Course Description:

Rock and roll is the simple name given to the musical/cultural/attitude movement that shook the minds and the pants off thousands of youngsters all around the world. It all started during the early 50's and it all began with the influence of blues, country and r'n'b music; probably the coolest type of music in the world.

From the Urban Dictionary

Music gives us a microphone to speak to the world. And music has the power to bring generations, nationalities and people together. Now more than ever, it’s critical to study and understand how music is changing our world as well as reflecting it.

From the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame website

It has been about 60 years since the popular musical genre called rock and roll or rock ‘n’ roll made its appearance. While Alan Freed, a Cleveland disk jockey, is famed with first using the phrase “rock and roll” back in the early 1950s, there were already songs which coined the term in the 1940s and references to “rocking and rolling” in music much earlier than that in the early 1900s. Whatever its roots and early beginnings, from its inception, rock and roll music has been a distinctly American blend with elements of blues, rhythm and blues, country, folk, and gospel music. This wedding of musical styles in U.S. history with concomitant implications for social relations—race-, class-, and gender-based particularly—is the central focus of this course. It seems fitting, then, to begin with a definition and a reference from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame describing one of the most important musical genres of the 20th and 21st centuries in U.S. society.

Fundamentally, this course is an historical, theoretical, and ultimately, sociological exploration of rock and roll music. The course will examine rock music from its roots, to its appearance in the late 1940s and early 1950s, to its evolution throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century. Students will be invited to explore the socio-cultural aspects reflected in and affected by this popular music including race, class, and gender relationships as well as some of the ways that institutions help to reinforce and shape musical genres.

I would like you to leave this course with 1) an understanding of sociological theory as it pertains to media texts such as rock and roll music; 2) an understanding of the socio-historical environment of each era of rock music and how the times influenced the music; 3) an understanding of the socio-cultural issues treated in rock and roll music; 4) an understanding of the effect of rock and roll music on American culture; 5) knowledge of the representative, pivotal artists, groups, and related individuals in rock and roll music; 6) and a basis for critical thinking about the place of rock and roll music in American history and culture.

Grading:

Your grade will be based on at least one exam, one research paper, and any quizzes or assignments that are given in class. Due dates are "written in stone" unless you have been informed otherwise by me. Late papers will not be accepted nor can exams be rescheduled unless you inform me before the dates in question. If I don't hear from you before the due date of the paper or before the dates of the exams you will be out of luck. Participation and attendance are also important to your grade. Details follow.

Exam Format

Any exams given in class will consist of a choice of one essay question out of three or four. This may sound fairly easy on its face. However, you will need to incorporate in this one essay quite a bit of material from lectures, readings, theory, and media examples, and you will only have one blank sheet front and back to do this. You absolutely need to write legibly, so make sure that others can read your writing—print if necessary. The final exam is NOT cumulative. There will be no review for either exam; your exam grades will stand or fall based on your notes, your reading, and in class media discussions. This means you had better take thorough notes on class lectures and discussions. If you cannot attend class, get to know one of the other students. TAs do not give out notes except in emergencies or for students with special circumstances. An optional final may be offered. This means a student can opt to keep the grade they are getting so far
in the class or choose to take the final to better their grade. **If they take the final, it will count toward their final grade.** If an optional final is offered, and there is no guarantee that it will be, it will be announced near the end of the semester and the criteria used to determine whether or not a student has an option will include the student’s **attendance** and the student’s **grade standing** going into the final exam period. **If an optional final is offered, qualifying students can opt to take the final or remain for a discussion; they cannot simply leave.** All students should, of course, prepare to take a final exam in any case.

**Rock and Roll Research Paper (5-7 pages, TYPED Double-spaced)**

The rock and roll research paper consists of an empirical exploration of some aspect of rock and roll music through a critical media literacy lens. There are **three elements within critical media literacy and one or more** can be used in your analysis including: **political economy**, **textual analysis**, and **audience reception**. For example, you could focus on the **political economy** surrounding a rock era such as the rise of punk rock or the emergence of hip hop. Or you could conduct a **content or semiotic analysis** of the lyrics of some representative bands of a given genre—the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and Big Brother and the Holding Company, as part of the psychedelic sounds era. Or you might want to take on an **audience reception** analysis contrasting dominant readings versus oppositional readings of the work of British invasion artists including the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and the Who. Or you might just shoot the moon and take on all three—for example, discuss the political economy surrounding the emergence of grunge, conduct a semiotic analysis of some Nirvana, Soundgarden, and Mudhoney lyrics, and discuss a dominant reading of grunge music. The choice is ultimately yours and the possibilities and permutations are pretty wide-ranging, practically infinite. **Watch out for regurgitation of class material and lack of depth in analysis.** Oh yes, you can use the word “I”. The paper should entail:

1. a **thesis** [no more than a page]—introducing me to the thesis or main point of the paper. What **element of critical media literacy** will you be using and what **aspect of rock and roll music**? Will you be exploring the political economy of the roots of rock and roll or some other era within rock and roll history such as the British invasion, or a textual analysis of representative bands within a musical genre such as punk or rap, or an audience reception analysis of representatives of some rock genre, or will you taking on all three elements to analyze some aspect of rock music like women in rock? **Whatever you choose, make sure you introduce it here.** This section can be as dramatic as you’d like and include personal insight. Pick a topic that is connected in some way with your core self—make it from the heart and it will come across much stronger.

2. a **body** [three to five pages]—this entails your logical and thoughtful exploration of your thesis. If you have chosen the political economy of punk rock, then make a case and stick to it. **All papers will require some degree of research with citations** (at least 3 from sources other than websites and wikipedia). This section will likely look something like this:

   During the time that Madonna rose to stardom, America was living through the Reagan era. It was a time of cultural shifts in values and thinking from politics to boardrooms to MTV. Let me elaborate…. OR

   The writing of punk rockers easily lends itself to multiple forms of analysis. This semiotic analysis will focus on themes emerging in the lyrics of a representative sample of punk rock bands to highlight comparisons and contrasts in the work of punk rockers. These themes include… OR

   A dominant reading of punk rock largely turns the world on its ear, since punk rock was meant to clash, no pun intended, with mainstream thinking and values; while an oppositional reading of punk rock would question the value of this rock music genre and its meaning for generations. Let me begin with a dominant reading of punk rock through a look at the work of some representative bands… OR

   Hip hop emerged within the disenfranchised inner-city neighborhoods of the South Bronx, New York. This political economy backdrop will foreground a content analysis of lyrics by Tupac Shakur, Mos Def, and the Roots whose work I will argue from a dominant reading of their texts. So to begin…

3. a **critique or evaluation section** [no more than a page]--this section can be as dramatic as you choose to make it and must entail a personal opinion of the task--it is not meant to be a summary of what you have already written.
Please DO NOT use plastic folders, cover pages, or bibliography pages unless you are citing sources other than your book(s) and lectures. PROOFREAD!! Poor grammar, spelling, etc... will suffer grade reduction. Also watch font and margin space. Keep font to no more than 12pt (as long as it is not Courier New) and margins to no more than 1 inch on each side. Your grade will be reduced for large font and margins.

**Listening Assignments**
Because there are no required texts for the class, the articles and the audiofiles take on that much more significance in terms of your grade. For every audiofile, there will be a listening assignment so that students can demonstrate that they listened in. Listening assignments are listed on the last page of the syllabus and include due dates and a contact to whom you will email your assignments.

**Assignments and Miscellaneous Information...**
I reserve the right to give assignments as needed. For example, students who don’t complete reading/listening assignments may be asked to turn in an essay assignment. If assignments are given, they will count toward your final grade. **Attendance** will be taken regularly and class **participation** is also considered significant to your grade. Taking **notes** is a **must** in this class and will be considered part of participation. One other thing… if laptops are becoming a nuisance in the class, I will ban them, so don’t let them become a distraction.

**Required Reading/Listening:**
There are no required textbooks or required books of any kind for the class. Instead, you are required to read some articles and listen to several audiofiles during the course of the semester. Audiofiles seemed particularly appropriate for a course on rock and roll. Each audiofile is less than 11 minutes in length—an easy length of time to hear a portion of rock and roll sociohistory. I would suggest also jotting down notes on what you hear so that you are prepared to discuss the articles or audiofiles in class. You are expected to read and listen to articles and audiofiles by the dates noted in the course outline. For example, the Ellen Seiter and Peggy McIntosh articles are due to be read by January 13th. The David Welna audiofile is due to be heard by January 18th.

**Required Reserve Readings:**
Students can access course reserves by going to [http://search.library.utah.edu](http://search.library.utah.edu). Then click on the Course Reserves tab. Type in Soc 3562. A list of articles appears. Note that they are not in alphabetical order by title and also note that there are readings that are not listed on your syllabus. Those are for folks who want to read more.

Reserve readings from off campus can be accessed by using this guide (scroll down to that section): [http://campusguides.lib.utah.edu/course_reserves_guide](http://campusguides.lib.utah.edu/course_reserves_guide)
If you have any trouble, email me or contact the Reserve Desk folks at 801-581-4670

**Information about the Center for Disability Services:**
The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD) to make arrangements for accommodations. All printed information for this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

**Dates You Should Know:**
- 14 Feb: Exam #1
- 29 Mar: Rock and Roll Research Paper due
- 3 May: Final Exam
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<th>Introduction to the Sociology of Rock and Roll</th>
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| 12   |    | Developing a Critical Media Literacy: Rock and Roll, Race/Class/Gender, and Learning to Read Against the Grain  

*Ellen Seiter* “Different Children, Different Dreams: Racial Representation in Advertising.”  

*Peggy McIntosh* “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women’s Studies.” |
| 16   |    | Martin Luther King Holiday |
| 17-19|    | The Roots of Rock and Roll: Up From Slavery  

*Listen: David Welna.* “I’m Your Hoochie Coochie Man”  

| 24-26|    | The Classic Rockers: Music to the Tune of Integration  

*Listen: Farai Chideya.* “Chuck Berry: Father of Rock ‘n Roll”  

| 31   |    | The British Invasion, The Sound of Protest, Folk Rock  

*Listen: Terry Gross* “Behind the Myth: A New Beatles Biography”  


*Listen: Ken Tucker* “Bob Dylan Takes His Latest Look at ‘Life’”  


*Listen: Robert Smith* “Iggy Pop: The Voice as a Weapon”  

| FEB  | 2-9| The British Invasion, The Sound of Protest, Folk Rock continued |
| *14  |    | Exam #1 |
| 20   |    | Presidents Day Holiday |
| 16-21|    | Motown and Integration, Soul and Disillusion  

*Listen: NPR Story* “Sam Cooke’s Swan Song of Protest”  

| 23-28|    | Psychedelic Sound, Militant Blues on Campus, 70s Excess  

*Listen: Argin Hutchins.* “Jimi Hendrix: King of the Electric Guitar”  


*Listen: Robert Smith* “Iggy Pop: The Voice as a Weapon”  

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Psychedelic Sound continued</td>
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| 6-8 | **Punk Revolution, MTV Generation**  
**Listen:** NPR Story “Intersections: Patti Smith, Poet Laureate of Punk”  
| 12-17 | Spring Break |
| 20-29 | **80s Promise, Gen-X Blues, Metal, and Grunge**  
**Listen:** NPR Interview “Ed Norton Interviews Bruce Springsteen On ‘Darkness’”  
**Listen:** NPR Story “Nirvana’s ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit’ Remembered”  
| *29 | Rock and Roll Research Paper Due |
| APR 3-10 | **The Emergence of Hip Hop and Rap**  
**Listen:** NPR Story “‘The Anthology of Rap’: Lyrics as Poetry”  
| 12-17 | **The Women of Rock and Roll**  
**Listen:** NPR Studio Session “India.Arie: ‘Love and Politics,’ Live in Studio”  
| 19-24 | **Rock in the Last Decade/First Decade: Merging, Bending, Crossing Borders** |
| MAY 3 | Final Exam – Thursday, 8:00-10:00am |
Critical Media Literacy

The Roots of Rock and Roll: Up from Slavery
David Welna. 4/3/2000 “I’m Your Hoochie Coochie Man”

The Classic Rockers: Music to the Tune of Integration
Farai Chideya. 3/28/2008 “Chuck Berry: Father of Rock ‘n Roll”

The British Invasion, The Sound of Protest, Folk Rock

Motown and Integration/Soul and Disillusion
NPR Story. 12/16/2007 “Sam Cooke’s Swan Song of Protest”

Psychedelic Sound, Militant Blues on Campus, 70s Excess
Argin Hutchins. 2/25/2011 “Jimi Hendrix: King of the Electric Guitar”

Punk Revolution, MTV Generation
NPR Story. 4/12/2004 “Intersections: Patti Smith, Poet Laureate of Punk”

80s Promise, Gen-X Blues, Metal, and Grunge
NPR Interview. 11/15/2010 “Ed Norton Interviews Bruce Springsteen On ‘Darkness’”
NPR Story. 4/5/2009 Nirvana’s ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit’ Remembered”

The Emergence of Hip Hop and Rap
NPR Story. 11/7/2010 “The Anthology of Rap: Lyrics as Poetry”

The Women of Rock and Roll
SOC 3041-001 SOCIOLOGY OF ROCK AND ROLL
DUE DATES AND CONTACTS FOR LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS

**Assignments are due by 9:00am on the due date!**

The Roadmap on Listening Assignments

**Epitaph** – There are only three epitaphs included in the assignments—for Muddy Waters, Jimi Hendrix, and for the song “Smells Like Teen Spirit” by Nirvana (indicating in this instance a significant legacy and not an end to the life of the song). Epitaph assignments will be emailed or handed out to students and include information you might find on a headstone except that you can only use the information you find on the audiofile. You should also include 2 images that represent the artist and your reasons for including them.

**Acrostic Poem** – For the acrostic poem assignment, you will listen to the audiofile and make a poem (not rhyming necessarily) in which the first letter of each line spells down vertically a key name or term from the file. The key name or term must be over 7 letters.

**Hand-Drawn Images** – Self-explanatory. Remember that these need to directly relate to the audiofiles and can’t just be any images.

**Concept Map** – For some of the assignments, you could create a concept map or a visual representation of the ideas and concepts related in the audiofile. Concept maps represent any kind of intellectual work—a story, a novel, a film, a poem, etc… A concept map can be very sophisticated in terms of visuals used. You could even make a short film that would serve as a concept map. Keep in mind that this is not a simple task. Concept maps must be **conceptually sophisticated** as well as creatively framed.

**Verse or Poem or Spoken Word Piece** – For the poetic/cipher-driven among you, you could also do a **creative verse or poem or spoken word piece** as one or more of the assignments. Remember that you have to incorporate main points of the article(s) within the piece so this can’t just be a simple collection of images or thoughts. Again, it has to be sophisticated and creatively framed.

Tues Jan 17  David Welna. “I’m Your Hoochie Coochie Man”
SEND TO

- Write an epitaph (a summary statement of commemoration for a dead person) for Muddy Waters such as you would find on a gravestone using specific guidelines and only using the information you hear mentioned in the audiofile. Cut/paste 2 images onto the headstone that represent this artist and explain your rationale for including them. This doc will be sent to the class.

Tues Jan 24  Farai Chideya “Chuck Berry: Father of Rock ‘n Roll”
SEND TO

- This challenge assignment involves a choice: create an acrostic poem, hand-draw 5 images, create a concept map, or write a verse which encompasses as much information as possible from this audiofile.

Tues Jan 31  Terry Gross  “Behind the Myth: A New Beatles Biography”
SEND TO

- This challenge assignment involves a choice: create an acrostic poem, hand-draw 5 images, create a concept map, or write a verse/poem or spoken word piece which encompasses as much information as possible from this audiofile.

Tues Feb 7  Ken Tucker  “Bob Dylan Takes His Latest Look at ‘Life’”
SEND TO

- This challenge assignment involves a choice: create an acrostic poem, hand-draw 5 images, create a concept map, or write a verse/poem or spoken word piece which encompasses as much information as possible from this audiofile.
Thurs Feb 16 NPR Story “Sam Cooke's Swan Song of Protest”
SEND TO
➢ This challenge assignment involves a choice: create an acrostic poem, hand-draw 5 images, create a concept map, or write a verse/poem or spoken word piece which encompasses as much information as possible from this audiofile.

Thurs Feb 23 Argin Hutchins “Jimi Hendrix: King of the Electric Guitar”
SEND TO
➢ Write an epitaph (a summary statement of commemoration for a dead person) for Jimi Hendrix such as you would find on a gravestone using specific guidelines and only using the information you hear mentioned in the audiofile. Cut/paste 2 images onto the headstone that represent this artist and explain your rationale for including them. This doc will be sent or handed out in class.

Tues Feb 28 Robert Smith “Iggy Pop: The Voice as a Weapon”
SEND TO
➢ This challenge assignment involves a choice: create an acrostic poem, hand-draw 5 images, create a concept map, or write a verse/poem or spoken word piece which encompasses as much information as possible from this audiofile.

Tues Mar 6 NPR Story “Intersections: Patti Smith, Poet Laureate of Punk”
SEND TO
➢ This challenge assignment involves a choice: create an acrostic poem, hand-draw 5 images, create a concept map, or write a verse/poem or spoken word piece which encompasses as much information as possible from this audiofile.

Tues Mar 20 NPR Interview “Ed Norton Interviews Bruce Springsteen On ‘Darkness’”
SEND TO
➢ This challenge assignment involves a choice: create an acrostic poem, hand-draw 5 images, create a concept map, or write a verse/poem or spoken word piece which encompasses as much information as possible from this audiofile.

Tues Mar 27 NPR Story “Nirvana’s ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit’ Remembered”
SEND TO
➢ Write an epitaph (a summary statement of commemoration for a dead person) for the song “Smells Like Teen Spirit” such as you would find on a gravestone using specific guidelines and only using the information you hear mentioned in the audiofile. Cut/paste 2 images onto the headstone that represent this song and explain your rationale for including them. This doc will be sent to the class.

Tues Apr 3 NPR Story “‘The Anthology of Rap’: Lyrics as Poetry”
SEND TO
➢ This challenge assignment requires you to write a creative verse/poem or spoken word piece which encompasses as much as possible of this audiofile.

Tues Apr 17 NPR Studio Session “India.Arie: 'Love and Politics,' Live in Studio”
SEND TO
➢ This challenge assignment involves a choice: create an acrostic poem, hand-draw 5 images, or write a verse/poem or spoken word piece which encompasses as much information as possible from this audiofile.