

## ROCK 'N' ROLL AND AMERICAN SOCIETY

MMC 3702  
3 CREDITS

Rock 'n roll? "It's restless and rude. It's defiant and daring. It's a fist shaken at age. It's a voice that often screams out questions because the answers are always changing."

Nora Roberts  
"Public Secrets"

**CLASS MEETINGS:** This is an online class. Lectures may be viewed at your convenience, but it is expected that you view three per week, every week.

**INSTRUCTOR:** David E. Carlson (aka "Prof. Rock")  
Cox/Palm Beach Post Professor of New Media Journalism College of Journalism  
and Communications  
3219 Weimer Hall  
[dcarlson@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:dcarlson@jou.ufl.edu)  
Phone: 352.846.0171

**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment via Skype

**COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:** Messages will be sent to the class via Canvas Announcements. Individual students may be contacted via email. Students are encouraged to contact me via email to [dcarlson@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:dcarlson@jou.ufl.edu).

**REQUIRED TEXT:** *What's That Sound? An Introduction to Rock and Its History* (Fourth Edition) by John Covach and Andrew Flory (W.W. Norton, 2015). ISBN: 978-0-393-93725-1.

*There also will be about 30 short articles that will be posted in the "Resources" section of Canvas. Many of those articles are compiled in the next book. Purchase is optional but recommended to provide additional nourishment to your brain. It is a compilation of essays, record reviews and the like from throughout the history of rock 'n' roll:*

*"Rock and Roll Is Here to Stay: An Anthology"* by William McKeen (W.W. Norton, 2000). ISBN: 0393047008

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** *(From the UF catalog) Studies the role of popular music in American culture. It is not a music course but a look at the effects of recorded sound on popular culture. Part 1 emphasizes rock 'n roll and its impact from 1954-1970.*

**PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:** *There are no prerequisites for MMC1702, but students who are hearing impaired may have difficulty as we play and discuss a lot of music. **No prior familiarity with music (rock or otherwise) is necessary or assumed.** All I ask is that you have an open mind and be ready and able to suspend whatever pre-conceived notions you may have*

*regarding “rock 'n' roll,” “rock music” or “popular music” in general.*

**PURPOSE OF COURSE:** This communication course explores **the history of rock (and pop) music**—its significant performers, producers, recordings, performances, and cultural identity, with the focus on the decades of the 1950s and 1960s.

It’s NOT a music course, per se, but we will be listening to a lot of music as we consider the effects of recorded sound on popular culture. Thus, this is a quintessential **“communication and culture”** course. We will study the origin and growth of the recording industry and music business, consider the impact new technology had (and continues to have) on the development of popular music and examine the mutual influences of rock 'n' roll music and other mass media (film, television, journalism, advertising, etc.).

We will attempt to **integrate into this story the general social and intellectual history of the United States**. Our emphasis is on rock 'n' roll and its impact from around 1954 to 1970, which happens to closely parallel the Civil Rights movement.

We will examine some of the different musical influences that came together to create rock 'n' roll, beginning as far back as the turn of the century, then building through the first half of the last century. Following a loose chronology, we will trace the evolution of specific musical styles and investigate issues related to culture, performance, technology, and reception. Reading assignments will introduce the distinct musical styles, performers, and works that comprise each genre and time period.

**COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** By the end of this course, students will:

Be able to broadly describe the history and development of rock ‘n’ roll music, its technological, regional and cultural influences, and articulate how all of that has influenced the cultural history of the United States. Students also will be able to recognize different styles of music such as blues, bluegrass, country, gospel, jazz and various genres of rock ‘n’ roll.

*Additional goals are to improve critical thinking skills, ability to discern important information and note-taking skills, all of which are useful in a broad range of disciplines.*

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:** *This is a large lecture class conducted entirely online.* Lectures include a great deal of multimedia, especially music and videos of musical performances. You will need a reasonably fast Internet connection to watch them.

*Students are encouraged to discuss the material within the e-learning system, and the instructor will weigh in as appropriate.*

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

**HOW TO DO WELL:** *This class is a whole lot of fun. We listen to great music during every lecture. We watch videos and movie trailers. But “fun” does not mean “easy.” We cover a lot of material, about 70 years of music and social history, so it will be hard to catch up if you fall behind. To do well, the following will make a big difference:*

Come to the Canvas site at least twice every week to read anynew announcements and keep up with the class.

1. Watch every lecture on time, and do not fall behind. Take good notes on the lectures and study them every day. You will not have time to go back through every lecture when exam time rolls around. Due dates areflexible but you have 15 weeks from the time you enrolled to finish the course.
2. Read the text and all assigned materials *before* watching the videos. The book and other readings have been carefully chosen to maximize the experience and potential for intellectual growth. Keeping up with the readings will make a big difference in how much you enjoy the journey we will take this semester.
3. Complete four exams. Tests will include a minimum of 50 questions and may be a combination of multiple-choice, true-false, matching and audio. Questions are taken from lectures and reading assignments. Many, if not most, exam questions will come from lectures so enjoy the music, do the “bar-stool boogie,” but stay alert. Exams are given in a proctored online environment called ProctorU. See below formore.
4. Be open-minded and fully engage yourself. Please leave your preconceptions about what music sucks and what doesn’t at the virtual classroom door. The development of rock 'n' roll has been mostly linear, and learning what came before will help you appreciate the music of today. My goal is to make you a better-educated listener, exposing you to many artists, genres and songs that may be new to you. It’s also to help you understand what a powerful force this music has been in American culture. Leave behind your subjective opinion of rock and roll. Be open- minded and don’t discriminate against music of any kind based on previous experiences.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** *Attendance is virtual, but you are expected to work in a timely fashion, completing a module per week plus the assigned readings. If you fall behind, it will be very difficult to catch up. Remember to visit the Canvas site at least twice every week.*

**EXAM POLICY:** *Exams will be offered online in a timed, proctored environment (ProctorU). You must create a ProctorU account before the first exam and make reservations to take the tests at least 72 hours in advance. If you don’t do that, ProctorU will require you to pay directly to them a penalty fee. Exams are non- comprehensive. Each one covers the lectures and readings assigned since the previous exam. Therefore, there is no “final exam.”*

*The four exams for the course (Exam 1, Exam 2, Exam 3, and Exam 4 ) require online proctoring by [ProctorU](#). Details on signing up for the ProctorU service are available on the Canvas page.*

**IMPORTANT:** All exam proctoring appointments should be made at least 72 hours in advance.

**MAKE-UP POLICY:** *If you become aware of a serious problem or an extraordinary circumstance that will prevent you from finishing the course in 15 weeks, you must communicate with me to explain the situation. That is the only way to receive an extension.*

**ASSIGNMENT POLICY:** *There are no additional required assignments. However, if you wish to get*

the most out of this class, there is a project you can complete – build a timeline of the events covered in class using a free, online tool called tiki-toki. If you are interested in doing this, contact me and I'll explain how it works.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** *It is expected that you will exhibit ethical behavior in this class.* Students are expected to do their own work, use their own words in papers, and to reference outside sources appropriately.

*Students are further expected to observe intellectual property rights and to comply with copyright laws. **The music included in the lectures for this class is the property of the respective copyright holders. It does not belong to you, and you are not free to copy it or distribute it to others.** The same goes for the lectures themselves, images and videos included in the lectures and printed materials.*

*Academic honesty also means you will not plagiarize the words, designs, concepts or ideas of others. Plagiarism is defined as "...taking someone's words or ideas as if they were your own."*  
Source: [Dictionary.com](http://Dictionary.com).

*Students who cheat will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of university rules. You will automatically receive a failing grade in this class if you engage in any form of academic dishonesty.*

**EXTRA CREDIT:** *There will not be any papers or projects offered for extra credit, but there will be extra credit questions on each exam worth an additional 6 to 10 points (which is what a paper or project would be worth anyway). No individual extra-credit opportunities will be offered; everyone in class is treated the same. Please remember that the grading scale (see below) is hard and fast. A point total of 799, for example, will not be rounded up to 800.*

**COURSE TECHNOLOGY:** *This is an online course being taught in Canvas. You will need a computer, high-speed Internet access and a GatorLink ID to gain access to the course and materials via the World Wide Web.*

## UF POLICIES:

### UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH

**DISABILITIES:** Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the [Dean of Students Office](#). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking any quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

**Instructor's note:** *Students who are severely hearing impaired may have difficulty as we play and discuss a lot of music.*

**UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand

the [UF Student Honor Code](#).

**NETIQUETTE: COMMUNICATION COURTESY:** All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. Students who “flame” others will be warned once and then locked out of the class’ online communications. Find more information on [Netiquette Guide for Online Courses](#).

### GETTING HELP:

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu)
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- [e-Learning help](#)

\*\* Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them.

The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e- mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at [Distance Learning - Getting Help](#) for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit [Distance Learning - Student Complaint Process](#) to submit a complaint.

### GRADING SYSTEM:

Your grade for the course will be based on a 600-point scale.

| Assignment | Points or percentage               |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| Exams (4)  | 150 points each (600 points total) |

### GRADING SCALE:

|             |              |              |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| A = 571-600 | A- = 550-569 | B+ = 530-549 |
| B = 510-529 | B- = 476-509 | C+ = 450-475 |
| C = 436-449 | C- = 420-435 | D+ = 395-419 |

D = 376-394

D- = 360-375

E = &lt; 359

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

The most recent calendar is listed under the Syllabus tab in Canvas. The one below is not updated each semester, but it will give you an idea of the workload.

**Rock 'n' Roll and American Society Course content**

| Lesson | Topic  | Readings  | Assignments                    |
|--------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| 1      | What to expect:<br>Course introduction<br>and welcome          |   | Get the book                   |
| 2      | Video: What Rocks?<br>Musicians talk about<br>rock 'n' roll    | The syllabus – all of it  | Fill out the<br>student survey |
| 3      | Labor Pains: The<br>Origins of Rock 'n'<br>Roll                | Canvas: "The Origin of<br>Rock 'n' Roll" (Canvas<br>readings are found in the<br>Learning Modules)  |                                |
| 4      | Labor Pains<br>(continued)                                     | Covach: Pages 18-36   |                                |
| 5      | Mississippi Ghosts:<br>Robert Johnson and<br>the Roots of Rock | Canvas: "Land Where the<br>Blues Began" and "King of<br>the Delta Blues"<br><br>Covach: Pages 37-74 |                                |
| 6      | A Tale of Three Cities:<br>New Orleans                         | Canvas: "Fats"  |                                |
| 7      | A Tale of Three<br>Cities: Chicago                             | Canvas: "From the Delta to<br>Chicago"  |                                |
| 8      | A Tale of Three<br>Cities: Memphis,<br>Sun and the rise of     | Canvas: "706 Union<br>Avenue" and "Elvis Scotty<br>and Bill"  |                                |

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|    | Elvis   | Covach 75-100   |  |
| 9  | Memphis Continued:<br>Who made the first<br>rock 'n' roll record? |   |  |
| 10 | Elvis Presley: The<br>return of the king                          | Canvas: "The Return of the<br>King" and "Where Were You<br>When Elvis Died"   | EXAM 1<br>(complete<br>before class<br>11) |
| 11 | Chuck Berry and the<br>"Deluge"                                   | Covach: Pages 101-109<br>Canvas: "Got to Be Rock<br>and Roll Music," and "The<br>Immortals - Bo Diddley"  |  |
| 12 | The Class of '55:   | Canvas: "The Immortals -<br>Perkins, Cash, Lewis, and<br>Orbison," "Up Against the<br>Wall," and "Jerry Lee Sees<br>the Bright Light of Dallas" |  |
| 13 | Buddy Holly   | Canvas: "The Immortals -<br>Buddy Holly"  |  |
| 14 | The Day the Music<br>Died   | Canvas: "The Day the<br>Music Died"   |  |
| 15 | The Five Styles of<br>Rock 'n' Roll                               | Canvas: "The Five Styles of<br>Rock and Roll"   |  |
| 16 | Five Styles<br>(continued)  | Canvas: "Doo Wop"   |  |
| 17 | Rock 'n Roll, Inc.  | Covach: Pages 111-126<br>Canvas: "Save the Last<br>Dance for Me"  |  |
| 18 | Songwriters and<br>Teen Idols                                     | Covach: Pages 126-139<br>Canvas: "The Immortals -<br>Ricky Nelson"  | Fill out the<br>second student<br>survey   |

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| 19 | Misfortune strikes:<br>Radio and the<br>Payola Scandal | Canvas: "Testimony in the<br>Payola Hearings"   |  |
| 20 | The "Wall of Sound"                                    | Canvas: "Behind the Glass,"<br>"Inflatable Phil," and "The<br>Immortals - Phil Spector"         |  |
| 21 | "Wall of Sound"<br>(continued)                         | Canvas: "The Top 10<br>Weirdest Phil Spector<br>Moments"  | EXAM 2<br>(complete<br>before class<br>22) |
| 22 | Surf's Up: The<br>Beach Boys, Dick<br>Dale, Jan & Dean | Covach,: Pages 145-154<br>Canvas: "The Immortals -<br>The Beach Boys"                           |  |
| 23 | Surf's Up (continued)                                  | Canvas: "A Teenage Hymn to<br>God"  |  |
| 24 | Bob Dylan: The Folk<br>Years                           | Canvas: "The Immortals - Bob<br>Dylan" and "How Does it<br>Feel"                                |  |
| 25 | Blasphemy: Dylan<br>Goes Electric                      | Canvas: "The Making of Blonde<br>on Blonde"   |  |
| 26 | Dylan: The<br>Troubadour                               |   | EXAM 3<br>(Complete<br>before class<br>32) |
| 27 | The Beatles (1958-<br>64)                              | Covach: Pages 158-166<br>Canvas: "The Immortals -<br>The Beatles" and "A Good<br>Stomping Band" |  |
| 28 | The Beatles (1965-<br>67)                              | Canvas: "Words to the<br>Wild" and "More Popular<br>than Jesus"                                 |  |



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| 29 | The Beatles (1968-70)                                     | Canvas: "The Ballad of John and Yoko" and "Video Pioneer"  |  |
| 30 | The British Invasion                                      | Covach: Pages 175-191 Canvas: "The Immortals - The Kinks," "The Immortals – The Rolling Stones" and "Altamont" |  |
| 31 | The Rolling Stones  | Canvas: "The Immortals -- The Yardbirds" and "The Immortals – The Who"   |  |
| 32 | America Responds  | Covach: Pages 192-215  |  |
| 33 | Sweet Soul Music: Motown                                  | Covach, pages 135-139 and 222-234<br>Canvas: "Girl Groups" and "Motown Finishing School"                       |  |
| 34 | Stax, Atlantic and Southern Soul                          | Covach: Pages 235-253<br>Canvas: "Dan and Spooner" and "Otis Redding: King of Them All"                        |  |
| 35 | Sweet Soul Music: James Brown                             | Covach: Pages 245-253<br>Canvas: "The Godfather of Soul" and "The Immortals – James Brown"                     |  |
| 36 | Psychedelia: Drugs and the Quest for Higher Consciousness | Covach: Pages 254-295<br>Canvas: "Next Year in San Francisco" and "These are the Good Old Days"                |  |

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| 37 | Guitar Heroes: Beck, Clapton, Hendrix, Townshend and Page | Canvas: "A Life at the Crossroads," and "Meaty, Beaty, Big and Bouncy" |        |
| 38 | Guitar Heroes (continued)                                 | Canvas: "Hendrix in Black and White"                                   |        |
| 39 | Bringing It All Back Home                                 |  | EXAM 4 |

**Disclaimer:** *This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.*