Course Description

The history of contemporary events is a complicated process of analyzing events that are still unfolding and, in the case of popular culture, having very narrow, insular, yet protean parameters through which the event initially existed.

Our inquiry into the history of Rock will start with the elemental material of culture that will eventually combine to become the Rock n Roll of the 1950’s. Typical of popular culture, we will observe an exponential rate of change in music and will set the artificial parameters of a half decade through which we will view the changes in Rock music. Similar to the term “classical music”, which refers to the period between 1795 and 1820 in Western European music, but also a style of music which encompasses the last 750 years, we will use the term Rock music as a blanket term for all popular music of the 20th and 21st centuries; whether it be Motown, Soul, R&B, Disco, Heavy Metal, Death Metal, Punk Psycho-Billy, Lounge-Metal or Country-rave-rap.

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Required Text

Course objectives

There are three aspects to what this course designed to instruct. The first is simply addressing the rudiments of how to discuss music in an absolute sense. Whether describing the use of tremolo in the guitar playing of Blind Lemon Jefferson or Dick Dale or the complex harmonic language of the Brill Building composers or the unsophisticated, yet direct language of I IV V in the Garage bands of the early 60’s. The second is the actual history of events such as they unfold over the decades; from the combining of country and blues to create the first Rock n Roll song, and the protest songs of the early 60’s to the balkanization of Rock in the 70’s to the collapse of Rock and rebirth in Punk of the late 70’s. The third aspect springs forth from the understanding that the human condition is defined by the expression of ideas in music, art, drama, and dance. What were and are the major themes of a generation? What was/is the zeitgeist; “spirit of the age” and where are you/we in relation to this?

Requirements of the course

The text Rock and Roll, an introduction states themes of Rock history of which these will be elaborated on in the lectures and in the video documentaries we will watch. Note taking and supplementary listening of examples of the music we discuss will be an important part of your preparation for your mid-term and final.

The good news and the bad news is that you will have two tests in this class. A midterm on November 3rd and a final on Wednesday December 12th from 9:30 to 11:20. These two tests will comprise the extensive listening that we have done in class and the supplementary listening examples available at the library along with written and multiple choice exam questions.
Grading

Grades will be assigned based on class participation 20% written assignments 30% and your midterm 25% and final 25%

In the beginning  Week 1  Roots of Rock, the Exodus and the New World

1920-1950
Crossroads  Week 2  Guitar Masters from the Delta and beyond-Going North/Chicago Blues

1950-1960
Rock n Roll  Week 3  The Birth of Rock n Roll-The Architect-the Million S Quartet

1960-1065
Age of Innocence  Week 4  Rock is Dead-Producer driven Pop-Fringe genres-Garage-Surf-Folk revival and the protest mvnt.

Week 5  The British Invasion/ The Beatles
Week 6  Review of previous 5 weeks

1965- 1971
Paradise Lost  Week 7  Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band,Psychedelia and the Haight-Ashbury
Week 8  British Invasion part 2, Soul Music, the Big Festivals

1971-9175
Balkanization of Rock  Week 9  Distilled and divided Rock
Week 10  Birth of Rap, Punk, Techno and the height of Arena Rock

1975-1980
Rock is Dead redux  Week 11  Rap, Punk/New Wave, Techno/Rave goes mainstream
Week 12  Final on Wednesday December 12th from 9:30 to 11:30
**Student Responsibility:**
Instructors may, at their discretion, agree to accept student work that is submitted in various ways, including in person, to the division office, or via e-mail. It is the student’s responsibility to verify that all assignments are actually received by the instructor, whether they are submitted in person or electronically.

It is the student's responsibility, not the instructor's, to initiate communication about progress or concerns with the course. Instructors are under no obligation to inform students that work is overdue, to nag students to complete assignments, or to call students who fail to attend class. Similarly, students need to keep themselves informed about syllabus changes that may have been made in class. We suggest finding a partner the first week of classes and keeping each other up to date if one is absent.

**BCC Attendance policy:**
Attendance at all scheduled class meetings is mandatory. This requirement is particularly meant to apply to courses that are designated for classroom delivery, although distance education courses may also have certain attendance requirements. This requirement is intended 1) to prevent instructors from having to adjudicate individual excuses, and 2) to recognize that excuses are ultimately irrelevant both here at BCC and in the workplace.

While specific attendance requirements are up to individual faculty members, the Arts and Humanities Division recognizes that attending class and participating actively are perhaps the most important way in which students can set themselves up for success. Conversely, not attending class almost certainly leads to failure.

Students in performance courses (Drama, Music, etc.) are reminded that attendance builds the professional relationship necessary between partners or in working groups.

In order for students to be eligible for a grade in a course, they must not miss more than ten classes, or 20% of the total class time scheduled, for any reason. When absences go beyond ten, instructors may a) give a grade of "F" for the course, or b) lower the final grade as much as they see fit. This does not imply that you may be absent fewer than ten times or 20% without seeing an effect on your grade; indeed, we wish to emphasize that any absence undermines your progress and will result in your having to work harder to catch up. Ten absences or 20% is merely the figure beyond which you cannot go without risking your eligibility for a course grade. In cases of legitimate hardship, students may also request that instructors grant a “HW” (hardship withdrawal), which is a non-credit grade.
In summary, when you are absent from a class more than ten times or 20% in any given quarter, you may receive a failing grade. Whatever written policy an instructor has in the syllabus will be upheld by the Arts and Humanities Division in any grievance process.