

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Introduction to Rock Music: Its Historical, Musical, and Performative Role in American Culture</b> Professor Neal</p>
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**Course Description:**

This course explores the history of rock music, its significant performers, producers, recordings, performances, and cultural identity in the twentieth century. Following a loose chronology, we will trace the evolution of specific musical styles and investigate issues related to culture, performance practice, transmission, and reception. Extensive listening assignments will introduce the distinct musical styles, voices, and performers that comprise the genre. Reading assignments cover the relationship of rock music to American popular culture, historical representation, and authenticity. This course will critically evaluate rock's musical content and contemporary cultural role; the primary texts for our investigation are the songs themselves.

**Documentation:**

If you need help listening to the recordings on this website, consult the document available on the course website (MSWord document covers software, hardware, internet connections, and setting up your computer to play these files).

**Course Information:**

Course: Tues-Thurs 12:30 - 1:45 p.m.  
Location: Hanes Auditorium  
Room 121

**Contact Information:**

Professor: Dr. Neal  
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Office: Hill Hall Annex 11  
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Thursdays 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Teaching Assistants:

Email:

Office: Hill Hall Graduate Student Offices

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.  
Thursdays 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.

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excerpts from pieces not covered in class or on the assignments (where you will be asked to describe style, likely artists, approximate date, and historical relevance of the style).

### **Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to abide by the University's Honor Code at all times. All projects and exams must include a signed honor statement. No form of plagiarism, cheating, or compromising the work of another student will be tolerated. Unless otherwise specified on the specific assignment, all graded work is to be completed individually.

### **The Learning Environment:**

Any study of music is best undertaken within a community of scholars and peers. Meet your classmates; work together to learn the repertoire, explore the ideas, read the texts, and understand the concepts that we will address in this course. Bring your academic experiences from other disciplines to this subject area. Engage with this music inside and outside the classroom for the span of the semester.

### **Syllabus:**

(Reading and listening assignments will be posted regularly on the website.)

Week 1	Thurs 1/12	Introduction and Overview, "What Is Rock?"
Week 2	Tues 1/17	The Popular Sounds of the 1940s: Crooners and Twang
	Thurs 1/19	The Appeal of Rhythm and Blues
Week 3	Tues 1/24	Rock and Roll Is Born
	Thurs 1/26	Elvis and Rockabilly
Week 4	Tues 1/31	Making Sense of Songs
	Thurs 2/2	Selling Tunes: Brill Building and the Bandstand
Week 5	Tues 2/7	Everly Brothers and the Beach Boys
	Thurs 2/9	British Invasion
Week 6	Tues 2/14	Beatlemania
	Thurs 2/16	Exam #1
Week 7	Tues 2/21	Dylan and the Byrds
	Thurs 2/23	Coming to Terms with the 1960s
Week 8	Tues 2/28	Motown Comes to Town
	Thurs 3/2	James Brown's Voice
Week 9	Tues 3/7	Psychedelia and 1969
	Thurs 3/9	The London Scene

	Tues 3/14	NO CLASS - Spring Break
	Thurs 3/16	NO CLASS – Spring Break
Week 10	Tues 3/21	Blues-Based Rock, Southern Rock
	Thurs 3/23	The 1970s: Rock's Greatest Potential?
Week 11	Tues 3/28	Disco!
	Thurs 3/30	Exam #2
Week 12	Tues 4/4	Mainstream Rock
	Thurs 4/6	Punk Appears
Week 13	Tues 4/11	New Wave Meets Pop and MTV
	Thurs 4/13	Metal and Hair Bands Paper due
Week 14	Tues 4/18	U2 and the 1980s
	Thurs 4/20	Seattle Sound
Week 15	Tues 4/25	Turn of the Century
	Thurs 4/27	The Landscape Today
Final		Final Exam: Thurs., May 4, 2006 at 4:00 p.m.

### **Selected Bibliography:**

- Brackett, David. *Interpreting Popular Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Brackett, David. *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Covach, John. *What's That Sound? An Introduction to Rock and Its History*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006 [Uncorrected Proofs].
- Covach, John, and Graeme M. Boone. *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- DeCurtis, Anthony and James Henke, eds. *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll: The Definitive History of the Most Important Artists and their Music*. With Holly George-Warren. Original Ed. Jim Miller. New York: Random House, 1992.
- Einarson, John. *Desperados: The Roots of Country Rock*. New York : Cooper Square Press, 2000.
- Everett, Walt. *The Beatles as Musicians: Revolver through the Anthology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Everett, Walt. *The Beatles as Musicians: The Quarry Men through Rubber Soul*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Miller, James. *Flowers in the Dustbin: The Rise of Rock and Roll, 1947-1977*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.
- Shank, Barry. *Dissonant Identities: The Rock'n'Roll Scene in Austin, Texas*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994.

Stuessy, Joe, and Scott Lipscomb, *Rock and Roll: Its History and Stylistic Development*. 5th Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006.

Walls, Richard C. "Bruce Springsteen & Michael Jackson: Through Time and Space with the Changeling Gods." *Creem* 19 No. 6 (February 1988): 50-53.

## Sample Assignments:

### Weekly Listening/Reading Assignment

#### Assignment 10 (MARCH 21)

1. Discussion Board #2 assigned
2. Reading: Chapter 8
3. Listening:

Led Zeppelin

“Whole Lotta Love” (1969)

"Stairway to Heaven" (1972)

Deep Purple

“Smoke on the Water” (1972)

Black Sabbath

"Sweet Leaf" (1971)

Allman Brothers

“Ramblin’ Man” (1973)

Lynyrd Skynyrd

"Sweet Home Alabama" (1974)

Charlie Daniels Band

"The South's Gonna Do It Again" (1974)

Paul Simon

“Still Crazy After All These Years” (1975)

Elton John

"Rocket Man (I Think It's Going to Be a Long, Long Time)" (1972)

Yes

"Roundabout" (1972)

Genesis

"I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)" (1973)

Emerson, Lake, and Palmer

“Trilogy” (1972)

Chicago

"Make Me Smile" (1970)

Steely Dan

"Peg" (1977)

Alice Cooper

“I’m Eighteen” (1971)

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#### DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENT #1

Assigned February 7, 2006

Each class member will be assigned to a small discussion group of approximately 20 students, organized on Blackboard by last name. For all discussion board assignments, adhere to the following guidelines:

- To get to the discussion boards, go to Blackboard. Login with your ONYEN and personal password. Choose "Communication" > "Group Pages," then select your group (by last name). Click on "Group Discussion Board." (note: these boards will be made available to you when the first assignment is distributed.)
- Present your idea(s) as coherently as possible, and post your response to the assigned as a new thread. Your initial response should be at least one well-formed paragraph in length, approximately 250 words or more.
- Read and *respond* to your group-members' posts. You must contribute at least 2 follow-up posts.
- Write clearly and professionally. For discussions, first-person responses are fine.
- Exhibit respect toward your fellow discussants and the subject matter at all times.
- Reference outside sources -- websites, newspaper articles, books, recordings, quotations, etc. -- wherever relevant to support your ideas.

Your grade will be determined by the following:

- depth of thought in your comments
- relevance of ideas to the given question and issues addressed in class and in the reading
- additionally, your grade will be affected by how much you engage with classmates in your responses to their posts.

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QUESTION: *For the first decade of rock's history (up to about 1964), how much was the new genre defined by musical style, and how much was it defined by culture?*

- Use specific examples in your discussion. Refer to songs, artists, events, writers, or other evidence to support your ideas.
  - Post your initial response to the question no later than Friday, February 10, 2006 (11:59 p.m.)
  - This discussion board closes Monday, February 13 (11:59 p.m.)
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