Syllabus
Spring 2011
University of South Florida
MUH 2020:
The History of Blues & Rock
3 credits
Tuesdays, 6:20-9:05 P.M.
Classroom: BEH 104

A study of the history of rock music: the essence of its musical language, its roots, evolution, styles, influences, social/cultural context, etc. Blues and rock are particularly American musics—they were born here—but they have changed the style of music around the world, faster and further than any other musical revolution. Part of the power of blues and rock comes from the fact that they tap a proto-musical language that is common to many different cultures. This class is approved as a General Education course that fulfills the dimensions of Critical Thinking, Inquiry-based learning, Global Context, and Human Historical Context and Process.

Instructor: Paul Reller, Associate Professor

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, noon-1:00
Office: TAR 027 (basement of the Theatre Centre building)
Email: reller@arts.usf.edu (Please include course number in subject--i.e. "MUH 2020" when it is not possible to email from Blackboard)
Campus mail: FAH 110
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Prerequisites: None

Objectives:
* To learn about the musical roots of Blues and Rock music well enough to hear and identify echoes of antiquity in modern-day rock, pop, country and hip-hop music
* To read three textbooks which span this history and discuss their relevance to the evolution of Blues and Rock music.
* To become familiar with the music of this history through listening examples of world music and American music
* To understand the historical situations which allowed for this music to be born in the United States
* To understand Blues and Rock in a global/historical context, connecting certain aspects of the music to traditions that are tens of thousands of years old.
* To develop an understanding of how many of today's musical genres are born of ethnic and regional influences. The reason that music sounded different in New Orleans than it did in Atlanta or the Mississippi Delta 50-100 years ago has much to do with which traditions and ethnicities were predominant. These demographics have always been in a state of flux.
* To understand that the musical language of Blues and Rock was essentially fully developed by the year 1900, and that what follows is both the development of the musical language and the social changes that allow for "Africanized" music to make its way into mainstream American consciousness, and later world consciousness.
* To understand that the same dynamics that created racial and ethnic diversity in this country have created hybrid musical styles that ultimately transcend ethnicity and regionalism.
* To develop abilities in critical, inductive and deductive thinking and analysis, and to create sound arguments to demonstrate such reasoning.
* To develop a healthy appetite for inquiry, not just for music which is new or new to the student, but especially where it involves investigation and deconstruction of familiar material.

Student learning outcomes:
* The ability to place an never-before-heard example of blues or rock into a social and historical context
* To have a working knowledge of 100 years of American folk music (blues and rock)
* To understand the practice of blues and rock as a tradition that combines European and African traits
* To be familiar with the names, music and lives of the great pop/rock/blues artists of this country, as well as other musicians and practices elsewhere in the world that relate to them
* To have an understanding of the musical and social forces that helped create blues and rock
* To be aware of and facile with the newly developing internet databases for song and song-family research
* To develop inquiry and analytical skills while at the same time developing the ability to research, organize and write a paper to present analysis
* To begin a life-long career as a blues and rock enthusiast and researcher

Textbooks (required, available in the USF Bookstore):
1. Origins of the Popular Style by Peter van der Merwe (Oxford)
2. The History of the Blues by Francis Davis (Hyperion)
3. Rockin’ in Time by David Szatmary (Prentice Hall)

Grading:
Exam #1 (1/25/11)--5%
Exam #2 (2/08/11)--10%
Exam #3 (3/08/11)--15%
Exam #4 (4/05/11)--15%
Exam #5 (5/03/11)--20%
Assignment #1 (1/18/11) Rock and Roll contract (email)--2%
Assignment #2 (2/08/11) Song posting--3%
Assignment #3 (3/01/11) Posted mp3 and analysis--5%
Assignment #4 (4/5/11) Posted mp3 and analysis--10%
Assignment #5 (4/26/11) Posted document and mp3--15%

Exams: Exams are all multiple-choice. There will be no make-up exams given.

Assignments: All assignments must be posted by 5:19 P.M. on Blackboard (with the exception of Assignment #1, which needs to be emailed by that time) the day it is due. Any late work will drop one letter grade from the earned grade. Work more than one week late will not be excepted and will convert to an 'F.' Except for Assignment #1, I do NOT accept assignments via email.
Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

Attendance policy:
1) Absences can be excused with a doctor's note
2) A student is allowed 3 absences without affecting his or her final grade
3) Each additional absence will cause the student's final grade to drop one letter grade
4) Late arrivals and early departures count as 1/2 of an absence
5) Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to a religious observance must provide notice of the date(s), in writing, to the instructor by the third class meeting

Listening Materials: Listening examples will be posted on Blackboard. Additional materials are on reserve in the USF Library's Media Center.

Required equipment: A computer with internet access is required of all students.

Also required: You will have to search, research and download music. You may have to spend about $10 or so on downloads to do this

Blackboard: The use of the Blackboard system is required of all students. Much of your grade will depend on your use of Blackboard. You must make sure that emails from Blackboard are getting to you in a timely fashion. All assignments and papers will be submitted electronically through Blackboard. Blackboard is available through you your MyUSF account.

The Instructor expects students to:
1) Come to class on time (see attendance policy)
2) Read each week's assigned reading before class and review it afterward
3) Check Blackboard and email often
3) Participate in class discussions
4) Take notes
5) Cross-reference all major concepts and artists discussed in class with your texts' indices and, when possible, the internet
6) Refrain from any talking while musical examples are played
7) Spend an hour or more a week listening to the required and other relevant materials
8) Use this class as an opportunity to improve your powers of audition (i.e. become a better practitioner of the Art of Listening)

Academic misconduct:
All outside sources of material used in student assignments must be properly referenced. If the instructor has reason to believe that a student is cheating or being academically dishonest in any way, proceedings may be instituted to have the student dismissed from the class, program and/or the University. See the following for more information concerning university policy for academic dishonesty and plagiarism:
Plagiarism Tutorial: http://www.cte.usf.edu/plagiarism.htm
Undergraduate Catalog: http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0607/adadap.htm
Graduate Catalog: http://catalog.grad.usf.edu/currentpdf/USF_Grad_Catalog_2007_2008.pdf (p. 81)
Disabilities:
Any student with a disability is encouraged to meet with the instructor privately during the first week to discuss accommodations. Each student must bring a current Memorandum of Accommodations from the Office of Student Disability Services (SVC 1133), which is prerequisite for receiving accommodations. Accommodated examinations through the Office of Student Disability Services require two weeks notice. All course documents are available in alternate format if requested in the student's Memorandum of Accommodations.

Other policies:
1) The use of cell phones in class is not permitted. Please turn them off before coming into class.
2) No talking during the playing of audio examples in class
3) It is not permissible to sell notes or recordings of class lectures
4) Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor during office hours