

Iconic Figures of Popular Music: The Doors

Fall 2017

Course no. MUSC 424

Section no. 47229

Units: 2

Time: Wednesday 10:00 - 11:50 am

Room: KDC 241

Course instructor: Bill Biersach

Instructor's office: MUS 316

Instructor's office hours: M 9 – 9:50 am; 2 – 3 pm

Office phone: (213) 740-7416

Instructor's email: biersach@usc.edu

The Premise

The Doors are considered to be one of the most controversial rock bands of the 1960s, mainly due to singer Jim Morrison's wild lyrics and unpredictable stage persona, but also because of their unique instrumentation (keyboards, guitar, drums, but no bass player) and myriad musical influences from flamenco to jazz to ragtime. The terms "psychedelic rock," "acid rock," "hard blues rock" and "stale bourbon and cigarette butt blues" have all been applied to their albums without dispute, though "dark" is perhaps the most pervasive adjective. Although Morrison died in 1971 and the remaining group disbanded two years later, they have sold more than 30 million albums in the United States in the intervening years, and three times that worldwide. These numbers are astounding when one considers that the band only recorded six studio albums while their lead singer was alive. Jim Morrison's assessment of himself, the band, and their music went as follows:

"Expose yourself to your deepest fear; after that, fear has no power, and the fear of freedom shrinks and vanishes. You are free."

Course Goal

In this seminar we will scrutinize the output of the Doors from the standpoint of lyrics, stylistic influences, philosophical influences, instrumentation, performance and production. We will focus, not on the professor's opinions and reactions (based on his memories of the sixties), but those of the students (raised in the present culture). To this end, students will be assigned songs to research and for which to prepare presentations to be given when we arrive at them chronologically. Students who are keyboardists, guitarists, and drummers will be encouraged to demonstrate the licks and riffs of the band members (although proficiency with an instrument is not a requirement to take the

course). In the end it is hoped that each student will leave with an enhanced appreciation not only for music of this group but for the dynamics of the thought behind it.

Grades

Grades will be based on the following:

Weekly assignments (written discussion points based on the texts)	25 Points
Oral presentations (album reviews)	25 Points
Three essay exams	25 Points
Class participation	25 Points

Scores for course grade will be tabulated as follows:

94 - 100	A
90 - 93	A-
87 - 89	B+
84 - 86	B
80 - 83	B-
77 - 79	C+
74 - 76	C
70 - 73	C-
67 - 69	D+
64 - 66	D
60 - 63	D-
0 - 59	F

Texts

Required:

Densmore, John. *Riders on the Storm: My Life with Jim Morrison and the Doors*. Delacorte Press, New York. 1990. ISBN: 0385304471.

Hopkins, Jerry, and Sugerman, Danny. *No One Here Gets Out Alive*. Warner Books, New York. 1980. ISBN: 9780446697330.

Recommended, not required:

Kubernik, Harvey. *Canyon of Dreams: The Magic and the Music of Laurel Canyon*. Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 2009. ISBN: 9781402797613.

Manzarek, Ray. *Light My Fire: My Life with The Doors*. Berkley Trade, San Francisco. 1999. ISBN: 0425170454.

THE DOORS

Fall 2017

Schedule of Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments

WEEK	TOPIC	DATE	Hopkins/ Sugarman NO ONE HERE GETS OUT ALIVE	Densmore RIDERS ON THE STORM
1.	Preliminaries	Aug. 23		
2.	<i>The Doors</i> (1967)	Aug. 30	Forward, Chpts. 1-3	Chpts. 1-5
3.	<i>The Doors</i> (1967)	Sept. 6	Chpt. 4	Chpts. 6-8
				Sept. 12 – Last Day to Drop, Add, Etc.
4.	<i>Strange Days</i> (1967)	Sept. 13	Chpt. 5	Chpt. 9
5.	<i>Strange Days</i> (1967)	Sept. 20	— —	Chpt. 10
6.	First Midterm	Sept. 27	— —	— —
7.	<i>Waiting for the Sun</i> (1968)	Oct. 4	Chpt. 6-7	Chpt. 11-12
8.	<i>Waiting for the Sun</i> (1968) <i>Soft Parade</i> (1969)	Oct. 11	Chpt. 8	Chpt. 13
9.	<i>Soft Parade</i> (1969)	Oct. 18	— —	Chpt. 14
10.	Second Midterm	Oct. 25	— —	— —
11.	Morrison Motel (1970)	Nov. 1	Chpt. 9	Chpts. 15-16
12.	Morrison Motel (1970)	Nov. 8	—	Chpt. 17
				Nov. 14 – Last Day to Drop with “W”
13.	07 L.A. Woman (1971)	Nov. 15	Chpt. 10	Chpt. 18
14.	Holiday	Nov. 22	— —	— —
15.	07 L.A. Woman (1971)	Nov 29	Chpt. 11-12 & Afterward	Chpt. 19-22 & Afterward
16.	Final Exam	Monday Dec. 12	8 – 10 am	

LAPTOP COMPUTERS, PRINTERS, AND CELL PHONES

It is expected that students in this class will have their own (or access to a) laptop computer for the giving of presentations and a printer for submitting assignments.

However, during class the professor asks that you not use your digital phones, laptops, and/or other communication devices. Studies show that the use of these devices tends to distract students from the subject under discussion.

Notes should be taken by hand.

If you wish to use a device to look up a fact under discussion, please request permission to do so, and put away the device immediately afterwards.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776, http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html.

Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Emergency Preparedness in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their

residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

The University's Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

Tab for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

Bibliography (books consulted while creating this course)

- Brackett, David. *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*. Oxford University Press, New York. 2009.
- Brandelius, Jerilyn Lee. *Grateful Dead Family Album*. Warner Books, New York. 1989.
- Charlton, Katherine. *Rock Music Styles: A History*. Sixth edition. McGraw Hill, New York. 2011.
- Courier, Kevin. *Dangerous Kitchen: The Subversive World of Frank Zappa*. ECW Press, Toronto. 2002.
- Corvach, John, and Flory, Andrew. *What's That Sound? An Introduction to Rock and It's History*. Third edition. Norton and Company, New York. 2012
- Dodd, David (annotated by). *The Complete Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics*. Free Press, New York. 2005.
- Editors of Billboard. *Rock Movers and Shakers*. Billboard Publications, New York. 1989.
- Editors of Rolling Stone. *The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll*. Rolling Stone Press, New York. 1981.
- Garfalo, Reebee. *Rockin' Out: Popular Music in the USA*. Fourth edition. Prentiss Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ. 2008.
- Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. Bantam Books, New York. 1987.
- Greenfield, Robert. *Dark Star: An Oral Biography of Jerry Garcia*. It Books, New York, 2009. ISBN 13: 978-0061715723 (Pbk.).
- Jackson, Blair. *Grateful Dead Gear*. Backbeat Books, San Francisco, 2006. ISBN 13: 978-0-87930-893-3. (Pbk.).
- Kubernick, Harvey. *Canyon of Dreams: The Magic and the Music of Laurel Canyon*. Sterling, New York. 2009.
- Larson, Thomas E. *History of Rock & Roll*. Dubuque; Kendall Hunt, 2012.
- Lesh, Phil. *Searching for the Sound: My Life with the Grateful Dead*. Back Bay Books, New York, 2005. ISBN 13: 978-0-316-15449-9 (Pbk.).

- McNally, Dennis. *A Long Strange Trip: The Inside History of the Grateful Dead*. Broadway Books, New York, 2002. ISBN: 0-7679-1186-5 (Pbk.).
- Pattison, Robert. *The Triumph of Vulgarity: Rock Music in the Mirror of Romanticism*. Oxford University Press, New York. 1981.
- Schloss, Joseph G., Starr, Larry; and Waterman, Christopher. *Rock Music, Culture, and Business*. Oxford University Press, New York. 2012.
- Skully, Rock. *Living with the Dead: Twenty Years on the Bus with Garcia and the Grateful Dead*. Cooper Square Press, New York, 2001. ISBN: 0-8154-1163-4 (Pbk.).
- Neil Slaven. *Electric Don Quixote: The Definitive Story of Frank Zappa*. Omnibus Press, London. 2003
- Taruskin, Richard, and Gibbs, Christopher H. *The Oxford History of Western Music*. College edition. Oxford University Press, New York. 2013.