The Beatles: Their Music and Their Times

Spring 2018

Course no. MUSC 422
Section no. 47220
Units: 4
Time: MW 4 – 5:50 pm
Room: THH 202

Course instructor: Bill Biersach
Instructor’s office: MUS 316
Instructor’s office hours: MW 9 – 9:45 am, 12 - 1 pm
Office phone: (213) 740-7416
Instructor’s email: biersach@usc.edu

Teaching assistants: Matt Dievendorf and Eric Pham

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this course is to familiarize the student with the music, lyrics, recordings, personal and public lives, production techniques, career strategy, social ramifications, and technological impact of the musical group known as The Beatles. The goal is to imbue the student with an appreciation for the music itself, a basic understanding of the primitive technology available at the time (both recording and playing back), and a broader comprehension of the social, economic, political, and cultural upheavals that gave rise to the musical trends of the Sixties.

Instructional Strategy

Each week the professor will present a lecture which will include musical examples, lyrics, and pertinent background information on the four Beatles, their personal and professional dealings, their approach to live performance and studio recording, and the activities of their managerial and production staff.

There will also be a section devoted to the viewing of films, pertinent film clips, documentaries, and discussion of the texts led by the teaching assistants.

Typically lectures will be on Mondays and the discussions on Wednesdays.
Examinations and Grades

There will be three examinations: two midterms and a final. Each exam will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions. You will circle the answers in your exam booklet, and also fill in the bubbles on a Scantron sheet. The Scantron will be graded by computer.

Your course grade will be determined by the scores of the two midterms and final exam as processed by Blackboard, part of the University’s Grading and Roster System. Blackboard calculates final grades by percentages rather than averages, hence the exams are weighted as follows: First midterm 33%; second midterm 33%; and final exam 34%. Blackboard also determines grade splits. Because of the weighted calculation, the following splits are provided as guidelines rather than predictors of final outcome:

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

The second midterm and final examination will be non-cumulative.

Texts

The required texts this semester will be:


Recommended, not required:

## Schedule of Lecture Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture MONDAY</th>
<th>Discussion WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>Topic/Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Jan. 8</td>
<td>Jan. 10</td>
<td>Early Recordings</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Jan. 15</td>
<td>Jan. 17</td>
<td>Liverpool, Hamburg</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[Holiday]</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Jan. 22</td>
<td>Jan. 24</td>
<td><em>Please Please Me</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Friday, Jan. 26</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Last day to drop without “W”, P/NP, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Jan. 29</td>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td><em>With the Beatles/A Hard Day’s Night</em></td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Feb. 5</td>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td><em>A Hard Day’s Night/Beatles for Sale</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td><em>Help!/Rubber Soul</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Feb. 19</td>
<td>Feb. 21</td>
<td><em>Help!/Rubber Soul</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>[Holiday]</td>
<td>1st Midterm Exam</td>
<td>Last day to change Pass/No Pass to Letter</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td><em>Rubber Soul/Revolver</em></td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Mar. 5</td>
<td>Mar. 7</td>
<td><em>Revolver/“Strawberry Fields Forever”/”PennyLane”</em></td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Mar. 12</td>
<td>Mar. 14</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Mar. 19</td>
<td>Mar. 21</td>
<td><em>Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band</em></td>
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<td>2nd Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Apr. 2</td>
<td>Apr. 4</td>
<td><em>Magical Mystery Tour/Yellow Submarine</em></td>
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<td>Friday, Apr. 6</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Last day to drop with “W”</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Apr. 16</td>
<td>Apr. 18</td>
<td><em>The Beatles (“The White Album”)</em> cont’d</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Let It Be (“Get Back”)</em></td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Apr. 23</td>
<td>Apr. 25</td>
<td><em>Abbey Road</em></td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM—4:30-6:30 pm</td>
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Statement of 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 Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions>. 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>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems for Students

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali> which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs <http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html> provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Confidential On-Campus Resources
USC Center for Work and Family Life
http://www.usc.edu/programs/cwfl/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Byrne, David</td>
<td>How Music Works</td>
<td>McSweeney’s, San Francisco, 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>978-1-938073-53-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gitlin, Todd</td>
<td>The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage</td>
<td>Bantam Books, New York, 1987</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gunthur, Curt  
*The Beatles ’64: A Hard Day’s Night in America*  
Doubleday, New York, 1989  
ISBN 0-385-24583-1

Larson, Thomas E.  
*History of Rock & Roll*  

Lefcowitz, Eric  
*Tomorrow Never Knows: The Beatles Last Concert*  
Terra Firma Books, San Francisco, 1987  
ISBN 0-943249-02-3

Lewisohn, Mark  
*The Beatles Recording Sessions*  
Harmony Books (Crown Publishers), New York, 1989  
ISBN 0-517-57066-1

Martin, George  
*All You Need Is Ears*  
St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1979  
ISBN 3-312-02044-9

McDonald, Ian  
ISBN 978-1-55652-733-3

Norman, Philip  
*Shout! The Beatles in Their Generation*  
Simon & Shuster, New York, 1981  

Pattison, Robert  
*The Triumph of Vulgarity:*  
*Rock Music in the Mirror of Romanticism*  
Oxford University Press, New York, 1981  

Riley, Tim  
*Tell Me Why*  
Vintage Books, New York, 1988  

Runstein, Robert E. and Huber, David M.  
*Modern Recording Techniques*  
Howard W. Sam & Co., Indianapolis, 1987  
ISBN 0-672-22451-8

Sheff, David  
*The Playboy Interviews with John Lennon*
and Yoko Ono

Smith, Joe
Off the Record: The Oral History of Popular Music
Warner Publications, New York, 1988
ISBN 0-446-51232-X

Somach, Denny,
Somach, Kathleen and
Gunn, Kevin
Ticket to Ride
ISBN 0-688-08769-8

Tillery, Gary
The Cynical Idealist: A Spiritual Biography of John Lennon
Quest Books, Wheaton, IL, 2009
978-0-8356-0900-6

Tillery, Gary
Working Class Mystic: A Spiritual Biography of George Harrison
Quest Books, Wheaton, IL, 2011
978-0-8356-0875-5

Wenner, Jann
Lennon Remembers
SBN: 0/87932/009/5