

## ROCK 'N' ROLL AND AMERICAN SOCIETY

MMC1702

3 CREDITS

[FALL 2015]

*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:** *Class meets from 3-3:50 p.m. each Monday and from 3-4:55 p.m. each Wednesday in Weimer 1060, a large lecture hall also known as Gannett Auditorium.*

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

**OFFICE HOURS:** *1-2:45 p.m. Monday and Wednesday or by appointment.*

**COURSE TA OR COORDINATOR:** *TBA*

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

**COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:** Assignments and grades will be posted in Sakai. *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 \(Fourth Edition\)\* by John Covach and Andrew Flory \(W.W. Norton, 2014.](#)

*There also will be required reading of 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. There is no longer a Part 2 of this course.*

**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 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. Lectures include a great deal of multimedia, especially music and videos of musical performances. Unfortunately, the large lecture format does not lend itself well to a lot of discussion, but students are encouraged to discuss the material within the e-learning system, and the instructor will weigh in as appropriate.*

## COURSE POLICIES:

**REQUIREMENTS:** *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. Show up for every lecture. Arrive 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 everything when exam time rolls around.
2. Read the text and all assigned materials *before* class. 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.
3. 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.
4. Create a timeline of events covered in our class. You will use a free, online tool to create this interactive timeline. Its purpose is to help you see how technology, human events, artists and music joined to create this thing we call rock 'n' roll and how it changed the world. I will provide greater detail in week 3.
5. Peer review three of your classmates’ timelines. You will be assigned these when the time comes.
6. Be open-minded and fully engage yourself. Please leave your preconceptions about music – 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 and better understand 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. So, 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.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** ***Attendance is required.** I will take attendance at random, but I shouldn’t have to motivate you to show up to hear great music and fascinating stories*

*about the people who made it. I do not put the lecture slides online, so it really is a good idea to come to class, even at 3 p.m. And remember, signing your friend's name is a form of academic dishonesty and can get you an F.*

**EXAM POLICY:** *Exams are given during regular class periods in the usual meeting room. 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 the Canvas version of the syllabus. Please arrange your schedule so you can be in class on the test dates. Please do not ask to take exams early or late.*

**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).*

**ASSIGNMENT POLICY:** *Deadlines are hard and fast. You will lose 10 points per day, or part thereof, if your work is late.*

**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, or me, 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](https://www.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. (And signing your friend's name on an attendance sheet is a 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 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 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 a hybrid course with live, in-person lectures and other course materials being made available 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.*

**ANOTHER WORD ABOUT COPYRIGHT:** *Please remember that the materials used in this class are subject to copyright. The music we hear and the videos we watch belong to the respective copyright holders. We are able to use them legally for educational purposes because of the federal Teach Act, but the act does not extend to you. You may not copy or redistribute the works of others without written permission. The lecture materials belong to your instructors. You may not copy or redistribute them without permission either.*

## GRADING POLICIES:

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

Assignment	Points or percentage
Exams (4)	150 points each (600 points total)
Timeline project	200 points
Peer review of timelines	100 points
Attendance	100

## GRADE 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

## 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 bring this to my office; please do not try to present it to me before or after class. You also 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](mailto: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.



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.*