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TAYLOR SWIFT COMING TO A CLASSROOM NEAR YOU

"READY FOR IT?"

by [Kelli Caplan](#) | October 17, 2024*Read time: about 2 min*

Swifties rejoice. Taylor is coming to campus.

Well, not live and in person, although the [Ferguson Center](#) hosts plenty of stars. Rather, her appearance is in the form of a class.

Pop culture and academia are about to collide in the classroom at Christopher Newport, creating a collegiate **"Love Story"** of sorts.

To put it in terms Swifties will appreciate (and with apologies to those baffled by the lyrical language): This class is perfect for students who have a **"Blank Space"** just waiting to be filled with knowledge and understanding about the pop sensation. And for all who are **"Enchanted"** with her, this class is likely to make them even more of a Taylor Swift **"Lover."** After all, taking a class about Tay-Tay is something that many Captains would only expect to happen in their **"Wildest Dreams."**

Here are the details, and **"Don't Blame Me"** if seats fill up fast.

"Contextualizing Taylor Swift," an Honors seminar, will be taught in the Spring by Dr. Chelsey Hamm, assistant professor of [Music Theory](#) and Director of Music Theory and Aural Skills. Students from all majors will be able to register for it.

Hamm's goal is to make the study of music appealing, to inject a bit of excitement in it and make it applicable to the

students of today.

"I think we have to meet students where they are," she said.

The class will focus on many elements of Swift's music. Students will analyze her lyrics and music videos and examine what her music means and what it says about the **"Superstar"** and her impact on the musical world.

For the class, students will use a textbook called, "Understanding Taylor's Swift's Many Identities." It explores her role as everything from "cult leader," to "poet," to "feminist," to "politician."

The topics outlined on Hamm's class syllabus run the gamut. Students will delve into how music terminology, such as melody, rhythm and mode, is depicted in Swift's tunes.

Swift appeals to a diverse group of listeners who interpret her music in different ways. The class will look at Swift and her songs through a variety of lenses, including girlhood, nostalgia, queer theory, and innocence. Students will also consider whether she is a feminist and whether she is actually revolutionary.

To have a chance to apply what they are learning, and to listen to Swift with a newfound perspective, students will have the option of taking a field trip to hear a Taylor Swift cover band perform locally.

Hamm is not a Swiftie, but is fascinated by the singer's influence on people of all ages and on the music world. She is anticipating a class that is educational, insightful, and current, one that will spur interesting conversations and show the superstar in distinct lights.

"I'm excited about it," she said. "Scholarship is sometimes slow to follow pop culture. It will be fun to do a new class like this."

Students will not only expand their knowledge of Swift, they will also take a deep dive into the music that has been central to their lives. It's important, Hamm said, that universities offer students interesting learning opportunities, ones they connect with and find pertinent to their lives and points of view.

"We want to engage them," she said. "Music helps people to become better critical thinkers and helps improve analytical skills. This class will be an intersection of academics, music and the real world."

"Call it What you Want," but this class **"Hits Different."** Don't be left feeling like you **"Would've, Could've, Should've."** As any Swiftie knows **"All Too Well,"** this class has the potential to be **"The I."**
