

# MMC 1702

## ROCK 'N' ROLL AND AMERICAN SOCIETY PT. I

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FALL 2013  
SECTION NUMBER: 05B6  
LOCATION: Weil 270

TIME: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 3 to 3:50 p.m.

**Instructor:** Professor David Carlson  
**Office & Hours:** 3219B Weimer  
T-R 2 p.m.- 3:30 p.m. or by appointment

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### Course Description

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. **Ideally, the course serves to develop your general intellectual capacity in popular culture.**

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 the general social and intellectual history of the United States into this story.** 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.

**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.

We will begin with an introduction to listening and some musical fundamentals, gradually developing a vocabulary with which to discuss and experience selected works from the history of rock 'n' roll.

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 a certain time period.

### Course objectives

This class is designed to help you improve your critical thinking skills, ability to discern important information, note taking, writing, and knowledge of the cultural history of the United States. While doing all this, you will hear a lot of great music.

### Textbooks and Required Reading

The required textbook is:

*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 from other books that will be posted on eLearning.**

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*

## E-Learning on Sakai

We will be using **e-Learning** for posting grades, reading assignments, course-related material, reaction papers, and the calendar. If you have never used Sakai, log on and learn to navigate it ASAP.

There's a tutorial and Help menu and you can get further assistance by contacting the [UF Computing HelpDesk](#) located at The Hub. Call 352-392-4357, e-mail [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu) or visit in person.

## Course Requirements

- Show up for lectures
- Read the text and all assigned materials
- Take good notes
- Complete three exams
- Write and submit two Reaction Papers

## Grading

Your grade for the course is based on a 1,000-point scale:

- **Three Exams: 750 points (250 pts. each)**
- **Two Reaction Papers: 200 points (100 points each)**
- **Attendance: 50 points (I will occasionally take attendance, usually on Fridays)**

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 Below

\*You may be able to take the course with the S/U option. Please check with your college's student services office for information.

For more information on UF grading policies, go to:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

## How to Do Well in This Course

**1. Always come to class.** Attendance is required, so no excuses. Take detailed notes on the lectures and study them every day. If you miss a lecture, make sure to get good notes from a classmate. Note-taking is part of the class experience, and I will not post lecture notes online. Therefore, attendance is important. And, class will be fun, so you won't want to miss it.

**2. Read the assigned readings before class.** The book and other readings assigned 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.

**3. Be open-minded and fully engage yourself in class.** Please leave your preconceptions about what sucks and what doesn't at the 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 personal taste and preference.

## Reaction Papers

**These are papers in which you will write your thoughts, impressions, reactions, etc. on the music and artists we cover in class.** You will write **TWO** papers—the first one on the decade of the '50s and the other on the '60s. They could be in a form of homage, critical piece, or even an overview of the decade backed up with your reactions, but it may **NOT** be a mere album review, biography, or artist profile filled with facts easily obtained on the

Web. Hopefully the music, lectures and videos will spark ideas and even challenge some preconceived notions you may have had about certain performers and/or music genres.

You are required to submit both papers on our e-Learning site, and each deadline is specified in the course schedule. The deadline is firm. When it passes, the board will close and you will not be allowed to submit late entries. Together these papers make up **20% of your final grade**, and a poor paper can have a negative impact on your final grade, even if you do well on exams. The grades will be decided based on content, writing style, degree of thought, creativity, mechanics, and length. **The length should be about 2-3 pages, double-spaced.** Your entries are private as far as your classmates are concerned, as they will be viewable by you and the instructors. I will post some sample writings from the past that may serve as “good” and “bad” examples.

## Notes on Exams/Make Ups

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. You are expected to come prepared to every class. Pay attention in lecture. Many, if not most, exam questions will come from lectures. Enjoy the music. Do the “bar-stool boogie,” but don’t fall behind; stay alert.

All testing dates are clearly stated in this syllabus. Failure to complete work at the appropriate time will result in a grade of “**zero**.” 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 official documentation to prove your need for absence.

## Attendance/Class Policies

**Missing a class or two can have a big impact on your final grade** because there is a lot of information covered in each class. With that in mind, please be on time for class and do not leave early. We have about 35 class meetings and 30+ years of rock and pop music to cover, so please be polite and courteous to your fellow students. Silence your cell phone. Do not talk, break-dance, or make rude noises during the lectures. Such disruptions will

have a damaging effect on your grade. There’s no excuse for rudeness or frequent tardiness. Playing air guitar or air drums is encouraged, depending on the song. Doing the “bar-stool boogie” (dancing in your seat) is encouraged!

## Extra Credit

A word about extra credit – there **WON’T** be any papers or projects offered for extra credit, but there **WILL BE** extra credit questions on each exam worth an additional 10 to 20 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 fairly. Please remember that the grading scale is hard and fast.

## Academic Honesty

A helpful explanation of academic honesty and plagiarism is hosted on the College and University websites at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/jou/honesty> and <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>, respectively. Academic honesty is a very big deal to me. Should you engage in any form of academic dishonesty, expect to be hit with the maximum penalty, at least a failing grade for the course and possibly expulsion from the university.

## Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodations must first register with the [Dean of Students Office](#). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodations. You must present this documentation in person during my office hours, not just before or after class. If you are requesting special accommodations, please contact the Dean of Students Office at 392-1261 or visit it at P202 Peabody Hall.

## Consider this syllabus a contract

This document is your contract with me, your professor. It outlines your responsibilities for this term and tells you how you can succeed in this course. It also outlines my duties and responsibilities as your instructor. That being said, this syllabus is subject to revision at the discretion of the instructor. You’ll be notified in advance of any revisions in class and via e-mail.

## Tentative Course Schedule

- Reading assignments are to be completed *before* class. Read ahead; it's for your own benefit. If you read the assignment before class, you'll have a better understanding of what's talked about in class.
  - The schedule will be revised as the semester progresses, depending on our progress. Your best bet is to frequently review the schedule on the e-Learning site.
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### Week 1: Getting started

**Aug. 21** Course Introduction and Class Welcome

- An Introduction to MMC 1702 Part I, including overview of the course, syllabus, and policies.

**Aug. 23** Video: What Is Rock 'n' Roll?

- Rock artists discuss what rock 'n' roll means to them (from *The Time-Life History of Rock and Roll*)

### Week 2: Before there was rock...

**Aug. 26 and 28** How to listen to music, and Labor Pains: How it All Began

Read on e-Learning, "The Origin of Rock and Roll"

**Aug. 30** Mississippi Ghosts: Robert Johnson and the Roots of Rock

- Read Covach, Chapter 1; and on eLearning: "Land Where the Blues Began" and "King of the Delta Blues"

### Week 3 A tale of three cities

**Sept. 2** LABOR DAY NO CLASS

**Sept. 4** A tale of three cities: New Orleans,

- Read Covach pp 80-94; and on eLearning: "The Immortals - Fats Domino"

**Sept. 6** A tale of three cities: Chicago

- Read on eLearning: "From the Delta to Chicago"

### Week 4 Memphis, Sun and Elvis

**Sept. 9** A tale of three cities: Memphis

- Read Covach pp 95-101; on eLearning: "706 Union Avenue" and "Elvis, Scott and Bill"

**Sept. 11** Who made the first rock 'n' roll record?

- Read Covach pp 102-105

**Sept. 13** Elvis Presley: The Return of The King

- Read on eLearning: "The Return of the King" and "Where Were You When Elvis Died"

### Week 5 The floodgates open

**Sept. 16** Chuck Berry and the Deluge

- Read on eLearning: "Got to Be Rock and Roll Music," "Up Against the Wall," and "The Immortals - Bo Diddley"

**Sept. 18** EXAM 1

**Sept. 20** NO CLASS

## **Week 6      The class of 1955**

**Sept. 23                      The Class of '55 – Perkins, Cash, Lewis, and Orbison**

- Read on eLearning: “The Immortals - Perkins, Cash, Lewis, and Orbison” and “Jerry Lee Sees the Bright Light of Dallas”

**Sept. 25                      Buddy Holly**

- Read on eLearning: “The Day the Music Died” and “The Immortals - Buddy Holly”

**Sept. 27                      “The Day the Music Died”**

## **Week 7      The five styles of rock 'n' roll**

**Sept. 30                      The Five Styles of Rock and Roll**

- Read on eLearning: “The Five Styles of Rock and Roll”

**Oct. 2                      The Five Styles of Rock and Roll**

- Read on eLearning: “Doo Wop”

**Oct. 4                      Rock ‘n’ Roll Inc. – Songwriters and Teen-Idols**

- Read Covach pp114-134; on eLearning: “Save the Last Dance For Me” and “The Immortals - Ricky Nelson”

## **Week 8      The “Wall of Sound”**

**Oct. 6                      REACTION PAPER #1 DUE BY MIDNIGHT**

**Oct. 7                      Good Rockin’ Tonight: The Rise and Fall of Rock and Roll**

- Read on eLearning: “Testimony in the Payola Hearings”

**Oct. 9      Phil Spector and The Wall of Sound**

- Read on eLearning: “Behind the Glass,” “Inflatable Phil,” and “The Immortals - Phil Spector”

**Oct. 11                      Wall of Sound continued**

## **Week 9      Sweet Soul Music**

**Oct. 14                      Motown Hit Machines**

- Read Covach, pp 222-253; and on eLearning: “Girl Groups” and “Motown Finishing School”

**Oct. 16                      Memphis and Muscle Shoals**

**Oct. 18                      NO CLASS**

## **Week 10      Good vibrations**

**Oct. 21                      The Beach Boys: Surf Rock’s Finest**

- Read Covach, pp 145-154; on eLearning: “The Immortals - The Beach Boys” and “A Teenage Hymn to God”

**Oct. 23                      Beach Boys continued**

**Oct. 25                      EXAM #2**

## **Week 11      Bob Dylan**

**Oct. 28                      Bob Dylan: The Folk Years**

- Read on eLearning: “The Immortals - Bob Dylan,” “How Does it Feel” and “The Making of Blonde on Blonde”

**Oct. 30                      Blasphemy: Dylan Goes Electric**

**Nov. 1**            **Dylan continued**

**Week 12**    **The Beatles**

**Nov. 4**            **The Beatles: The Early Years (1958-1964)**

- Read Covach, pp 158-166; on eLearning: “The Immortals - The Beatles” and “A Good Stomping Band”

**Nov. 6**            **The Beatles: The Transition Years (1965-1967)**

- Read on eLearning: “Words to the Wild” and “More Popular than Jesus”

**Nov. 8**            **The Beatles: The End of an Era (1968-1970)**

- Read on eLearning: “The Ballad of John and Yoko” and “Video Pioneer”

**Week 13**    **The British Invasion**

**Nov. 11**          **The British Invasion**

- Read Covach, pp 175-191; on eLearning: “The Immortals - The Kinks, The Rolling Stones, The Yardbirds and The Who” and “Altamont”

**Nov. 13**          **The British Invasion continued**

**Nov. 15**          **The Guitar Heroes (Clapton, Beck, Page, and Hendrix)**

- Read on eLearning: “A Life at the Crossroads,” “Hendrix in Black and White” and “Meaty, Beaty, Big and Bouncy”

**Week 14**    **Guitar Heroes, Psychedelia**

**Nov. 18**          **More Guitar Heroes**

**Nov. 20-22**      **The Tale of Two Cities: Los Angeles and San Francisco**

- Read on eLearning: “Next Year in San Francisco” and “These are the Good Old Days”

**Week 15**    **Wrapping it all up**

**Nov. 25**          **James Brown**

**Nov. 27-29**      **No CLASS**

**Week 16**    **Part 2 beckons**

**Dec. 2**            **What’s it all mean?**

**Dec. 4**            **EXAM # 3**

**Dec. 7**            **REACTION PAPER #2 DUE BY MIDNIGHT**