

ROCK 'N' ROLL AND AMERICAN SOCIETY

MMC 1702

3 CREDITS

[SEMESTER/YEAR]

Rock 'n roll? "It's restless and rude. It's defiant and daring. It's a fist shaken at age. It's a voice that often screams out questions because the answers are always changing."

*Nora Roberts
"Public Secrets"*

CLASS MEETINGS: *This is an online class. Lectures may be viewed at your convenience, but it is expected that you view three per week, every week.*

INSTRUCTOR: *David E. Carlson
Cox/Palm Beach Post Professor of New Media Journalism
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352.846.0171*

OFFICE HOURS: *Virtual office hours are 2-4 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday in our Sakai chat room. In-person visits are by appointment.*

COURSE TA OR COORDINATOR: *TBA*

COURSE WEBSITE: *<http://lss.at.ufl.edu>*

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS: Messages will be sent to the class via Sakai Announcements. Individual students may be contacted via email. Students are encouraged to contact me via email to dcarlson@jou.ufl.edu.

REQUIRED TEXT: [*What's That Sound? An Introduction to Rock and Its History \(Third Edition\)* by John Covach and Andrew Flory \(W.W. Norton, 2012\). ISBN: 978-0-393-91204-3](#)

There also will be about 30 short articles that will be posted in the “Resources” section of Sakai. Many of those articles are compiled in the next book. Purchase is optional but recommended to provide additional nourishment to your brain. It is a compilation of essays, record reviews and the like from throughout the history of rock 'n' roll:

[*“Rock and Roll Is Here to Stay: An Anthology”* by William McKeen \(W.W. Norton, 2000\). ISBN: 0393047008](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: *(From the UF catalog) Studies the role of popular music in American culture. It is not a music course but a look at the effects of recorded sound on popular culture. Part 1 emphasizes rock 'n' roll and its impact from 1954-1970. Part 2 covers 1970 to 1990.*

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: *There are no prerequisites for MMC1702, but students who are hearing impaired may have difficulty as we play and discuss a lot of music. **No prior familiarity with music (rock or otherwise) is necessary or assumed.** All I ask is that you have an open mind and be ready and able to suspend whatever pre-conceived notions you may have regarding “rock 'n' roll,” “rock music” or “popular music” in general.*

PURPOSE OF COURSE: *This communication course explores **the history of rock (and pop) music**—its significant performers, producers, recordings, performances, and cultural identity, with the focus on the decades of the 1950s and 1960s.*

*It's NOT a music course, per se, but we will be listening to a lot of music as we consider the effects of recorded sound on popular culture. Thus, this is a quintessential “**communication and culture**” course. We will study the origin and growth of the*

recording industry and music business, consider the impact new technology had (and continues to have) on the development of popular music and examine the mutual influences of rock 'n' roll music and other mass media (film, television, journalism, advertising, etc.).

*We will attempt to **integrate into this story the general social and intellectual history of the United States.** Our emphasis is on rock 'n' roll and its impact from around 1954 to 1970, which happens to closely parallel the Civil Rights movement.*

We will examine some of the different musical influences that came together to create rock 'n' roll, beginning as far back as the turn of the century, then building through the first half of the last century. Following a loose chronology, we will trace the evolution of specific musical styles and investigate issues related to culture, performance, technology, and reception. Reading assignments will introduce the distinct musical styles, performers, and works that comprise each genre and time period.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: *By the end of this course, students will:*

Be able to broadly describe the history and development of rock 'n' roll music, its technological, regional and cultural influences, and articulate how all of that has influenced the cultural history of the United States. Students also will be able to recognize different styles of music such as blues, bluegrass, country, gospel, jazz and various genres of rock 'n' roll.

Additional goals are to improve critical thinking skills, ability to discern important information and note-taking skills, all of which are useful in a broad range of disciplines.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS: *This is a large lecture class conducted entirely online. Lectures include a great deal of multimedia, especially music and videos of musical performances. You will need a reasonably fast Internet connection as offered by DSL or cable modem.*

Students are encouraged to discuss the material within the e-learning system, and the instructor will weigh in as appropriate.

COURSE POLICIES:

HOW TO DO WELL: *This class is a whole lot of fun. We listen to great music during every lecture. We watch videos and movie trailers. But “fun” does not mean “easy.” We cover a lot of material, about 70 years of music and social history, so it will be hard to catch up if you fall behind. To do well, the following will make a big difference:*

1. Come to the Canvas site at least twice every week to read any new announcements.
2. Watch every lecture on time, and do not fall behind. Take good notes on the lectures and study them every day. You will not have time to go back through every lecture when exam time rolls around.
3. Read the text and all assigned materials *before* watching the videos. The book and other readings have been carefully chosen to maximize the experience and potential for intellectual growth. Keeping up with the readings will make a big difference in how much you enjoy the journey we will take this semester.
4. Be open-minded and fully engage yourself. Please leave your preconceptions about what music sucks and what doesn't at the virtual classroom door. The development of rock 'n' roll has been mostly linear, and learning what came before will help you appreciate the music of today. My goal is to make you a better-educated listener, exposing you to many artists, genres and songs that may be new to you. It's also to help you understand what a powerful force this music has been in American culture. Leave behind your subjective opinion of rock and roll. Be open-minded and don't discriminate against music of any kind based on your previous experience.
5. Complete four exams. Tests will include a minimum of 50 questions and may be a combination of multiple-choice, true-false and matching. Questions are taken from lectures and reading assignments. Many, if not most, exam questions will come from lectures so enjoy the music, do the “bar-stool boogie,” but stay alert.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: *Attendance is virtual, but you are expected to work along with the class in a timely fashion, viewing three lectures per week and completing the assigned readings. If you fall behind, it will be very difficult to catch up.*

EXAM POLICY: *Exams will be offered online in a timed, proctored environment (ProctorU). You must complete the exam on the assigned date and within the allotted time. Exams are non-comprehensive. Each one covers the lectures and readings assigned*

since the previous exam. Therefore, there is no “final exam.” All testing dates are clearly stated in this syllabus. Failure to complete the test within the stated time-frame will result in a grade of zero.

MAKE-UP POLICY: *If you become aware of a serious problem or an extraordinary circumstance that will prevent you from taking an exam, you must inform me **before** the exam to work out a compromise, **not after**. You still will need to provide documentation to prove your need for a makeup test.*

*Otherwise, there will be no makeup exams except in cases of documented technical issues (see “Getting Help” below). Late reaction papers **may** be accepted for up to half credit, but the circumstances would have to be extraordinary.*

ASSIGNMENT POLICY: *Additional assignments are few and are not graded.*

ACADEMIC HONESTY: *It is expected that you will exhibit ethical behavior in this class. Students are expected to do their own work, use their own words in papers, and to reference outside sources appropriately.*

*Students are further expected to observe intellectual property rights and to comply with copyright laws. **The music included in the lectures for this class is the property of the respective copyright holders. It does not belong to you, and you are not free to copy it or distribute it to others.** The same goes for the lectures themselves, images and videos included in the lectures and printed materials.*

Academic honesty also means you will not plagiarize the words, designs, concepts or ideas of others. Plagiarism is defined as “...taking someone's words or ideas as if they were your own.” Source: Dictionary.com.

Students who cheat will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of university rules. You will automatically receive a failing grade in this class if you engage in any form of academic dishonesty.

EXTRA CREDIT: *There will not be any papers or projects offered for extra credit, but there will be extra credit questions on each exam worth an additional 6 to 10 points (which is what a paper or project would be worth anyway). No individual extra-credit opportunities will be offered; everyone in class is treated the same. Please remember that the grading scale (see below) is hard and fast. A point total of 799, for example, will not be rounded up to 800.*

COURSE TECHNOLOGY: *This is an online course being taught in Sakai. You will need a computer, Internet access of DSL speed or better and a GatorLink ID to gain access to the course and materials via the World Wide Web.*

UF POLICIES:

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking any quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

Instructor's note: *Students who are severely hearing impaired may have difficulty as we play and discuss a lot of music.*

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>.

NETIQUETTE: COMMUNICATION COURTESY: All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. Students who “flame” others will be warned once and then locked out of the class’s online communications.

<http://teach.ufl.edu/docs/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf> .

GETTING HELP:

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Sakai, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

** Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.

GRADING POLICIES:

Your grade for the course will be based on a 1,000-point scale.

Assignment	Points or percentage
Exams (4)	250 points each (1,000 points total)

GRADING SCALE:

A = 931-1,000	A- = 900-930	B+ = 860-899
B- = 800-830	B = 831-859	C+ = 760-799
C = 731-759	C = 700-730	D+ = 660-699
D = 631-659	D- = 600-630	E = 599 and under

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Lesson	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	What to expect: Course introduction and welcome		Get the book
2	Video: What Rocks? Musicians talk about rock 'n' roll	The syllabus – all of it	Fill out the student survey
3	Labor Pains: The Origins of Rock 'n' Roll	Sakai: "The Origin of Rock 'n' Roll" (Sakai readings are found under the "Resources" link)	
4	Labor Pains (continued)	Covach: Chapter 1	
5	Mississippi Ghosts: Robert Johnson and the Roots of Rock	Sakai: : "Land Where the Blues Began" and "King of the Delta Blues"	
6	A Tale of Three Cities: New Orleans	Sakai: "Fats"	
7	A Tale of Three Cities: Chicago	Covach: Pages 74-94 Sakai: "From the Delta to Chicago"	Online chat: What's your coolest piece of rock memorabilia?
8	A Tale of Three Cities: Memphis, Sun and the rise of Elvis	Covach: Pages 95-101 Sakai: "706 Union Avenue" and "Elvis Scotty and Bill"	
9	Memphis Continued: Who made the first rock 'n' roll record?		
10	Elvis Presley: The return of the king	Sakai: "The Return of the King" and "Where Were You When Elvis Died"	EXAM 1 (complete before class 11)

11	Chuck Berry and the "Deluge"	Covach: Pages 80-94 Sakai: "Got to Be Rock and Roll Music," and "The Immortals - Bo Diddley"	
12	The Class of '55:	Sakai: "The Immortals - Perkins, Cash, Lewis, and Orbison," "Up Against the Wall," and "Jerry Lee Sees the Bright Light of Dallas"	
13	Buddy Holly	Covach: Pages 102-105 Sakai: "The Immortals - Buddy Holly"	
14	The Day the Music Died	Sakai: "The Day the Music Died"	Online chat: American Pie
15	The Five Styles of Rock 'n' Roll	Sakai: "The Five Styles of Rock and Roll"	
16	Five Styles (continued)	Sakai: "Doo Wop"	
17	Rock 'n Roll, Inc.	Covach: Pages 112-126 Sakai: "Save the Last Dance for Me"	
18	Songwriters and Teen Idols	Covach: Pages 126-139 Sakai: "The Immortals - Ricky Nelson"	Fill out the second student survey
19	Misfortune strikes: Radio and the Payola Scandal	Covach:Pages 106-111 Sakai: "Testimony in the Payola Hearings"	

20	The "Wall of Sound"	Sakai: "Behind the Glass," "Inflatable Phil," and "The Immortals - Phil Spector"	
21	"Wall of Sound" (continued)	Sakai: "The Top 10 Weirdest Phil Spector Moments"	EXAM 2 (complete before class 22)
22	Sweet Soul Music: Motown	Covach, pages 135-139 and 222-234 Sakai: "Girl Groups" and "Motown Finishing School"	
23	Stax, Atlantic and Southern Soul	Covach: Pages 235-253 Sakai: "Dan and Spooner" and "Otis Redding: King of Them All"	
26	Sweet Soul Music: James Brown	Covach: Pages 245-253 Sakai: "The Godfather of Soul" and "The Immortals – James Brown"	Online chat: Soul
27	Surf's Up: The Beach Boys, Dick Dale, Jan & Dean	Covach,: Pages 145-154 Sakai: "The Immortals - The Beach Boys"	
28	Surf's Up (continued)	Sakai: "A Teenage Hymn to God"	
29	Bob Dylan: The Folk Years	Sakai: "The Immortals - Bob Dylan" and "How Does it Feel"	
30	Blasphemy: Dylan Goes Electric	Sakai: "The Making of Blonde on Blonde"	
31	Dylan: The Troubadour		EXAM 3 (Complete before class 32)

32	The Beatles (1958-64)	Covach: Pages 158-166 Sakai: "The Immortals - The Beatles" and "A Good Stomping Band"	
33	The Beatles (1965-67)	Sakai: "Words to the Wild" and "More Popular than Jesus"	
34	The Beatles (1968-70)	Sakai: "The Ballad of John and Yoko" and "Video Pioneer"	Online chat: Dylan and the Beatles
36	The British Invasion	Covach: Pages 175-191 Sakai: "The Immortals - The Kinks," "The Immortals – The Rolling Stones" and "Altamont"	
37	The Rolling Stones	Sakai: "The Immortals -- The Yardbirds" and "The Immortals – The Who"	
38	America Responds	Covach: Pages 192-215	
39	Psychedelia: Drugs and the Quest for Higher Consciousness	Covach: Pages 254-295 Sakai: "Next Year in San Francisco" and "These are the Good Old Days"	
40	Guitar Heroes: Beck, Clapton, Hendrix, Townshend and Page	Sakai: "A Life at the Crossroads," and "Meaty, Beaty, Big and Bouncy"	
41	Guitar Heroes (continued)	Sakai: "Hendrix in Black and White"	Fill out course evaluation

42	Bringing It All Back Home		EXAM 4
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Disclaimer: This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.