

## **History of Rock**

Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Ryan Center for the Musical Arts (RCMA) 1-160

Instructor: Craig Davis Pinson (craigdavispinson2014@u.northwestern.edu)

Office: RCMA 4-157

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30-4:30, and by appointment.

### **Course description**

This course will introduce students to a framework for critical engagement with the cultural practices of rock, primarily focusing on the 1950's to the present. A broad chronological survey of musical and historical developments will undergird an ongoing discussion of interrelated economic, social, and political issues. What is rock, and how do people participate in it? What are its musical and lyrical elements, and what relation do they have to its visual components? What are the usual historical narratives about rock, and what myths do they perpetuate? What are rock's modes of production and consumption, of marketing, management, and labor? How is it connected to cultural identities along lines of race, gender, class, and sexuality? We will trace attempted answers to these questions as they change according to historical moment and location. With an emphasis on close listening to a variety of musical examples, students will be required to write reading journals, compose an analytical essay, and take midterm and final exams based on listening and key concepts.

### **Materials**

Reading and assignment descriptions will be made available to you via Canvas, and other communications through your Northwestern email account.

**Recordings:** The required listening examples will be available to you through a series of channels. The most accessible is a Spotify playlist I will be updating, which contains most of the required listening tracks. The basic Spotify service is free, and features advertising between tracks. The “Premium” account offers no advertising and other features, but is a paid subscription. You are **not** required to pay for this service. A link to access this playlist will be provided on canvas. Other listening examples will be provided either directly through the Canvas website, or through YouTube links. Please note that the playlist may include more recordings than this course requires - some recommended listening materials will be added as well.

### **Requirements and Grading**

The components of your grade will be participation and attendance (20%); submission of reading response journals (40%); two exams (15% + 15%), and a comparative analysis essay (10%).

### **Participation (20%)**

Your contributions will be crucial to the success of this class. Reading and listening should be completed before each class, as listed on the Course Schedule below; you are expected to arrive (on time!) prepared to participate actively in discussion of the material. Be aware that “discussion” involves not only speaking but also listening to and engaging with your fellow students. Do your best to put this principle into practice.

Consistent attendance is obligatory for successful performance in the course, and our attendance policy follows that of the School of Music’s Undergraduate Handbook:

Students are expected to attend all sessions of courses...for which they are registered....  
When one-time conflicts arise...the student’s attendance obligation for the scheduled course...still stands.... For exceptional circumstances, contact the student affairs office for assistance.

Excessive absence is potential grounds for failure in the course. Even when absences are excused due to personal emergency, religious observance, or professional conflict (auditions, etc.), you remain responsible for covering the assigned course material, and we will need to discuss ways of demonstrating that you have done so.

### **Required Listening (Only graded as a component of the two exams)**

As an essential part of this course, you will be required to do close listening on your own time to a few songs per class session. The lectures or readings will provide details regarding context, style, form, instrumentation, among other elements. This information will aid you, as the listening component of the two exams, detailed below, require not only song and artist identification, but also contextual and/or analytical remarks.

### **Reading Journals (40%)**

A major portion of your grade will be drawn from a course-long series of reading responses. Each reading assignment will be accompanied by a journal entry prompt on a Canvas discussion page. These responses will vary in length, which will be specified in each prompt. The average length is one or two paragraphs. You must submit your response to each prompt no later than 11:59 p.m. the night before the corresponding class session - otherwise, you will not receive credit (This is a strict cut-off).

For most weeks, you will be assigned to either the “A,” “B,” “C,” or “D” options for reading responses. There will be a period of time where you will be able to submit your preferences for desired topics to submit reading responses to. Please keep in mind you are still required to do all the readings and listenings since material from them will be tested on the exams.

### **Exams (15% + 15%)**

There will be two exams for this course, the first taking place halfway through the summer quarter, and the second one taking place on the last class session. The second exam is not cumulative. They are both comprised of three parts; listening identification and details, multiple choice questions, and short writing section. For listening identification, brief excerpts of several of the required listenings will be played for you, and you will identify the artist(s) and the recording title, while also providing two relevant contextual and/or analytical details. Multiple choice questions vary from broad stylistic and historical concepts to more specific factual information regarding key artists and recordings. All of the questions are drawn from the content of the lectures and readings. For the short response section, you will be provided prompts which will task you to synthesize information from the previously covered material in order to answer a question that will require you to provide specific examples of concepts and recordings for your argumentation.

### **Comparative Analysis Essay (10%)**

You will be asked to compare and contrast **two** recordings of songs of your choosing. The recordings may be of any time period and location, however, either the artists, or the tracks themselves, must have a concrete and definable relation to each other, and musical connection to ‘rock’, as historically defined in ways we’ve touched upon in this course. They may or may not be from the same artist or subgenre. This comparison will have both musical and historical/cultural analysis elements. Specific ways of talking about music will be addressed in lecture to give you tools for the musical component. More details will be clarified through Canvas, but bear in mind that there will be two separate deadlines for this assignment - one for a choice of recordings and preliminary ideas for analysis approach and one for the final submission of the paper.

### **Other Information**

**Academic integrity:** Please be aware of University-wide policies regarding dishonesty in academic work, as well as those specific to the School of Music. Information can be found at [www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/integrity/#guide](http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/integrity/#guide). If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, or of the circumstances under which you are obligated to cite a source in your writing, please consult the documents found through this site.

**Communication:** I will often communicate important information to the class – potentially including changes or clarifications to the reading and listening assignments – via email. Please check your mail regularly for updates.

**Students with disabilities** enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the University's Office of Services for Students with Disabilities office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

**Electronic device policy:** Laptops and other electronics may **NOT** be used during lecture sessions. For exceptional circumstances, speak to me in advance and we will try to work out a solution (Mostly, this would require communication with Accessible NU).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

(Required listening, reading, and assignment details will be available on a weekly basis on Canvas)

### WEEK 1

#### **Tuesday, June 25 - Lecture: Course Introduction**

##### Required reading:

Excerpt from Small, Christopher. *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1998.

Excerpts from “Chapter one: Introduction” in Holt, Fabian. *Genre in Popular Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. (pp. 1-9)

##### Suggested listening (NOT required):

Billie Holiday, “Strange Fruit”

**Wednesday, June 26 - Student Entry Form \*AND\* Reading response 1-A and 1-B due by 11:59 p.m.**

#### **Thursday, June 27 - Lecture: The World Before Rock and Roll**

##### Required reading:

“Chapter one: The Sheet Music Era” in Hajdu, David. *Love for Sale: Pop Music in America*. 2016.

##### Required listening:

Frank Sinatra, “All or Nothing at All”

Hank Williams, “Hey Good Lookin”

Muddy Waters, “I’m Your Hoochie Coochie Man”

Big Joe Turner, “Shake, Rattle, and Roll”

## WEEK 2

**Monday, July 1 - Reading response 2-A and 2-B due by 11:59 p.m.**

**Tuesday, July 2 - Lecture: The Rise and 'Fall' of Rock and Roll**

Required reading:

Robynn Stilwell, *Music of the Youth Revolution: Rock Through the 1960s* pp. 418-434.

Required listening:

Roy Brown, "Good Rockin' Tonight"

Chuck Berry, "Johnny B. Goode"

Little Richard, "Tutti Frutti"

Elvis Presley, "That's All Right (Mama)"

The Kingston Trio, "Tom Dooley"

**Wednesday, July 3 - NO RESPONSES DUE**

**Thursday, July 4 - NO CLASSES, National Holiday**

## WEEK 3

**Monday, July 8- Reading response 3-A and 3-B due by 11:59 p.m.**

**Tuesday, July 9 - Lecture: The British Invasion, History of Music Production**

Required reading:

"From Mirror to Beacon" in Moorefield, Virgil. *The Producer As Composer: Shaping the Sounds of Popular Music*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2010.

Required listening:

Les Paul and Mary Ford, "How High the Moon"

The Ronettes, "Be My Baby"

The Beach Boys, "Good Vibrations"

The Beatles, "I Want to Hold Your Hand"

The Beatles, "Tomorrow Never Knows"

**Wednesday, July 10 - Reading response 3-C and 3-D due by 11:59 p.m.**

**Thursday, July 11 - Lecture: 'Folk Rock,' Psychedelia**

Required reading:

Chapter 5, "Performing the Folk: Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan" in Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill University of North Carolina Press, 2000), pp. 182–232.

Excerpt of Nadya Zimmerman, "Consuming Nature: The Grateful Dead's Performance of an Anti-Commercial Counterculture," *American Music* 24 (Summer 2006): 194-216.

Required listening:

Pete Seeger, "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore"

Bob Dylan, "Maggie's Farm"

Grateful Dead, "Sugar Magnolia"

Jefferson Airplane, "White Rabbit"

Janis Joplin, "Ball and Chain" (Live)

The Jimi Hendrix Experience, "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)"

**Friday, July 12 - Song Choices for Comparative Analysis Essay DUE by 11:59 pm**

#### WEEK 4

**Tuesday, July 16 - EXAM NO. 1 ADMINISTERED**

**Wednesday, July 17 - Reading response 4-A, 4-B due by 11:59 p.m.**

**Thursday, July 18 - Lecture: The 'Hippie' Aesthetic, Rise of Punk Rock**

Required reading:

Excerpt (TBD) from Matthew Gelbart, "A Cohesive Shambles: The Clash's 'London Calling' and the Normalization of Punk," *Music & Letters* 92 (2011).

Required listening:

Joni Mitchell, "All I Want"

Led Zeppelin, "Over the Hills and Far Away" (Live)

Yes, "Roundabout"

Funkadelic, "I Got a Thing, You Got a Thing, Everybody's Got a Thing"

The Clash, "Four Horsemen"

Patti Smith, "Gloria"

## **WEEK 5**

**Monday, July 22 - Reading response 5-A and 5-B due by 11:59 p.m.**

**Tuesday, July 23 - Lecture: Heavy Metal, Indie Rock, Hardcore**

**Required reading:**

O'Meara, Caroline. "The Raincoats: Breaking Down Punk Rock's Masculinities". *Popular Music : a Year Book*. 2003.

**Required listening:**

Blondie, "Dreaming"

Black Flag, "Depression"

The Raincoats, "Fairytale in the Supermarket"

The Smiths, "This Charming Man"

Iron Maiden, "Number of the Beast"

**Wednesday, July 24 - Reading response 5-C and 5-D due by 11:59 p.m.**

**Thursday, July 25 - Lecture: Grunge, Experimental, Pop-Punk**

**Required reading:**

Wyndham Wallace. "After The Flood: Talk Talk's Laughing Stock 20-Years On." *The Quietus*. 2011.

**Required listening:**

Hole, "Gutless"

Bikini Kill, "Rebel Girl"

Talk Talk, "Ascension Day"

Björk, "Hunter"

Blur, "The Universal"

Rage Against the Machine, "Bulls on Parade"

**Saturday, July 27 - Comparative Analysis Essay DUE by 11:59 pm**



## **WEEK 6**

**Monday, July 29 - Reading response 6-A and 6-B due by 11:59 p.m.**

**Tuesday, July 30 - Lecture: Rock in Latin America, Rock in the 2000s-present**

**Required reading:**

Esterrich, Carmelo, and Javier H. Murillo. "Rock with Punk with Pop with Folklore: Transformations and Renewal in Aterciopelados and Café Tacuba". *Latin American Music Review* 21, no. 1 (2000): 31-44

“Chapter thirteen: Digitization: The Immaterial World” in Hajdu, David. *Love for Sale: Pop Music in America*. 2016.

**Required listening:**

Aterciopelados, “Baracunatana”

Café Tacuba, “La Chica Banda”

Yeah Yeah Yeahs, "Y Control"

Alabama Shakes, "Gimme All Your Love"

Sigur Rós, "Glósóli"

**Thursday, August 1 - EXAM NO. 2 ADMINISTERED**