

**Course Name:** MUS 27R

**Title:** The History of Rock and Popular Music

**Units:** 3

**Course Description:**

The History of Rock and Popular Music is a survey of the origin, major trends, musical forms, styles and genres of rock and popular music from 1945 to the present day. The course will focus on historical and cultural influences that shaped the music as well as the impact of electronic technology. Attention will be given to those artists and groups who have proven to be of the most enduring significance.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

A. Describe rock music and its relation to other musical genres such as folk and classical music.

B. Analyze the form and content of individual rock songs and genres such as: post WWII ballads, rhythm and blues, country music, the Beatles, British blues, 60's rock, heavy metal, art rock of the 70's, punk and new wave, rap, reggae, world music, fusion, etc. Then compare and contrast those genres.

C. Define the relationship between music, social and economic factors of each era.

D. Name and distinguish the results of technological advances (e.g. multi-track recording, digital synthesis, MIDI, etc.) and the effect these advances have pertaining to rock and popular music.

E. Identify the names and contributions of prominent rock artists from each era.

F. Calculate the business facets (e.g. royalties, mechanicals, production, marketing, etc.) of this music.

G. Report on the profound impact this music has had throughout the United States and the rest of the World. Be able to classify the major racial, political, socio-cultural and technological events that have shaped this unique expression throughout history.

**Course Content:**

A. Historical Overview

1. 1945 to the present
2. Cultural events and the effects on rock music

B. The Roots

1. Oral vs. written musical traditions
2. The Blues
3. Country music, gospel and American spirituals
4. Jazz from 1920 through WWII

- C. Pop-style rock and musicals
  - 1. Music in American parlors
  - 2. Technological innovations during the 1920's
  - 3. Phil Spector (girl groups)
  - 4. The surf sound
- D. Electronic Technology and its relation to the music industry.
- E. Folk and Folk-Rock
  - 1. Bob Dylan. The impact of the protest song.
  - 2. Folk-rock in the U.S. and Britain
- F. Soul Music
  - 1. Chicago, Memphis soul
  - 2. Motown (Detroit)
  - 3. Influences of soul on later styles
  - 4. Stax-Volt
  - 5. Jimi Hendrix
- G. The British Invasion
  - 1. The Beatles
  - 2. The Kinks, The Who, the Mersey groups
  - 3. Blues revival: The Rolling Stones and others
  - 4. American responses to the invasion
- H. Psychedelic Rock
  - 1. The San Francisco sound
  - 2. Beyond San Francisco and its influences
  - 3. Woodstock
- I. Country styled Rock
  - 1. Country rock
  - 2. Southern rock
  - 3. Rockabilly revival
  - 4. Garth Brooks
- J. Latin Rock
  - 1. Tango, salsa, samba, bossa nova trends
  - 2. Mexican and South American influences
  - 3. Carlos Santana
- K. Funk, Jazz rock and Fusion
  - 1. Jazz influences, Broadway shows and Hollywood movies
  - 2. Southern rock and pop
  - 3. Rockabilly revival
  - 4. Disco
- L. Art Rock
  - 1. Simultaneous rock and classical genres
  - 2. Avant-garde
  - 3. Glitter and glam rock
- M. Hard Rock and Heavy Metal
  - 1. The British influence
  - 2. The American influence
- N. Punk rock and New Wave
  - 1. New York and British punk
  - 2. West Coast Punk
- O. Ska and Reggae
  - 1. The Caribbean influence
  - 2. The revival of Reggae
- P. Hip Hop and Rap

1. East and West Coast rap
  2. Rap's influence on other rock styles
  3. Youth culture and censorship
- Q. Alternative and Underground rock
1. British influence
  2. Gothic/industrial rock
  3. Post-punk in the US
- R. Modern Mainstream Rock
1. Rock as an international music
  2. MTV and Rock superstars
  3. World Music

**Lab Content:**

Review and identification of recorded musical performances via media center listening sessions. Performances exemplify types of music listed in the Course Content section above.

**Methods of Instruction:**

A. Assignments

1. Weekly readings from the text book
2. Written papers based on personal observations and reviews of live music performances.
3. In class person to person or group discussion on questions relevant to form and content when comparing different rock and popular genres.
4. Weekly listening hours identifying recorded musical performances, in the media center. 14 hours for the semester.
5. Research report on a topic related to rock or popular music today and how the influences of past practices affect that music today and in the future.
6. Written homework assignment of a feature-length music video of the student's choice. Examples:
  - Is the film a successful example of its given genre? Why or why not?
  - How is music used in the film? Give examples.
  - If you were music supervisor on this assignment, what would you do differently?
7. Review an in class performance of a local singer-songwriter or local rock band. Analyzing the impact of a successful (or not) performance.
8. Discuss CD production, sound production (mixing) and music distribution. Other topics related to performance and the business of music production will also be talked about.

## B.Evaluation

1. Tests and/or quizzes that determine the understanding of rock history, musical form, content of different rock genres and musical definitions.

2. Listening examinations based on weekly listening that measure the ability to identify, compare and contrast different rock genres and follow musical form.

3. Class participation during group discussions answering critical thinking questions about today's music.

4. Final examination based on comprehension of course objectives, listening identification and a final research paper analyzing a rock or popular song.

5. Written concert reviews (2) of live performances describing a concert.

### **Out-of-Class Assignments:**

See above.

### **Methods of Evaluation:**

See above.

### **Examples of Appropriate Texts or Other Required Reading:**

Title: Rockin' in Time  
Author: Szatmary, David P  
Date: 2000

Title: Rock and Roll Its History and Style  
Author: Stuessy, Joe; Libscomb, Scott  
Date: 2000

Title: Rock Music Styles, A History  
Author: Charlton, Katherine  
Date: 1998

Title: Rockin' Out  
Author: Garofalo, Reebee  
Date: 2002

### **Other Appropriate Reading:**

1. Video: Feet's Don't Fail Me Now: a film by Alan Lomax about New Orleans.

2. Video: A Day in Harlem

3. Video: The History of Rock 'n' Roll: The Roots

4. Video: History of Rock 'n' Roll: Vol. 1, Funk, Vol. 2, Punk, Vol. 3, Rap and Metal