Life of Bob Marley

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Web connect: [www.mattjenson.com](http://www.mattjenson.com) [www.youtube.com/mattjensonmusic](http://www.youtube.com/mattjensonmusic)

- **Final grade** will be determined by quality of class participation, a ‘reaction paper’ to two movies, your Team Teaching Unit class presentation. (see page 3-4)

## FINAL CONCERTS

1) CAF show: 12/6 2) Public performance at the Amazing Things Arts Center in Framingham: 12/8

## Topical Outline:

- 1) SEPTEMBER 6: Auditions
- 2) SEPTEMBER 13: Introductions and introductory remarks  
(homework: Watch the MOVIE “The Harder they Come.” Read the analysis PDF by Julienne Burton. DVD 524 in Berklee library.)
- 3) SEPTEMBER 20: Marley early years in Nine Mile and first trips to Kingston. Conditions of extreme poverty  
Slide show: MJ’s trip to Trenchtown Culture Yard  
Formation and split up of original Wailers. Early producers, *Simmer Down*, *Trenchtown Rock*
- 4) SEPTEMBER 27: ALL REHEARSE
- 5) OCTOBER 4: Chris Blackwell and early Island Records years. *Catch a Fire* and *Burnin*.  
Intro to Jamaican history: A rebellious culture, Morant Bay Rebellion. READ #1  
(*Harder They Come* reaction paper due by midnight.)
- 6) OCTOBER 11: Guest speaker Victor Wallace on Capitalism and Socialism
- 7) OCTOBER 18: TEAM TEACHING UNIT #1.  
Jamaican political background/history as it relates to international circumstances  
How Bob Marley fits into Jamaican and International political background/history
- 8) OCTOBER 25: TEAM TEACHING UNIT #2. Marcus Garvey, Haile Selassie. READ #12. #7
- 9) NOVEMBER 1: TEAM TEACHING UNIT #3. Rastafari . READ #2, #11, #8
- 10) NOVEMBER 8: ALL REHEARSE
- 11) NOVEMBER 15: TEAM TEACHING UNIT #4. READ #3, #4  
Smile Jamaica concert. Assassination attempt. One Love Peace Concert  
(*Life & Debt* reaction paper due by midnight.)
- 12) NOVEMBER 22: THANKSGIVING (no class)
- 13) NOVEMBER 19: Matt’s reflections on Smile JA, Assassination & One Love .  
Marley’s Foot injury and cancer diagnosis. *Exodus*. Mid-Career highlights
- 14) DECEMBER 6: ALL REHEARSE
- 15) DECEMBER 13: Bob Marley passes away, May 11, 1981. Reflections on Bob’s life.

## **REPERTOIRE:**

**Rat Race** (*Rastaman Vibration*) *sol*

**Them Belly Full** (*Natty Dread*)

**Babylon System** (*Survival*)

**Want More** (*Rastaman Vibration*)

**Turn Your Lights Down Low** (*Exodus*) *sol*

**Jamming** (*Exodus*)

**So Much Things to Say** (*Exodus*)

**Get Up Stand Up** (*Burnin'*)

**Lively Up Yourself** (*Natty Dread*) *sol*

**So Much Trouble in the World** (*Survival*)

**Ongoing Homework Assignment:** Even though charts have been written for the arrangements of this music, there are a great many subtleties have NOT transcribed, especially with the guitar and keyboard parts. You will be expected to learn these on your own thorough study of Marley's recordings. Also, learn the arrangements: there are many differences between Marley's versions and the arrangements for the class.

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## **SOME DESCRIPTIVE TERMINOLOGY FOR PLAYING REGGAE**

**Chop, Skank, Strum, Bang** – the aggressive rhythmic attack played on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats of the measure, mainly by the guitar and keyboards.

**One Drop** – the rhythmic pattern played by the drum kit characterized by crisp high hat work off set by the kick drum “dropping” on the third beat of the measure. (There are many sub-styles within the one drop riddim.)

**Steppers** – the rhythmic pattern played by the drum kit characterized by crisp high hat work off set by the kick drum playing on all four beats of the measure (example: Exodus)

**Bubble** – the rhythmic pattern played mainly on the organ that incorporates the skank (on beats 2 and 4) and adds a subtle attack on all of the up beats of each measure.

**Dead Picking / Stuck line** – the muted, (plucked) staccato technique of playing guitar, often times used to double the bass line.

**Nayabinghi** – the “heart beat” drumming style that is used in Rastafarian religious ceremony (called a Groundation). The three drums used are called, 1) Thunder (bass), 2) Funde (middle drum that plays the ‘heartbeat’, 3) Akete or Repeater, (the high pitched lead drum). (The term Nayabinghi will often times be shortened to “Binghi.”)



My life is only important if me can help plenty of people. If my life is only about my own security, then me don't want it. My life is for people.

-BOB MARLEY

# The Music and Life of Bob Marley



## VISION pages

A space to free associate on topics covered in class and how they relate to you personally. You will be asked to take a few minutes at the beginning of some classes to throw the doors open and write or draw ANYTHING related to some quotes, ideas and questions on the 'vision pages.' We are artists and creative people and part of our jobs is to think about the BIG PICTURE, as Bob did, and try to bring some sense and clarity to any situation. Absolutely anything goes! Often times simply writing down the very first thing that comes to mind after reading the quotes/readings/questions on the page will reveal surprising depth and clarity. Other times you might have to struggle with something that you're trying to understand or express. This time is all about freeing and opening your minds, to really think out of the box. At the end of the semester you will photocopy your pages, hand them in, and Matt will share with the class (keeping them anonymous) some of the responses and we will reflect, discuss and enjoy our VISION PAGES offerings.

Use of metaphor is highly recommended.

**METAPHOR:** *A figure of speech or an image in which is used to refer to something that it does not literally denote in order to define a much deeper description or understanding.*

## TEAM TEACHING UNIT PROJECT (TTU)

Recent research has shown that the traditional model of teaching where the instructor lectures to the class is not nearly as effective (or fun!) as engaging the student more directly in the educational process.

The TEAM TEACHING UNIT project is designed to engage you more fully. The class will be divided into 4 groups of 3 people and each unit will be assigned a topic (listed and described below) that you will research and teach to the class together. (It is important that you get together with your group members to discuss and organize your topic and presentation!) Your presentation cannot be any longer than 40 minutes as Matt will be showing some video and adding some information to each unit. Creative teaching methods utilizing audio, video (we can easily use the projector with a laptop connected to internet) and any other creative ways in which you would like to convey the information is highly encouraged. (Think outside of the box!) Again, you only have 40 minutes so you must be organized!

### UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

**NOTE:** a good place to start your research is to look for related readings on the hand out PDF on the official Berklee class website. There are a number of very good documentaries about Marley: Caribbean Nights (1982), Rebel Music: The Bob Marley Story (2001), Marley (2012).

#### 1) **Jamaican political background/history:** presentation date - 10/18

What are the names of the two political parties in Jamaica and what do they stand for?

What is colonialism and what was Jamaica's role in British colonialism?

When did JA gain her independence from British rule?

What is the cold war and how was Jamaica a pawn in the cold war during the 70s?

What was going on in the streets of JA in the 70's?

Be sure to include some information about Socialism and Capitalism.

How did the political struggle affect and inform Marley's music? Find a clear musical/lyrical example.

#### 2) **Marcus Garvey, Haile Selassie:** presentation date – 10/25

Who was Marcus Garvey, what did he accomplish in his lifetime and why was he so important to Jamaican society and the formation of the Rastafarian movement?

What is the UNIA?

Who was Haile Selassie and why was he so important to Marley and the Rastafarian movement?

What country was he the ruler of, and for how long did he rule?

Was he as saintly a man as many in the Rasta faith believe? (Be sure to read #16 in hand out PDF)

#### 3) **Rastafari:** presentation date – 11/1

Why did the Rastafari movement come into existence?

Describe the Rastafarian belief system especially as it relates to Christianity.

On what points do the Rasta beliefs radically depart from Christianity and where are they similar?

Describe some of the cultural, symbolic and linguistic aspects of the movement

What are some of the common phrases used in Rasta parlance and what do they mean?

What is the symbolism of dread locks?

What is the role of marijuana in the Rastafarian movement?

4) **One Love and JA Smile concerts, assassination attempt:** presentation date – 11/15

What were the dates of these concerts and assassination attempt?

Under what cultural and socio-political conditions did these concerts come about?

What were the goals of these concerts and were they achieved?

Who was behind the assassination attempt, and why did certain people, institutions and mind-sets want Marley eliminated?

Watch this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv9jZOuj-HQ>

## **MOVIE REACTION PAPERS PROJECT**

You are required to watch two movies this semester and to write a one page (or more), single-spaced, ‘reaction’ paper summarizing your thoughts. You must hand them in electronically through the official Berklee class website before the deadline for each paper.

Do not plagiarize! Cutting and pasting from various internet sources or copying other scholarly work is not permitted. You can certainly gain insights from such research but your reaction must ultimately be your own.

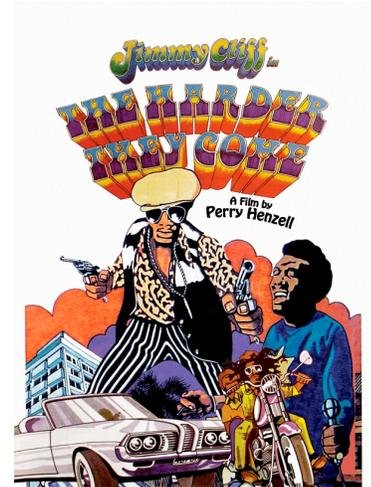
### **MOVIE 1**

**THE HARDER THEY COME. Due October 4, by midnight**

**No less than 1, single-spaced page**

Be SURE to read the analysis PDF by Julienne Burton located in this section of the official Berklee class website.

*This is not to be a retelling of the story. (Your teacher knows the story well!) What is your reaction to the story? Is Ivan simply a lawless criminal or a symbol for rebellion against an oppressive system? Do you see any similarities between the socio-economic system in the movie and how things are being run in our society today? Are there any parallels between the music industry today and back then? What does this movie say about freedom, is there such a thing at all?*



### **MOVIE 2**

**LIFE AND DEBT. Due November 15, by midnight**

**No less than 1, single-spaced page**

*Life and Debt is a feature-length documentary, which addresses the impact of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and current globalization policies on a developing country such as Jamaica.*

*[www.lifeanddebt.org](http://www.lifeanddebt.org) (You can't watch the movie from this link, but you can get information about the production and other useful information.)*

