

History 371
Society, Culture, and Rock and Roll
Spring 2011

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This class will survey the social and cultural fabric of post-World War II United States through the prism of music—*rock and roll* music. At one level the class will survey trends and styles in rock, focusing first on the artists and groups who gave rise to this hybrid form of music from its country and blues roots. It will then track the rise of rock and roll in the 1950s and the corporate, political, and social backlash against it. The focus on the 1960s will be on music as an expression and extension of the social, cultural, and political changes of that decade. Finally, the class will examine the paradoxical developments of the evolution of music videos (read: MTV) with the emergence of an abrasive, often angry music (read: punk/grunge/rap) by the end of the 1970s and into the 1990s. In the end, this class will examine and explain the technological, business, and social forces that helped cement rock's position in Western popular culture.

At another, deeper level, by placing this tradition of popular music in its historic context, the class will look at the problematic and interrelated issues of music, business, politics, gender, race, class, and culture in the postwar era. There are **five major themes** around which the class turns. The first is the importance of **African-American culture** to the origin and development of rock and roll. The second is the effect of **demographic shifts** and in particular the dramatic population growth during the postwar era (both in the United States and Britain). **Economic issues**—prosperity and major and independent record companies—form a third prism (to mix the metaphor) through which we will look at rock and roll. **Technological innovations** that both spread popular music and, in the 1950s, *became part of making music*, are a fourth theme. Finally **youth culture** and experiences are central to this class. This interdisciplinary class will empower students to use a medium with which they are somewhat familiar (popular music) to examine less well-known (to them) issues and historical forces that are intrinsic to the American and British postwar experience.

Assigned Readings: available for purchase at Follett's and University bookstores.

- Katherine Charlton, *Rock Music Styles: A History*, 6th edition (McGraw-Hill Publishing)
- David Brackett, ed., *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates* 2nd edition (Oxford University Press)

COURSE OUTLINE

Part I: The Blues, Country, and Race: The Evolution of Rock and Roll

Week 1: *The Roots of Rock*

- January 10: “Rock and Roll Music”: Course Introduction and Overview
- January 12: “Blue Yodel”: Country Blues and Country—the Roots of Rock
- January 14: “Brown-eyed Handsome Man”: Rock and Race, or Rhythm and Blues

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music History, Chapter 1 (pp. 5-11) Chapter 2 (pp. 20-26)

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8-11, 15, 16-17, 19-20

Week 2: *The Devil’s Music: “Hell boy, you are the Devil”* (Jerry Lee Lewis to Elvis)

- January 17: **Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observed—No Class**
- January 19: “Good Rockin’ Tonight”: Sun Records and Elvis
- January 21: “Great Balls of Fire”: Rock’s Evil Geniuses—Berry and Lewis

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music History, Chapters 3 and 4

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapters 23-24

Week 3: *The Empire Strikes Back*

- January 24: “The Day the Music Died”: Buddy Holly
- January 26: “Who’s Sorry Now”: Conservative Backlash: Payola and the Dick Clark Empire
- January 28: “You Don’t Own Me”: Women in Early Rock Music

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music History, Chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 69-75)

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapters 25-28

Week 4: *American Pie, American Dream*

- January 31: “Surfin’ Safari”: The California Dream and Rock and Roll
- **February 2: In-Class Review for First Exam**
- **February 4: First In-Class Exam**

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music Styles, Chapter 5 (pp. 77-82)

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapter 29

Part II: Popular Music and Populist Politics: The 1960s and 1970s

Week 5: *The British Invasion—A Hard Day’s Night*

- February 7: “Guitar Heroes”
- February 9: “Ferry Across the Mersey”: The Beatles and other Liverpool Shit-kickers
- February 11: “Revolution 9”: The Beatles, Part II

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music Styles, Chapter 7 (pp. 99-105)

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapters 38-40

Week 6: *Dancing in the Streets: Music, Civil Rights Movement, and Political Protest*

- February 14 “Brown Sugar”: Stones, Who, and the London Sound
- February 16: “Beauty is Only Skin Deep”: Martin Luther King and the Motown Sound
- February 18: “RESPECT”: Stax/Volt and Soul Music

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music Styles, Chapter 7 (pp. 106-11) and Chapter 6

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapters 42, 33-37

Week 7: *All You Need is Love: Acid Rock and the Counterculture*

- February 21: “The Times They are a Changin’”: Bob Dylan and the Music of Protest
- February 23: “Love is the Drug”: Beats and the San Francisco Sound
- February 25: “My Generation”: *Monterey Pop*

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music Styles, Chapter 9 (pp. 130-35) and Chapter 10

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul. Chapters 31-32 and 43-44

Week 8: *The End of an Era*

- February 28: “Wild Thing”: The Genius and Transformation of Jimi Hendrix
- March 2: “Woodstock”: Well, ah, Woodstock
- March 4: : “Gimme Shelter”: Altamont

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music Styles, Chapter 8 (pp. 118-28)

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapters 45, 49

Week 9: *The End: 1969*

- **March 7: In-Class Review for Second Exam**
- **March 9: Second In-Class Exam**
- **March 11: Library Research Day: No Class**

Part III: Prima Donnas, Punks and the Promise of Rock and Roll: 1970s-90s

Week 10: *Me: America Turns Inward*

- March 21: “Have You Ever Been Mellow?” The “Me Generation” and the Soft Sounds of the 1970
- March 23 “Boogie Fever”: The Excesses of Disco
- March 25: “Ziggy Stardust” meets Alice Cooper: Glam Rock

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music Styles, Chapters 9 (pp. 140-43), 17 (pp. 254-58), 14 (pp. 215-20)

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock and Soul, Chapters 50-52, 61, 58-59

Week 11: *The Blank Generation Revolts*

- March 28: *Spinal Tap* (Part 1)
- March 30: *Spinal Tap* (Part 2)
- April 1: “Blitzkrieg Bop”: American Punk from Ann Arbor to CBGBs

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music Styles, Chapters 16 (pp. 232-36)

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapter 62

Week 12: *I Want my MTV? The Politics of Punk and Music Videos*

- April 4: “Pretty Vacant”—anything but: British Punk—the Sex Pistols and Clash
- April 6: “Get Up, Stand Up” [for your rights]: Bob Marley and Rock against Racism
- April 8: “Money for Nothing”: Early Music Television

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music Styles, Chapters 16 (pp. 236-39), 15 and 19

Reader: Brackett, Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapters 63-68

Week 13: *Generation X*

- April 11: “Pretty Wasted”: Punk from Huntington Beach to Washington DC
- April 13: “All Apologies”: Seattle Grunge and the Meaning of Kurt Cobain
- April 15: “Rapper’s Delight”: The Many Faces of Hip Hop and Rap

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music Styles, Chapters 19 and 21 (pp. 336-40)

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapters 66-68, 73-80

Week 14: *Sid and Nancy meet Heroin Bob and His Girl Friend*

- April 18: *SLC Punk* (Part 1)
- April 20: *SLC Punk* (Part 2)
- **April 22: Library Research Day: No Class**

Textbook: Charlton, Rock Music Styles, Chapter 18.

Reader: Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapters 70, 75-80

Week 15: *The Politics of Censorship—or it's déjà vu all over again*

- April 27: “Eye of the Beholder”: Tipper Gore meets AC/DC, N.W.A., and Buckcherry
- April 29: Conclusion: The Meaning of Life
- May 1: Final Review or, Review for the Final
- **Reader:** Brackett, ed., Pop, Rock, and Soul, Chapter 91

➤ **Attendance:**

I will not take attendance at the lectures. You are responsible, however, for all of the material covered in lectures, music clips, and videos and you will find it difficult in the extreme to pass this course without regular attendance to lecture.

➤ **Teaching Assistants:**

One of the greatest learning resources in this class are the teaching assistants. I have been most fortunate to have **David Weir** and **Mauricio Castro** assigned to this class. David and Mauricio have had extensive experience working with undergraduates, are well versed in rock and roll music and twentieth-century U.S. history, and are outstanding members of our graduate program. Individually and together they know the material inside and out. Most important, David and Mauricio are here to help students do the very best that they can in History 371. They will be available for consultation during office hours and by appointment. Make use of their many talents.

➤ **Exams:**

There will be three hourly, in-class exams administered during the course of the semester. Each is worth 50 points. The first exam is scheduled for **Friday, February 4th** during the regular class period; it will focus on the lectures, visuals, and readings covered in Part I. The second exam will take place on **Wednesday, March 9th**, and it will cover the lectures, visuals, and readings in Part II. The third exam will take place during **finals week**, and it covers Part III's lectures, visuals, and readings.

Each will contain three short answer questions and one essay question. To help you prepare for the tests, you will receive a list of short-answer and essay question options. The short-answer and essay questions on each exam will come *word-for-word* from that study sheet. None of the exams is cumulative—each will cover one of the three main areas into which the course is divided. Each is worth a total of **fifty (50)** points—5 each for the short-answer and 35 points for the short essay.

➤ **In-Class Responses:**

There will be four opportunities during the semester to respond spontaneously and *very* informally to class material (lectures, films, discussion, etc.). These unscheduled, unannounced and generally ungraded in-class written response pieces will be worth a total of **twenty (20)** points or five points each. There will be no chance to make up the response if you are not in class that day. That's only fair to those of your classmates who were in class and able to respond.

➤ **Reading Response Essay Assignments**

Over the course of the semester, you will write **three (3)** informal two-page essays responding to questions based primarily on the reading material and lectures. The essays are due in class on the date indicated. You decide which three of eight dates you will submit essays. Note: essays must be submitted in hard copy in class—no email submissions and/or late submissions will be accepted. There also will be no backtracking. Each essay is worth 0-10 points. I want to emphasize that these are informal writing

assignments. The purpose of these two-page essays is not to improve your writing skills but to stimulate thinking about issues, questions, and problems raised by your study of American history in the twentieth century viewed through the lens of popular culture, specifically music. So you will be judged not on things like spelling, organization, and grammar but instead on things like the process and quality of thought. Read-and-respond questions for the informal essay options begin after the grading summary below.

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course: my email address: mmorrison@purdue.edu , and my office phone: 494-4140.

➤ **Grading:**

Believing both in the Protestant work ethic and laissez-faire market principles, there will be no curving in this class. Nor will there be any predetermined number of As, Bs, Cs, Ds, and Fs. Each student will be rewarded for her or his efforts, and no one will anyone be penalized for working hard and playing by the rules. Each student controls her or his destiny (grade-wise, that is) in this class.

Exam 1:	0-50 points	A: 180-200
Exam 2:	0-50 points	B: 160-179
Exam 3:	0-50 points	C: 140-159
In-Class Responses:	0-20	D: 120-139
Essays:	0-30	F: 0-119
Total:	200 points	



“Hey! Ho! Let’s Go!”
The Ramones

**HISTORY 371
SOCIETY, CULTURE, AND ROCK AND ROLL
SPRING 2009**

READING RESPONSE ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS

Over the course of the semester, you will write three two-page essays. The essays are due in hard-copy in the week they are assigned. You decide which three of eight dates you will submit essays, but keep in mind that there will be no extensions granted or backtracking allowed. The essays may be typed or (neatly) hand-written. Each should be 275-500 words. Each one is worth 0-10 points.

These are informal writing assignments. The purpose of these essays is not to improve your writing skills but to stimulate thinking about issues, questions, and problems raised by your study of the interconnection between society and culture on the one hand, and, on the other, rock and roll. The goal is for you to discover, develop, and clarify your own ideas. You should do the appropriate reading; then sit down and write in response to the question for 20-30 minutes. You will not be judged on things like spelling, organization, and grammar. But we will be looking for evidence that you are thinking seriously about the course materials. Your essays should show that you are wrestling with concepts explained in the reading and in lectures and that you have done your reading and thinking before attempting your essays. For the most part, you will be rewarded for the process of thinking rather than for the end product you deliver.

INSTRUCTIONS: SELECT ANY THREE OF THE FOLLOWING EIGHT ESSAY OPTIONS.

Essay Option 1. Select **one** of the following three questions. Due Week 3 on **Monday January 24**

1. Imagine that you are a serious student of this new phenomenon called rock and roll. You are writing an essay for Billboard Magazine that is going to try to explain the influences that shaped it. Write a brief summary of that essay explaining the influence of one of the following on Fifties rock and roll:
 - Blues
 - R&B
 - Country Music
2. Imagine that you were 14 in 1954, and consider how you might have reacted to Wynonie Harris, Little Richard, or Louis Jordan.
3. What is the most surprising thing you have learned about the origins and background to rock and roll? How is your sense of what rock is different from the music—especially R&B music—you have heard in class and seen on video tape?

Essay Option 2. Select **one** of the following three questions. Due Week 4 on **Monday January 31**

1. Assume that you are a white teenager growing up in a racially segregated and divided southern town—Tupelo, Ferriday, Lubbock, for example. Music—rock and roll—seems to be your only way out of, and up from, the dirt-poor life that you lead. What kinds of music are you listening to? Or put another way, what are the musical influences—both in terms of music types and musicians—on your own rock music songs?
2. Assume that you are the parent of this rebellious white teenager who is learning to play that caterwauling music called rock and roll. Why are you so angry about that kind of music? Is it just the noise, or are there other reasons that you are so opposed to having your child “get into” rock and rock culture?
3. You are a “hip” Purdue University undergraduate in History 371. Do you buy Tom Petty’s theory that rock and roll got out of control, and that the great artists—Presley, Lewis, Berry, Holly, Little Richard—had to be “neutralized” and disc jockeys like Alan Freed had to be “eliminated” in order to

calm things down? Or, in your not-so-humble opinion, does music simply change with the times, and the “rock” of American Bandstand and the Brill Building (Fabian, Neil Sedaka, Bobby Darin, Frankie Avalon) was inevitable?

Essay Option 3. Select **one** of the following three questions. Due Week 6 on **Wednesday February 16**

1. You are a “hip” eighteen-year-old teenager and the year is 1963. What kind of music are you hearing on the radio these days? How is it different from what you heard on Top Forty radio a few years back? Is the music, in your not-so-humble opinion, better or worse or just different from what you’ve been used to?
2. Compare the Beatles’ “I Want to Hold Your Hand” to “Norwegian Wood” or “Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band.” Then explore two questions: How do you know (from listening) that both songs are by the Beatles? How can you describe the differences between early and late Beatles songs?
3. You and your friend have hot debates on which of the two British groups—the Beatles and the Stones—is the best. What are the terms of the debate (that is how do you two determine which of the groups is superior)? List the pros and cons for each side of this debate. A tube of Clearasil to the winner.

Essay Option 4. Select **one** of the following three questions. Due Week 7 on **Friday February 25**

1. Analyze the Motown sound. Explain the role of the label’s performers, songwriters, producers, and house band (the “Funk Brothers”). Relate the label’s musical and marketing philosophy to the social and racial climate of the 1960s.
2. To what extent did two soul labels—Motown and Stax/Volt (ok so it’s three labels)—represent different trends in the civil rights movement? Which of the two “sounds” had deeper roots in African-American culture? Why?
3. What is the importance of Bob Dylan? Is his influence felt more in the arena of politics (in the 1960s) or did he have a more significant impact on music (e.g., lyrics and the emergence of folk rock) and musicians (e.g., the Beatles)? Give your reasons for selecting one or the other.

Essay Option 5. Select **one** of the following three questions. Due Week 9 on **Monday March 7**

1. Much has been made in the last two weeks about how music—soul music and electrified folk and blues—reflected larger social and political trends. Well, how about it: *do you believe this or is Professor Morrison making it up?* When you think about any one of the three trends (soul music, Dylan, or MC5/Hendrix), do they affect (or shape) society or do they reflect only trends in rock music?
2. To what extent have the sounds of the 1960s (or at least the music that you have heard) shaped the music of the late 20th century? That is, what connections do you see between the types of soul music of the early 1960s or the electrified sounds of Dylan, the MC5, and Hendrix and more recent groups that you listen to. You must be specific about the connections between the genres (or sounds) of the 1960s and the groups you cite.
3. Explore the “guitar hero” in Sixties rock. Identify significant performers and describe their influences and approaches to the instrument.

Essay Option 6. Select **one** of the following three questions. Due Week 11 on **Monday March 28**

1. You are a reporter for Rolling Stone magazine who has been with the journal since the 1960s. Write a short record review of **one** of the following artists and their album. Assess not only its artistic merit, but how it has changed or influenced the landscape of rock and roll.
•Joni Mitchell, Blue

- Bee Gees, Saturday Night Fever
 - David Bowie, The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust
 - Funkadelic, Maggot Brain
2. Assume you are one of the following living in the 1970s:
 - A single adult woman
 - A fifteen-year-old teen living in Columbus, Ohio
 - An adult male who really likes to jam cocaine up his nose
 - A self-involved baby-boomer who is obsessed with primal scream therapy
 What kind of music are you listening to and why? What do you hear in it that really grabs you?
 3. Assess the disco craze of the late 1970s. Provide an analysis of the music, as well as an evaluation of its impact on popular culture.

Essay Option 7. Select **one** of the following three questions. Due Week 13 on **Monday April 11**

1. Use the work of specific bands to compare American and British punk music in the 1970s. Describe the musical and cultural impact (and origins) of each.
2. Which of the following groups or artists were more political in their music: Sex Pistols, Clash, or Bob Marley? What examples can you point to in order to substantiate or prove your choice?
3. Most students really don't like punk music, especially that of the 1970s. Fair enough. But why did punks craft that sound (and look) that grates so harshly on your tender ears? Answer this as if you are either Joey Ramone or Johnny Rotten (whom you choose will affect your answer—somewhat).

Essay Option 8. Select **one** of the following three questions. Due Week 14 on **Wednesday April 20**

1. Explore the impact of MTV on the evolution of popular music during the 1980s. Compare the conflicting images and values embodied by “pop” and “rock” performers during this period.
2. Grunge music has been labeled the punk music of the nineties. Test this idea by comparing “Smells Like Teen Spirit” to either a Sex Pistols’ or Ramones’ song. What carries over from seventies punk? What’s new?
3. Is rap music? This has been a hotly debated question since the emergence of rap. To answer this question for yourself, read two or three definitions of music in dictionaries or encyclopedias, then consider rap as music in light of the definitions. What do you discover?