Brandeis
UNIVERSITY

MUS 35A: Rock, Country and Hip-Hop: History of American Popular Music

Contact Details

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Communication
Please email the professor for all class correspondence. I will do my best to respond within 48 hours Monday-Friday. Emails received over the weekend will be responded to at the beginning of the next week.

Meeting Times/Locations

Classes
This class is held entirely asynchronously. All materials are posted on LATTE including lectures formatted as VoiceThreads.

Student Hours
Office hours are available by appointment. Before meeting please email me to let me know when you would like to meet and how I can help you. This way I can prepare accordingly and avoid multiple students trying to meet via zoom at the same time.

Course Description

Course Prerequisite(s):
MUS 35a, The History of American Popular Music, has no prerequisites, but does involve a good amount of reading and writing. While students will be primarily evaluated for their ideas and understanding, proficiency in writing will aid the successful completion of this course.

Learning Goals:
In this course students will examine the historical context, stylistic development, and cultural significance of rock and roll and other closely related genres, spanning from the birth of America popular music through the present. Close attention will be paid to how political and social changes have interacted with technological innovations through commercial music to challenge, affirm and shape ideas of race, gender, class and sexuality in the United States. Ultimately the goal of this course is to provide students with the vocabulary, analytical tools and historical background to understand the music they listen to encounter as people in the 21st century. While the course is structure as a lecture, class sessions will be participatory and will provide space for students to reflect on the music they hear and study in order to share their personal experiences and observations. By the end of the course students will be able to:
- Engage in detail with the core musical characteristics of rock by analyzing its constituent elements (rhythm, form, pitch structure, instrumental texture, and vocal style).
- Recognize and identify important musical styles and artists by ear.

- Contextualize the role of rock music within U.S. history and society.
- Demonstrate knowledge of relationships among subcultures and subgenres within the rock music tradition.
- Build skills in effective writing about rock music and in appropriate modes of listening.

Credit Hours:
Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of nine hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for the exams, etc.)

Course Requirements

Textbook
All students will need to acquire a copy of the eBook 6th edition *American Popular Music* by Larry Starr and Waterman. There will be assigned reading from this text as well as articles and videos shared via LATTE. All listening will be provided as a Spotify Playlist. Because of the online nature of this course, assigned reading and listening make up a substantial portion of the course materials. Lectures are supplemental to this materials.

Participation/Attendance
This course is asynchronous so there is no required attendance at specific times. Instead students earn their participation grade by commenting on the VoiceThread lectures.

Assignments
This class will involve regular assignments in two broad categories: **Written Assignments** and **Discussion Prompts**. These assignments will provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of class materials while reflecting their personal experiences with music. Most weeks will have one of these smaller assignments. **Written Assignments** will be short responses to listening assignments and out of class activities. **Discussion Prompts** will be based on course readings will be submitted on LATTE in Forums.

Larger Projects
In addition to regular assignments there will be two larger projects spread throughout the course. These will consist of a **Listening Guide** and a **Final Project**. Detailed instructions for these will be provided on LATTE.

Accommodations

Brandeis seeks to create a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students, and I want to support you in your learning. If you think you may require disability accommodations, you will need to work with Student Accessibility Support (SAS). You can contact them at 781-736-3470, email them at access@brandeis.edu, or visit the Student Accessibility Support home page. You can find helpful student FAQs and other resources on the SAS website, including guidance on how to know whether you might be eligible for support from SAS.

If you already have an accommodation letter from SAS, please provide me with a copy as soon as you can so that I can ensure effective implementation of accommodations for this class. In order to coordinate exam accommodations, ideally you should provide the accommodation letter at least 48 hours before an exam.

Evaluation and Grading

Student performance will be evaluated in five categories shown below. For specifics see **Course Requirements** or ask the professor:

Class Element	Grade Percentage
Written Assignments	30%
Discussion Prompts	20%
Listening Guide Project	15%
Final Project	15%
Participation	20%

Course Plan

The basic plan for the "semester" is found below. Our course is divided into **Units**, focusing on a specific time period or stylist development. Detailed reading instructions along with any **Supplemental Articles** will be provided at the beginning of each Unit. Because we are covering a great deal of material this schedule may change to accommodate the needs of the class as a whole:

Readings from Starr and Waterman's *American Popular Music* - abbreviated APM
(Except where otherwise noted)

UNIT 1   6/3-7: APM Ch 1-4   **Introduction and The Birth of American Popular Music**
                Discussion Prompt 1 Labeling Popular Music? – Due 6/7

UNIT 2   6/10-14: APM Ch 5-6   **Race Records and Hillbilly Music**
                Written Assignment 1 What Music Represents You? – Due 6/12

UNIT 3   6/17-21: APM Ch 7   **Music after World War 2**
                Supplemental: Brown "'Miss Rhythm' Speaks Out: Ruth Brown, on R&B and Covers"
                Discussion Prompt 2 Covers – Due 6/21

UNIT 4   6/24-28: APM Ch 8   **Rock and Roll**
                Listening Guide Project – Due 6/28

UNIT 5   7/1-5: APM Ch 9   **The 1960s and the British Invasion**
                Supplemental: Williams, "Understanding Dylan,"
                Discussion Prompt 3 Bob Dylan's Poetry – Due ???

UNIT 6	7/8-12: APM Ch 10	**The Counterculture: Soul and Rock in the Late 1960s**

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Supplemental: Brian Eno, "The Studio as Compositional Tool"
Discussion Prompt 4 The Studio as Compositional Tool – Due 7/12

UNIT 7   7/15-19: APM Ch 11   **Mainstream Music in the 1970s**
Written Assignment 2 The Album – Due 7/19

UNIT 8   7/22-26: APM Ch 12   **Outsider Music**
Final Project Proposal – Due 7/22 (note - this is the beginning of the week!)

UNIT 9   7/29-8/2: APM Ch 13-14 **Popular Music in the 1980s**
Written Assignment 3 Interview – Due 8/2

UNIT 10   8/5-9: APM Ch 15   **Popular Music and the Internet**
Supplemental: Hyden, "It's Time to Stop Using Rock as a Catch-All Term…"
Discussion Prompt 5 What's in a Name? – Due 8/5 (the beginning of the week)

Final Project – Due 8/9

Important Policies and Resources

Academic Integrity
Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student shall not submit work that is falsified or is not the result of the student's own effort. Infringement of academic integrity by a student subjects that student to serious penalties, which may include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension from the University or other sanctions. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work via TurnItIn.com or similar software to verify originality. A student who is in doubt regarding standards of academic integrity as they apply to a specific course or assignment should consult the faculty member responsible for that course or assignment before submitting the work. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards. Citation and research assistance can be found at Brandeis Library Guides - Citing Sources.

Course Materials/Books/Apps/Equipment
If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options, including vouchers for purchases made at the Brandeis Bookstore.

LATTE
LATTE is the Brandeis learning management system. Login using your UNET ID and password. For LATTE help, contact Library@brandeis.edu.

Library
The Brandeis Library collections and staff offer resources and services to support Brandeis students, faculty and staff. Librarians and Specialists from Research & Instructional Services, Public Services, Archives & Special

Collections, Sound & Image Media Studios, MakerLab, AutomationLab, and Digital Scholarship Lab are available to help you through consultations and workshops.

Privacy
To protect your privacy in any case where this course involves online student work outside of Brandeis password-protected spaces, you may choose to use a pseudonym/alias. You must share the pseudonym/ alias with me and any teaching assistants as needed. Alternatively, with prior consultation, you may submit such work directly to me.

Student Support
Brandeis University is committed to supporting all our students so they can thrive. If a student, faculty, or staff member wants to learn more about support resources, the Support at Brandeis webpage offers a comprehensive list that includes these staff colleagues you can consult, along with other support resources:

- The Care Team
- Academic Services (undergraduate)
- Graduate Student Affairs
- Directors of Graduate Studies in each department, School of Arts & Sciences
- Program Administrators for the Heller School and International Business School
- University Ombuds
- Office of Equal Opportunity.