

## *The History of Rock and Roll*

Drew University  
Fall, 2019

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Professor: James Carter

Email: [jcarter1@drew.edu](mailto:jcarter1@drew.edu)

Day/Time: TR 10:25-11:40

Office hours: TR 11:45-1:00 and/or by appt

Location: SEM 205

### **Course Description**

This course is a *cultural history of rock and roll music* in the United States. American popular music is both born of and embodied within the complicated fabric of American social, political, and cultural life. Keeping that broader context in view, the course will trace the advent of early rock and roll following World War II. Rock and Roll combined the various popular musical traditions and forms, most famously with the rise to stardom of Elvis Presley, to offer something both new and old for a rapidly expanding and changing audience. In the decades that followed, Rock and Roll expanded dramatically in form and influence to cut across lines of race, class, and gender (blues, folk, R&B, punk, etc.) to both fascinate and bedevil critics, political leaders, and mothers and fathers everywhere. The course will examine these developments and the various ways Rock and Roll continued to be both a reflection of and affected by late 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. history.

### **Course Learning Objectives:**

In this course you will learn to:

- Read historically and critically by synthesizing the vocabulary, content, master narratives, and historical approaches to the history of rock and roll
- Articulate the social, political, economic, & ideological changes for the period under review
- Synthesize material from music, readings, lectures, and other sources in essay form
- Integrate the intellectual conversation and the give-and-take common to the study of history into your own writings for the course.

The objective for the student is to leave this class with a broad and useful general understanding of the history of rock and roll. If all goes well, you will hear things you haven't before and might even have to re-evaluate some basic assumptions. For this reason, students are also encouraged to participate and ask questions.

### **Course Readings**

Listed in the weekly schedule on Moodle

### **Course Assignments & Grading**

Final Paper (25 percent) You will create your own album based on the weekly topic headings and write liner notes to that album. Additional details will follow.

Exams: (60 percent total) There will be two exams during the semester—a midterm (25 percent of the final grade) and a final (35 percent of the final grade). Both will be essay exams. I will provide more specific guidance for the exams as we get closer to the exam dates—listed on the schedule below.

Attendance/Participation: (15 percent total) Your attendance and participation in this course are very important. Missing class means missing material/content/discussions that will no doubt impact your overall performance in the class. As such, everyone is expected to attend every class and to participate in our conversations/discussions and to complete assignments and to turn them in as outlined in the schedule. If anyone absolutely must miss class, email and let me know.

### **Course Schedule**

Week one: (Aug 27 & 29) Introduction: “*I know it’s only rock and roll, but I like it!*”

Reading: Reebee Garofalo, *Rockin’ Out*, introduction (Moodle)

Week two: (Sept 3 & 5) Early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Tin Pan Alley

Reading: Garofalo, *Rockin’ Out*, ch. 1 (Moodle)

Week three: (Sept 10 & 12) “Race” & “Hillbilly:” segregation in popular music

Reading: “Culture Brokers and Questions of Authenticity,” “James Carter and the Prisoners,” & “Thar’s Gold in Them Hillbillies,” “Greil Marcus on the Blues” (Moodle)

Week four: (Sept 17 & 19) Postwar America

Reading: “Postwar Prosperity & Its Discontents” (on Moodle)

Week five: (Sept 24 & 26) Rock n Roll erupts in Cold War America

Reading: “Censorship & Youth Culture,” “The Enemy Within: Censorship in Rock Music in the 1950s” (on Moodle)

Week six: (Oct 3—**no class Tuesday**) The death of rock n roll

Reading:

Week seven: (Oct 8 & 10) Brill Building & “Girl Groups”

Reading:

**Midterm Exam, Thursday**

Week eight: (Oct 15 & 17) The sixties

Reading:

Week nine: (Oct 22 & 24) The birth of “Rock” music

Reading: Keightley, *Rock Reconsidered*

Week ten: (Oct 29 & 31) “Psychedelic rock” from Haight-Ashbury to the East Village

Reading: “Tear Down the Walls: Jefferson Airplane, Race, and Revolutionary Rhetoric in Sixties Rock,” “The Kosmic Blues of Janis Joplin,” & “The Fugs, the Lower East Side & the Slum Aesthetic of 60s Rock” (Moodle)

Week eleven: (Nov 5 & 7) The “death of the hippie:” Monterrey to Woodstock to Altamont

Reading: Garofalo, “Commercializing the Counterculture: The Monterey Pop Festival,” “Jimi Hendrix and the Electronic Guitar,” “300,000 at Folk-Rock Fair Camp Out in a Sea of Mud,” *New York Times* (Moodle)

Week twelve: (Nov 12 & 14) “Kick Out the Jams:” MC5 & the advent of punk

Reading: “Kick Out the Jams! The MC5 and the Politics of Noise,” “Punk: The Sound of Criticism,” “Punk: Rock as (White) Noise” (Moodle)

Week thirteen: (Nov 19 & 21) Reelin’ in the Years

Reading: Steve Waksman, “Grand Funk Live!: Staging Rock in the Age of the Arena,” & “Luther King Was a Good Ole Boy” (Moodle)

Week fourteen: (Nov 26—**no class Thursday, Thanksgiving break**) I Want My MTV!

Reading: “Did Punk Matter?”

Week fifteen: (Dec 3 & 5)

**Final Exam:** TBA

### **Course Policies:**

**1. Make-up Examinations:** For students who miss a scheduled exam, a make-up exam will be arranged if you are able to document the legitimacy of your absence. The makeup will come from the same materials and review guides as the regular exams. Because of the nature of the course, however, students are strongly advised to take the exams at the originally scheduled times.

**2. Extra Credit:** You have enough to do in the regular assignments for this course. No extra credit will be available.

**3. Assistance:** Office hours are intended to make this course less forbidding. Feel free to come by and talk with me about your work or about history in general during the office hours listed. If you cannot make these times, ask me for an appointment.

**4. Freedom of Speech:** Feel free to raise your hand with a question or comment. Reducing confusion, providing clarification, or responding to student curiosity is an important part of the classroom process and will be undertaken to the extent that time and class size permit. In most cases, if you did not understand something, it is because I did not explain it clearly, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you ask for clarification.

**5. Academic etiquette:** Universities must maintain standards of academic etiquette in order to create and perpetuate an atmosphere conducive to learning. You are expected to demonstrate courtesy toward each other in and out of the classroom. Talking to one's neighbor(s) during class lectures or general discussions, chronic lateness, leaving class

before it has been dismissed, etc., is inherently disruptive and thus injurious to the rights of others to the opportunity to learn. As such, it is unacceptable in a university classroom.

**6. Academic Integrity:** You are expected to abide by the University standards for academic honesty and integrity in all aspects of this course. Academic dishonesty or plagiarism is taken very seriously by me personally and by Drew University. Consequences include (but are not limited to) removal from the class with a zero score for the course and/or removal from this university. If you are at all unclear as to what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism, consult the Academic Integrity Handbook, the CLA Dean's Office web page (<http://depts.drew.edu/cladean>—then click on the first link labeled "College and University Policies"), and/or see me immediately.

**7. Dropping a Class:** I hope no student needs to drop this course. However, events sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. The University has set October 25 as the last day to drop a course for the semester with an automatic grade of W.

**8. Late assignments:** I will not accept late assignments for full credit. Those submitted after the due date must also be accompanied by a reasonable, legitimate excuse. These will then be graded down *at least* one letter grade for tardiness. **NOTE:** on turning assignments in, *never* turn in to me your only copy of anything! Make sure you have a back-up.

**9. Requesting Accommodations at Drew: Requesting Accommodations at Drew**  
Requesting Accommodations for the First Time: students are instructed to contact Accessibility Resources, Brothers College, 119B; 973-408-3962. Although disclosure may take place at any time during the semester, students are encouraged to do so early in the semester, because, in general, accommodations are not implemented retroactively. For additional information, visit: <http://www.drew.edu/academic-services/disabilityservices>

Returning Students with Approved Accommodations: Requests for previously approved accommodations for the current semester should be sent to Accessibility Resources ideally within the first two weeks of class. This allows the office sufficient lead time to process the request.

Please call 973-408-3962, email [disabilityserv@drew.edu](mailto:disabilityserv@drew.edu) , or complete the accommodations request at:

<http://www.drew.edu/academic-services/disabilityservices/request-for-accommodations>