

Music 0824: Special Topics in Rock (History of Popular Music in the U.S.A.)

University of Pittsburgh
Department of Music
Fall 2021
Tuesdays 2-420
123 MB (and online)
Instructor: Professor Andrew Weintraub

This course explores the history of popular music (mostly rock) and the political, economic, and cultural forces that surround its production, distribution, and consumption in the U.S.A. The class is organized chronologically, encompassing the period from the late 19th century to the present. In addition to addressing genres sold under the rock marketing label, we will cover genres sold under different labels such as soul, funk, salsa, disco, and hip-hop. The course is not simply a narrative history of genres, individual artists, and stylistic trends, but a complex story about the social and cultural conditions that inform popular music as a cultural practice in the U.S.A. The course examines the discursive and material construction of popular music as it intersects with discourses about race, gender, class, ethnicity, generation, and geography. The course addresses historical tendencies as well as historical tensions, organized into themes such as music as community and music as commodity; individual creativity and market demands; and the politics of appropriation and selling out. Students will develop a common vocabulary of musical terms – melody, rhythm, harmony, form, timbre, instrumentation, texture – to understand how the music is constructed as sound.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of rock music and associated popular music genres;
- Demonstrate an understanding of rock music's history and its relationship to American society and culture;
- Identify elements of rock from various eras and associated genres;
- Examine various types of rock music using different analytical approaches;
- Develop critical skills for interpreting music.

COVID19 Learning Environment Statement

COVID19 has been and will continue to be stressful for all of us. Between economic distress, health challenges, loss of family members, social distancing, and really slow internet, learning will continue to be complex. To maintain our spirits in the course, I will do the following:

- I will try to be as flexible as I can with all students in terms of deadlines related to COVID 19 or life in general. Stuff happens. Please let me know when stuff happens so that I can help you be as successful in the course as possible.
- I will try to make all parts of learning and Canvas as accessible, consistent, and clear. Please let me know, kindly, when something does not appear or work as it should.
- I will try to be as responsive to you and your learning needs as I can.

In turn, I ask that you do the following:

- Please be kind, patient, and forgiving with yourself, fellow classmates, and professor. Stuff also happens to professors too; we are doing our best.
- Please reach out to me for any support you need. If I cannot personally help you, I will guide you to the help that you need.
- Please know that no matter what operational posture the University is in, office hours and academic support (advising, mentoring, help) will continue to be available to you.

Course Requirements

This course involves listening, reading, writing, and discussion. There is one required textbook for the course (*Rockin' Out, 6th Edition*). All other course materials will be made available through Canvas. It is therefore essential that you are familiar with Canvas and regularly check your Canvas portals (24/7/365 support within Canvas). You will need to absorb reading, listening, and viewing material on your own, and put in consistent effort throughout the whole term. Late assignments will not be accepted.

1. Attendance and Participation (60 points). This course will consist of a mix of remote synchronous and in-person lectures. Students are responsible for all course materials, which will cover essential biographical, contextual, and stylistic information about the music. Participation grades will be based on participation in discussions and overall engagement with the course. Class time will be set aside during each session to listen as a group and to discuss the material. We will also do some group assignments during and outside of class. Participation is an important part of learning. Arrive prepared and ready

to think out loud and share your ideas and questions. All students are expected to actively listen to one another in order to participate in discussions.

2. Journal and shared writing (20 points each, 60 points total). Each chapter contains several "Journal" opportunities. Think of journal-writing (or "journaling") as a form of guided note-taking. "Shared Writing" assignments within chapters will require you to respond to a writing prompt and respond to your classmates' responses.
3. Quizzes (20 points each, 80 points total). You have assigned reading for each class session. (Note: if you find apparent inconsistencies between written sources, and the lecture material, I invite you to ask me about them at any time). Quizzes on the reading can help you learn more as you read. Quizzes will be a mix of multiple choice and short essays. Missed quizzes may not be made up.
4. Additional assignments (30 points each, 90 points total). There will be three additional assignments (musical road maps; musical ethnography; and musical mashups).
5. Exams (80 points each, 160 points total). Exams are based on class lectures, discussions, and assignments. See class schedule below for details on which chapters will be covered on each exam. Exams will be a mix of short answer, essay, and listening identification questions. There will be two exams. There are no make-up exams for this class. More details about the exams will be given in class.

GRADING & SCALE

- Attendance & Participation: 60 points
- Journal and Shared Writing (20 points each, x3): 60 points
- Quizzes (20 points each, x4): 80 points
- Additional Assignments (30 points each, x3): 90 points
- Exams (80 points each, x2): 160 points

TOTAL: 450 points

440 - 450 points = A+
418 - 439 points = A
405 - 417 points = A-
391 - 404 points = B+
373 - 390 points = B
360 - 372 points = B-
346 - 359 points = C+
328 - 345 points = C
315 - 327 points = C-
301 - 314 points = D+
283 - 300 points = D
0 - 283 points = F

ALL REQUIREMENTS, DATES, AND DEADLINES ARE FIRM: THERE CAN BE NO "MAKE UPS" OR END-OF-THE-SEMESTER WORK FOR EXTRA CREDIT. EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE ONLY

RARELY AND ONLY IN CASES OF SERIOUS HARDSHIP FOR WHICH DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN ADVANCE.

Course resources

Required textbook:

- Garofalo, Reebee and Steven Waksman. [6th Edition] *Rockin' Out: Popular Music in the USA*. Pearson.

To order the eText (\$40 for four months):

<https://www.pearson.com/store/p/rockin-out-popular-music-in-the-u-s-a-updated-edition/P100003097372/9780137533794?tab=table-of-contents>

- Selected recordings (on Spotify), containing weekly listening assignments coordinated with lecture topics and assigned reading. I will make additional listening examples available. You may access the Spotify playlist here:

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5Dvr4B6sb66YYp3G0zS4cj?si=pCIAXlxjR_ybiaEj0fUG6Q&nd=1

- Resources available through PittCat (for example):

Rock's Backpages

<https://www-rocksbackpages-com.pitt.idm.oclc.org/>

Popular Culture in Britain and America

<http://www.rockandroll.amdigital.co.uk.pitt.idm.oclc.org/>

On-line Music Dictionary

New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Database (University Library System Digital Library—"find articles")

- Films (required; some will be viewed in class). More details about how to view these films will be made available.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

NOTE: Reading, Listening, and Writing, as well as Quizzes, are due in class on the date of the lecture (before we cover the chapter in class). Additional reading and viewing will be assigned as necessary. The following schedule is tentative.

M=Module

Green, Orange, Yellow, and Blue indicate assignments that must be submitted for credit.

August

31 Introduction: Definitions, Themes, and Issues

M1

September

7 Constructing Tin Pan Alley: From Minstrelsy to Mass Culture

M2

14 Blues, Jazz, and Country: The Segregation of Popular Music

•Journal and shared writing

M3

21 Good Rockin' Tonight": The Rise of Rhythm and Blues

• Quiz on chapters 1-3

M4

28 Crossing Cultures: The Eruption of Rock 'n' Roll

•Musical "Road Maps"

M5

October

5 The Empire Strikes Back: The Reaction to Rock 'n' Roll

• Quiz on chapters 4-5

M6

12 Popular Music and Political Culture: The Sixties

•Musical Ethnography: Interview

M7

19 Music Versus Markets: The Fragmentation of Pop

• Midterm

M8

26 Punk and Disco: The Poles of Pop

•Journal and shared writing

M9

November

2 Are We the World?: Music Videos, Superstars, and Mega-Events

•Quiz on chapters 7-8

M10

9 Rap and Metal: The Voices of Youth Culture

•Journal and shared writing

M11

16 Repackaging Pop: The Changing Mainstream

• Quiz on chapters 9-10

M12

23 [Thanksgiving]

30 Changing Channels: Music and Media in the New Millennium

•Musical Mashups

M13

December

7 Wrap-Up and Review

[Final Exam during Finals Week]

COURSE RESOURCES & POLICIES

Academic Support. If you experience difficulty in the course for any reason, please do not hesitate to consult with the professor. In addition to the Music Department resources, a wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to learn and meet the course requirements.

Disability Services. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your professor and Disability Resources and Services (DRS) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. 140 William Pitt Union (412.648.7890, 412.228.5347 for P3 ASL users). DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Health & Safety Statement. In the midst of this Coronavirus pandemic, it is extremely important that you abide by public health regulations and University of Pittsburgh health standards and guidelines. While in class, at a minimum this means that you must wear a face covering and comply with physical distancing requirements; other requirements may be added by the University during the semester. These rules have been developed to protect the health and safety of all community members. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in you not being permitted to attend class in person and could result in a Student Conduct violation. For the most up-to-date information and guidance,

please visit <coronavirus.pitt.edu>, and check your Pitt email for updates before each class.

Accessibility. The Canvas LMS platform was built using the most modern HTML and CSS technologies, and is committed to W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative and Section 508 guidelines. Specific details regarding individual feature compliance are documented and updated regularly.

Diversity & Inclusion. The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, see: <<http://diversity.pitt.edu/affirmative-action/policies-procedures-and-practices>>. I ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that all members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or e-mailing <titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu>. Reports can also be filed online: <<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/make-report/report-form>>. You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity (<<http://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html>>). Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Students suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the Academic Integrity Guide (<<https://pitt.libguides.com/academicintegrity>>). A minimum sanction of a zero score for the assignment/quiz/exam will be imposed. Please see the professor for more information or clarification. View the Academic Integrity Code at: <<https://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policies-and-procedures/academic-integrity-code>>.

E-mail Communication Policy

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account

*on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. To forward e-mail sent to your University account, go to <http://accounts.pitt.edu>, log into your account, click on **Edit Forwarding Addresses**, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, go to www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html.)*

General Education Requirement Goals

If the course fulfills one or more General Education Requirements, the goals of each Gen Ed should appear in the syllabus.

Turnitin

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.