**University of Wyoming**

**English 4040-02**

**“Rhetoric, Media, and Culture:**

**Rock and Roll”**

**Course Prerequisites:**COM 2

**Course Description**

In the Grand History of Music, rock and roll stands tall. It’s a moment we’re still living in, and through. Think of Elvis. The Beatles. Hendrix. Joplin. Zeppelin. Dylan. Michael Jackson. Think also of the Carpenters, Joan Jett, and Taylor Swift. Then think of their musical ancestors: Robert Johnson. Hank Williams. Bessie Smith. Frank Sinatra. Pete Seeger. The way these performers have influenced our culture and shaped our lifestyles is not only difficult to articulate – it’s difficult to overstate.

 Rock and roll is so ubiquitous, we can hardly imagine life without it. Rock is so transmutable, we can’t always recognize its influence. And rock is so desirable, we want to keep consuming it in all its forms. Part musical style, part lifestyle, part lexical choice (‘Look at her rock those jeans!’) rock and roll has achieved a generalized iconic status around the world. It’s is a life force that seems like it’s been with us forever – even though (in clearly identifiable terms) it’s about 80 years old. ‘Rock ‘n’ roll is here to stay/ It will never die’ sang Danny and the Juniors in 1958. And maybe they were right.

 Rock and roll is, above all else, a musical style. And as we will see, its roots are legion. Certainly, the black spiritual tradition is essential. So is the white pop tradition. Country music is a critical ingredient. Folk music is as well. We will investigate all of these roots – and more – as we explore the evolution of this musical form. And you will situate your own favorite style of rock music within these traditions.

Finally, we cannot overestimate the role technology plays in the evolution of rock and roll – not only in the type of sounds it enables us to produce, but in the way it allows us to consume the music we love: wherever, whenever, and however we choose.

**five graded assignments you have will cover multiple LO’s, as specified below.**

**Required Text**

*Rockin’ in Time: A Social History of Rock and Roll*, by David Szatmary.

**It’s important that you get the 9thedition, 2018, available in loose-leaf or eTextbook only. Publisher: Pearson. Only this edition has the EDM chapter.**

**Requirements and Assignments**

**Participation.**Class participation is a critical key to success in this class! It includes coming to class fully prepared, with the assignment carefully read and/or viewed, and actively, thoughtfully, and respectfully contributing to discussions. You will also be required to whole-heartedly commit to brief in-class assignments. Participation also includes acting professionally at all times (see the Classroom Behavior Policy later in this syllabus). And for those who are comfortable speaking in class, please keep your comments on point, and allow others to speak who may be less comfortable doing so. 1**00 points. LO’s covered: 1, 6, 7.**

**Pairs Presentation: *School of Rock*.** In pairs, present a 15-minute oral report (including Q&A) on a question about *School of Rock*, assigned to you by your professor. **50 points.** **LO’s covered: 1,2,4,6**.

**In-class Writing Assignment: "Strawberry Fields Forever."** As we play the Beatles song, “Strawberry Fields Forever,” write a free-flowing essay on what the song means to you, and more particularly, how you feel it achieves that meaning. **50 points, LO’s covered: 1,2,3,4.**

**Individual Written Document: Favorite Song.**Create a written document that discusses the influences and elements of a song you have always liked. Will include first draft, then revision. **100 points. LO’s covered: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.**

**Pairs Written Document: *Across the Universe.***With a partner, prepare a written document that answers a question about the film, *Across the Universe.* Will include first draft, then revision. **100 points. LO’s covered: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7.**

**Individual Teaching Module.**Teach a 15-minute class period based on an assigned chapter from our text, *Rockin’ in Time.*This will include selecting and assigning background material, uploading your material in module form to the course shell, then teaching a live class period. **100 points.  LO’s covered: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7.**

**Grading Breakdown**

**Assignment                                                    Points          Your Score**

Participation                                           100

School of Rock                                        50

Strawberry Fields Forever                      50

Favorite Song                                         100

Across the Universe                               100

Teaching Module                                    100

**Total                                                            500**

A = 450-500; B = 400-449; C = 350-399

**IN ORDER TO PASS THIS CLASS, YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS.**

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus as circumstances dictate. I will, however, notify you when I do, accompanied by a rationale.

**Schedule at a Glance**

**M    6/20        Introductions. View and Discuss Chuck Berry video.**

**T     6/21        Comedy/Tragedy discussion. View *School of Rock.***

**W    6/22        Ch. 1: The Birth of the Blues. Work in Groups.**

**Th   6/23        Ch. 2: The Advent of Rock and Roll. Present in Groups.**

**M  6/27         Ch. 7: The Beatles. Strawberry Fields Forever in-class writing.**

**T  6/28          Ch. 3: Elvis and Rockabilly. Zoom Call from Liverpool: Karen Carter**

**W  6/29         Ch. 4: The Teen Market. Watch Across the Universe.**

**\*\*\* We will attend a showing of the new movie, *Elvis*, this evening. \*\*\***

**Th  6/30        Ch. 5: Surfboards and Hot Rods. Favorite Song Summaries**

**T  7/5            Ch. 6: The New Frontier of Folk**

**W 7/6            Ch. 8: The British Blues Invasion**

**Th 7/7           Ch. 9: Motown**

**M  7/11         Ch. 13: Soft Sounds**

**T   7/12         Ch. 18: I Want my MTV**

**W  7/13         Present Teaching Modules**

**Th  7/14        Present Teaching Modules**