

Iconic Figures of Popular Music: The Rolling Stones

Spring 2018

Course no. MUSC 424

Section no. 47229D

Units: 2

Time: Wednesdays 10:00-11:50am

Room: KDC 241

Course instructor: Bill Biersach

Instructor's office: MUS 316

Instructor's office hours: MW 9 – 9:50 am

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Instructor's email: biersach@usc.edu

The Premise

Considered rivals of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones were in fact a very different sort of band. The original members got together precisely because they loved the rhythm and blues music of American black artists. They helped foster a blues movement in London when jazz and pop were the going trends in most nightclubs. When the Beatles burst upon the scene in 1964, the Rolling Stone were shortly behind. In fact, it was because the A&R man at Decca Records had turned down the Beatles that he immediately signed the Rolling Stones. Although they originally played few originals, concentrating as they did on blues tunes, eventually Mick Jagger (lead vocalist) and Keith Richards (lead guitar) became momentous songwriters in their own right, writing such hits as “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction,” “Paint It Black,” “Let’s Spend the Night Together,” “Lady Jane,” “Mother’s Little Helper,” and so many more.

There was a great deal of internal strife within the band. Founder Brian Jones developed severe health and psychological problems, was eventually fired, and soon after died. Bill Wyman, the bassist, was older than the others and tended not to participate in drug and other activities. Jagger, Richards, and Jones were all arrested on drug charges, for which they got minimum sentences. This left the band rather ragged by the end of the sixties. Nonetheless, with a new rhythm guitarist they charged ahead again in the seventies, and continued right into the next century.

Course Goal

In this seminar we will scrutinize the early output of this talented but turbulent band (1964 – 1969) from the standpoint of lyrics, musical style, philosophy, instrumentation, performance, and production. Students will be assigned specific albums to research in all these areas and prepare presentations based on their findings. In the end it is hoped that

each student will leave with an enhanced appreciation for the time known as the Sixties, especially from a pop and blues perspective.

Grades

Grades will be based on the following:

Weekly assignments (written discussion points)	20 Points
Oral presentations (album reviews)	20 Points
First midterm exam	20 Points
Second midterm exam	20 Points
Final exam	20 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

Richards, Keith. *Life*. Back Pay Books. New York, 2010.

Wyman, Bill. *Stone Alone*. Da Capo Books. New York, 1990.

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/>.

Schedule of Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments

WEEK	ALBUM	DATE	Bill Wyman <i>Stone Alone</i>	Keith Richards <i>Life</i>
1.	Preliminaries	Jan. 10		
2.	Selected influences*	Jan. 17	Chpts. 1 & 2	Chpt. 1
3.	01 <i>England's Newest Hit Makers</i>	Jan. 24	Chpt. 3	Chpt. 2
4.	02 <i>12 x 5</i>	Jan. 31	Chpt. 4	Chpt. 3
5.	03 <i>The Rolling Stones, Now!</i>	Feb. 7	Chpt. 5	Chpt. 4
6.	04 <i>Out of Our Heads</i>	Feb. 14	Chpt. 6	
7.	FIRST MIDTERM	Feb. 21		
8.	05 <i>December's Children</i>	Feb. 28	Chpt. 7	Chpt. 5
9.	06 <i>Aftermath</i>	Mar. 7	Chpt. 8	Chpt. 6
10.	SPRING BREAK	Mar. 14		
11.	07 <i>Got Live If You Want It</i>	Mar. 21	Chpt. 9	
12.	SECOND MIDTERM	Mar. 28		
13.	08 <i>Between the Buttons</i>	Apr. 4	Chpt. 10	
14.	09 <i>Their Satanic Majesties Request</i>	Apr. 11	Chpt. 11	
15.	10 <i>Beggars Banquet</i>	Apr. 18	Chpt. 12	Chpt. 7
16.	11 <i>Let It Bleed</i>	Apr. 25		
17.	FINAL EXAM	Friday, May 4. 12:00		

* Muddy Wateres, Jimmy Waters, Chuck Berry, Jimmy Reed, Little Walter Jacobs, Elvis Presley

Bibliography

- Brackett, David *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader* (Third Edition)
Oxford University Press, New York, 2005
ISBN 978-0-19-981170-0
- Charlton, Katherine *Rock Music Styles: A History* (Sixth Edition)
McGraw Hill, New York, 2008
ISBN 978-0-07-802507-5
- Covach, John and
Flory, Andrew *What's That Sound? An Introduction to Rock and
It's History* (Third edition)
Norton & Company, New York, 2012
ISBN-13: 978-0-393-91204-3
- Garafalo, Reebee *Rockin' Out: Popular Music in the USA*, (Fourth
Edition) Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2008
ISBN-13: 978-0-13-234305-3
- Gitlin, Todd *The Sixties: Days of Hope, Days of Rage*
Bantam Books, New York, 1987
ISBN 0-553-05233-0
- Kubernik, Harvey *Canyon of Dreams: The Magic and the Music
of Laurel Canyon*
Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 2009
ISBN: 978-4027-9761-3
- Lazell, Barry
(editor) *Rock Movers and Shakers*
Billboard Publications, New York, 1989
ISBN 0-8230-7608-3
- Parles, John and
Romanowski, Patricia *The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll*
Rolling Stone Press, New York, 1983
ISBN 0-671-44071-3
- Pattison, Robert *The Triumph of Vulgarity:
Popular Music in the Mirror of Romanticism*
Oxford University Press, New York, 1987
ISBN 0-19-503876-2
- Pichaske, David *A Generation in Motion:
Popular Music and the Culture of the Sixties*

Ellis Press, Peoria, 1989
ISBN 0-944024-16-5

Richards, Keith
With Fox, James

Life
Back Pay Books, New York, 2010
ISBN 978-0-316-03441-8

Russel, Ethan A.

*Let It Bleed: The Rolling Stones, Altamont, and the
End of the Sixties.*
Springboard Press, New York, 2009.
ISBN 978-0-446-53904-3

Schloss, Joseph G.,
Starr, Larry, and
Waterman, Christopher

Rock Music, Culture., and Business
Oxford University Press, New York, 2012
ISBN: 978-0-19-975836-4

Wyman, Bill

Stone Alone
Da Capo Books, New York, 1990
ISBN 978-0-316-03441-8