

HIS 2134B: “Talkin’ ’Bout My Generation”: Youth, Rebellion and Rock ’n’ Roll



Department of History
The University of Western Ontario
Winter 2016

Instructor: Geoffrey Stewart

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00 to 2:00 or by appointment

Phone: 519-661-2111 ext. 84992

e-mail: gstewa4@uwo.ca

Office: 2237 Lawson Hall



The midpoint of the twentieth century ushered in a period of tremendous social and political upheaval across the globe. Geopolitically, the developed world was entering the ideological contest of the Cold War, while the less-developed states were attempting to throw off the shackles of the old imperial order. The Western world, particularly the United States, was entering a period of unprecedented affluence. On the surface, people appeared to be conforming to the banal norms of middle class life, enjoying stability after the dislocations of two world wars and a global depression. Scratch the surface and there was danger lurking. Many groups were marginalized and felt alienated from mainstream values. Slowly they began to push back, demanding an end to racial discrimination, more social justice, sexual freedom and gender

equality. The resistance grew and turned to rebellion. At the vanguard of this rebellion was youth. In both the developed and underdeveloped world, younger generations were looking at the world their parents had sanctioned and demanded change. Rock'n'roll, in all its glory, emerged in this matrix, reflecting and shaping the societal changes that were at work. To the gatekeepers of social and political order, the sight, sound and spectacle of rock'n'roll epitomized the forces of rebellion they were attempting to keep at bay. For those who challenged that order rock'n'roll served as an anthem.

This course uses the cultural phenomenon of rock'n'roll as a lens to explore the connections between youth and rebellion and societal change in the latter half of the twentieth century. In cultural terms, rock'n'roll transcended race, class, gender, sexual and national boundaries—a quality which lent it such symbolic and, at times, transformative power. It is with this cultural dimension that this course primarily concerns itself, treating the spectacle of the performers and the lyrics of their songs as historical texts that reflect the broader political, social and economic change that has defined the human condition.

Beginning with the birth of the blues in the Mississippi Delta, where newly freed African-Americans would use the music as a powerful, and sometimes cathartic, outlet for the frustrations and hardships they faced on a daily basis, we will follow the relationship between rock'n'roll and societal change in both the United States and across the globe through subsequent generations as the culture of rock'n'roll—its sights, sounds and spectacle—served as a locus for resistance and rebellion to everything from parents



to politics.

Outcomes:

Upon completing the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and describe key figures, movements, events and trends that have shaped the second half of the twentieth century
- Discuss, from a historical perspective, the connections between rock'n'roll race, class, gender, sexual and national identity
- Critically assess the connection between rock'n'roll and societal change through examinations, class discussions and a written assignment
- Develop verbal and written communication skills
- Consider the strengths and weaknesses of music as a historical source

Possible Textbooks:

Brian Cogan and Thom Gencarelli, *Baby Boomers and Popular Culture: An Inquiry into America's Most Powerful Generation* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2014)

Keith Richards, *Life* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 2010)

Deena Weinstein, *Rock'n America: A Social and Cultural History* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2015)

Course Requirements:

Midterm Exam 30% (February 9)

The Cover of the *Rolling Stone* Assignment 30% (Due March 15)

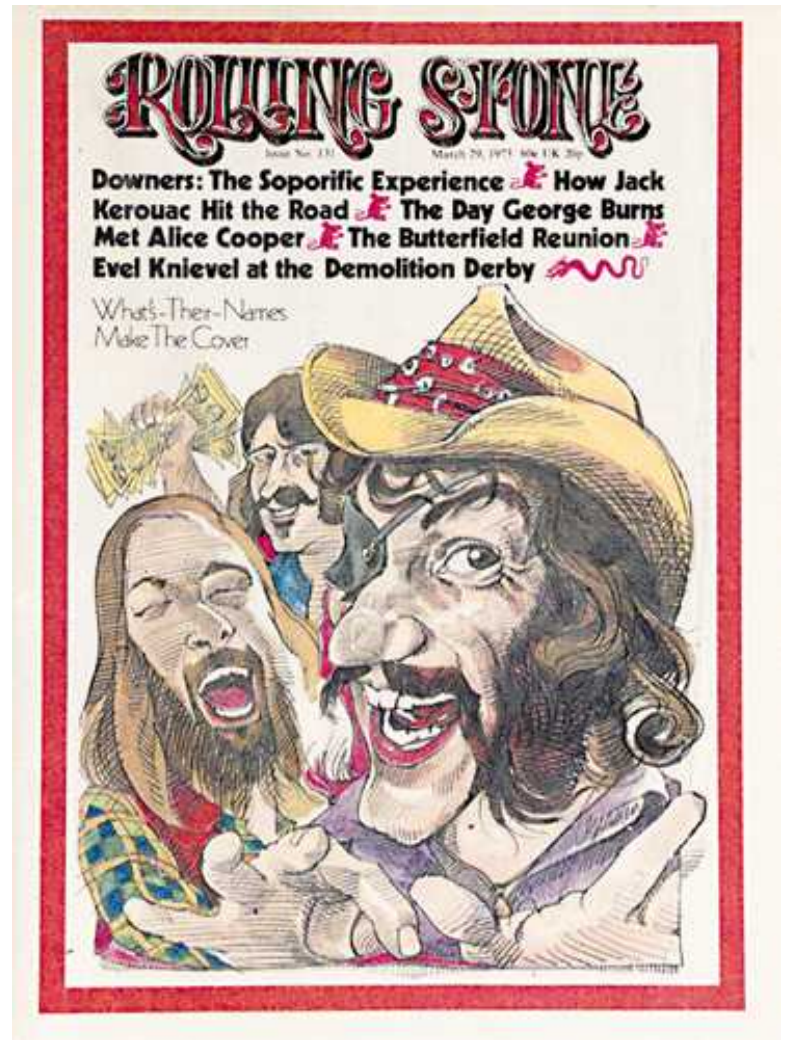
Final Exam 40% (Final Exam Period)

Midterm and Final Exam:

There will be one Midterm exam held in class on **February 9** and a Final exam held during the **Spring Exam** period. Electronic devices are not permitted in either exam.

Cover of the *Rolling Stone*:

In the very first edition of *Rolling Stone*, founder and publisher Jann Wenner explicitly stated the magazine “is not just about the music, but about the things and attitudes that music embraces.” This assignment gives you the opportunity to realize that vision. You will be required to write a **6 page (double-spaced)** article for *Rolling Stone* magazine discussing how the culture of rock’n’roll—its sight, sound or spectacle—as reflected in an artist, a band, a song, or an album commented on, furthered or symbolized the societal change of that particular era. Your article should use a **minimum of five secondary sources** (books, monographs, journal articles) from the Weldon Library including **at least one journal article and book**. On-line material is acceptable only in certain cases which must be verified by the professor or Teaching Assistant. All citations should appear as footnotes or endnotes and follow Chicago Style in format. The article will be due in class* on **March 15**.



***Assignment Submission**

Hardcopies of all assignments are to be submitted in class as well as electronically to turnitin.com *by the time that class has started*.

“Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website.”

Late assignments will be penalized 5% the first day and 2% each subsequent day. Late assignments handed in after the last day of class will not be accepted. Students must complete this assignment to pass the course.

Statement on Plagiarism:

It shall be an offence for a student to commit plagiarism.

From the Academic Handbook:

Plagiarism: “The act or an instance of copying or stealing another’s words or ideas and attributing them as one’s own.” Excerpted from Black’s Law Dictionary, West Group, 1999, 7th ed., p. 1170.

This includes submitting a paper you have written or intend to write for another class.

Tentative Lecture Schedule

January 5: The Crossroads: Introduction to the Course

January 12: Antecedents: Race, Resistance and the Blues

January 19: Rebels with Cause: Alan Freed and American Youth

January 26: Dick Clark strikes back: Pat Boone, *American Bandstand* and “the Day the Music Died”

February 2: Contesting Consensus, Containment and Anticommunism: Greenwich Village and the New Folk Scene

February 9: Mid-Term

February 16: No Class – Reading Week

February 23: From “Race” Music to R & B: Rock’n’Soul and the Struggle for Racial Equality

March 1: Storming the Beaches of Main Street, USA: The British Invasion and Rebellion in Middle Class America

March 8: The Sounds of Protest: Civil Rights, The Counterculture and Vietnam

March 15: From a Street Fighting Man to a Buffalo Soldier: The Global 1960s and the Postcolonial Moment

March 22: It’s Time for Androgyny: Glam Rock, Disco, Punk and the Me Decade

March 29: More than “Black Noise”: Hip Hop and what it means to be Black in America

April 5: K’Naan’s Coda: Youth, Rebellion and Rock’n’Roll in the New Millenium

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Prerequisites and Antirequisites:

Unless you have either the requisites for this course, as described in the Academic Calendar description of the course, or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The Academic Calendar description of each course also indicates which classes are considered antirequisites, i.e., to cover such similar material that students are not permitted to receive academic credit for both courses.

Academic Offences:

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitute a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and

indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

Medical Issues:

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. This site provides links to the necessary forms. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Mental Health@Western](mailto:MentalHealth@Western), <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Morgan Sheriff, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84999 or msherif5@uwo.ca