

The Evolution of a Popular Art: An Introduction to Rock Music

Division of Music
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Music 1220--Syllabus and General Information
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This is a general education course with no prerequisite. The course is online only. Students need to have access to internet and a computer, tablet or laptop. A secure connection is required for uploading assignments, and tests. Occasionally there is a tech glitch and when this happens, you should notify this instructor IMMEDIATELY, that you have encountered a problem. We can work through nearly every problem, but you must let me know ASAP. Glitches, may be site down, slow response on a test, your internet provider having a problem, etc. Don't panic if you get kicked out of a test, it will save what you did, and we can get you back in.

Communication

Other than discussion boards, tests, assignments, other questions should be sent via email sentgeorge@ucmo.edu I will respond within 12-48 hours. If I do not respond, I did not receive your message.

Texts

Starr, Larry and Christopher Waterman. *American Popular Music, From Minstrelsy to MP3*. Fifth edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.

This book is the primary text and indispensable to the class. Be sure to scratch off the silver coating to get your code to download audio needed for this course. It is located in a card inside the back cover. It is only usable ONCE. You will receive 60 tracks of music. This text is required.

Brackett, David. *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader--Histories and Debates*. Third Edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.

This text also contains important information that will allow you to answer test questions and complete assignments. This text will increase your understanding of the information we will study but is NOT required for the online class.

Outlines

The course is divided into segments; the outlines for each segment are posted on Blackboard before we begin that portion of the course. These outlines serve as a summary of exam material. Every outline contains required readings from the texts, which I assume you read. Some exam questions will be based on textbook readings.

Exams

Three exams, each of which is worth 100 points, will be given during the semester. Two hourly tests will be taken during the regular class time; the final

exam will be given at the time stipulated in the university's schedule for final exams. Exams will be returned in as timely a manner as possible. Essay exams do, of course, take somewhat longer to evaluate and grade; typically, it takes me 4-5 hours to grade a set of exams. Tests will be announced approximately a week ahead of time so that you have a week to prepare.

Concert Essays

You are required to observe two concerts in the rock idiom during the semester. Each student will write an essay one page in length summarizing his/her observations of the event. The procedure for writing about these concerts is described in a separate document headed *Concert Essays*. The document is posted on Blackboard.

Each essay will be edited and returned to the student. The student will then revise the essay according to the editings and re-submit it to the instructor. Full credit (25 points) will then be granted for each revision. Essays are not assigned letter grades.

Paper

A formal research paper 4 pages in length is also worth 100 points; a separate document (*Guidelines for the Research Paper*) describing its format is posted on Blackboard.

Grading System

The following grading scale will be used in the course:

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

59 or lower = F

Numerical scores will be awarded on all exams, the two concert essays, and the paper. To compute the final grade, the total of these five scores will be divided by 4.5 to arrive at a percentage of 450, the total points possible. That percentage will be applied to the scale above to arrive at the final grade in the course. A sample grade computation follows:

Example of a Sample Student's grades in course:

77 -- First Exam

84 -- Second Exam

91 -- Final Exam

50 -- Concert Essays (Students receive full credit if the revision of each essay is completed and submitted; each essay is worth 25 points.)

88 -- Paper

Calculation: $77 + 84 + 91 + 50 + 88 = 440$; $440/4.5 = 97.8\%$, a final grade of "B."

Failing to take an exam, revise a concert essay, or submit a research paper will result in a score of 0 points for that assignment.

Recordings

Required listening examples are listed on each outline. Several of these are available as downloads in the textbook. Some rock recordings are in the Naxos database, which may be accessed by any student through the Kirkpatrick Library. I use SPOTIFY in class, but you are free to listen to the examples on any of the available musical databases.

Office of Accessibility Services

The Office of Accessibility Services provides academic assistance to students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations. Students who feel they may want to take advantage of the services offered may contact the office at 660-543-4421 or visit the facility in Union 222.

Academic Dishonesty

Any student caught cheating on a written exam will receive a grade of 0% for that exam. A student who submits a concert essay that does not accurately reflect his/her own work will not be given credit for that report. If you take ideas, writing, etc. from another writer and pass them off as your own, without giving appropriate credit, you are plagiarizing the material. Any student found guilty of plagiarism will receive a score of 0 points for the plagiarized assignment.

Purpose of the Course

The course is an introduction to the development of rock music and its precursors during the period 1900-present. Students are introduced to vocal and instrumental examples of individual performers, ensembles, and composers from 1900 to the present. Moreover, the musical examples are placed in their attendant historical, social, and cultural contexts.

As part of the General Education curriculum, Music 1220 (3.0 hours) falls under Knowledge Area I (Arts, Humanities, Languages, and Literature). The primary outcome, or proficiency is Inquiry and Analysis. A secondary general education learning outcome is written communication.

In the Inquiry and Analysis outcome, “students will demonstrate critical and creative thought and/or expression with sensitivity to context.” Assessment for this outcome will include scoring the research paper using the Inquiry and Analysis rubric created by the UCM General Education Committee.

The following information is an explanation of how Music 1220 meets the primary General Education learning outcome of Inquiry and Analysis:

Students are expected to develop a knowledge of the development of rock music beginning with its precursors in the early twentieth century (blues and country music) and progressing up to the present time. To that end, readings are assigned throughout the course from the Starr/Waterman text, a general history of the music.

Additional cultural insight is provided from readings from the Brackett book, the

collection of essays. For example, when the course reaches the decade of the 60's where it discusses the Beach Boys, one of the assigned essays is an interview with Brian Wilson. He was a member of the band and developed many of the creative ideas heard in their music; he also became known as an exemplary record producer.

In writing the concert essays (short documents of 1-1 ½ pages), students are expected to analyze and write about performances they have observed. They have the option of attending live performances, but most students take advantage of the very large selection of videos available on YouTube. For example, an assignment for an essay last fall was to view the video of Elvis Presley's return to live performance in 1968. The complete concert is available and was broadcast on NBC television. They were asked to critically examine what they were hearing using the five basic elements of rhythm, melody, form, texture, and style. They were also invited to critique the performance to arrive at an opinion of why this concert was an appropriate context for Presley after having done no live concerts for approximately eight years.

The most comprehensive example of the student's ability to demonstrate critical and creative thought is seen in the writing of the formal research paper. For example, a topic used last fall was to select an iconic single recorded by a solo artist or band and research the history of that single. The student had to locate relevant written and on-line sources; take notes from those sources they critically evaluated as being relevant to the topic; organize those notes; and the creatively synthesize the information into a formal paper four to five pages in length. A key goal of the paper was to provide a critical basis for why the student felt the single chosen was indeed iconic.

Most of the first meeting of the class is spent discussing sources a student may use for the paper: databases from the UCM library (*JSTOR, Dissertations and Theses Full Text*); publications (*Billboard Magazine, Rolling Stone Magazine*); a website devoted to the artist or band; and musical websites (songfacts.com). Students are also encouraged to do a simple Google search to find additional sources. The student is required to list at least eight references in the bibliography to demonstrate breadth and depth of research.

The ability to demonstrate critical and creative thought is also required in the exams given in the course. For example, in last fall's course, the student was required to listen to an audio example and then discuss the style of the work and state when it might have

been recorded. The example was not one discussed in class but was closely related to those that were class material. Thus, the student must recall the factual information concerning the styles discussed in class, critically evaluate which works are most relevant to the question, and then summarize his/her thoughts in a short paragraph.

Every exam also contains a major essay question in which the student must think creatively and critically in order to formulate an appropriate answer. An essay used in last fall's class is a good example:

"First, cite at least 5 characteristics of each of The Beatles' three style periods; secondly, choose a single that exemplifies each style period and discuss it in detail; and finally, explain and discuss the significance of The Beatles in the context of rock history." The student must recall the factual information concerning the three style periods and relevant examples of singles from each style period. He must make a critical choice in choosing a single that supports the five characteristics listed. In choosing a single, he/she should show a sensitivity to the lyrics of the single (almost all of The Beatles output is vocal music) such that it supports the characteristics listed.

The third and final portion of the question requires the student to draw on the material presented in class about The Beatles and formulate a critical judgement about the significance of the band in the context of rock history. Information about their significance is presented at intervals during that portion of the class devoted to the band, so the student must be somewhat creative in first recalling those pieces of information and then assembling them in a summary.

Course procedure

The course is taught in a lecture format with opportunity for class discussion.

Course Justification

Rock music is a pervasive part of modern society. This specific music is listened to and enjoyed by a wide, diverse audience, from pre-teens through adults. It is readily available in a variety of formats (YouTube, iTunes, live concerts, television

broadcasts, compact discs, Sirius XM radio, etc.) and is thus a familiar music to almost everyone.

Most listeners, however, tend to react to the music on a purely emotional level. They may have a favorite artist but have little idea about how that artist's music came to evolve, what musical influences exist in his/her background, or how he/she fits into the overall stylistic development of the music. One may approach the study of rock music much like one approaches the study of "classical" music. Rock has evolved for more than a century, and its division into specific styles and trends has now become obvious.

An abundance of books surveying the general history of the music now exists. Articles on the music are regularly published in scholarly journals, and doctoral dissertations explore the various styles of rock. The academic study of rock has become a popular course on the campus of many colleges and universities. A systematic, academic examination of the music leads to a heightened enjoyment and appreciation of this type of popular music.

Diversity and Inclusiveness

The University of Central Missouri strives to develop a campus environment that welcomes and recognizes all dimensions of diversity and inclusiveness. Inclusive learning is facilitated by creative and innovative thought and mutual respect; being in this classroom means that you, your faculty member, and your peers pledge to foster a welcoming and equitable environment for all.

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