

## **Iconic Figures of Popular Music: Pink Floyd**

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Spring 2019

Course no. MUSC 424

Section no. 47229R

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 – 9:30 am, 12 – 1 pm

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Instructor's email: [biersach@usc.edu](mailto:biersach@usc.edu)

### **The Premise**

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From schoolyard friends to superstars to squabbling artists to fading stars, we will follow the course of these intense musicians through the intriguing twists and turns of their rise to fame and their eventual demise as a group and, unfortunately, as friends. Along the way, one of their founding members bailed due to mental problems—yet his unintended influence on the band remained eerily active. In their use of complex recording techniques and newly-invented electronic instruments, they were decades ahead of their time. The amazing visuals, both projected and animatronic, became an integral part of their stage presentation. Their albums were more than collections of musical tracks, and their concerts became more than mere performances of their music. Everything they did was larger than life, but the vicissitudes of life eventually tore the band apart.

### **Course Goal**

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In this course we will examine the career arc of this band from several perspectives. We will read the autobiography of a band member, Nick Mason, but also review the story from an outsider's perspective, journalist Mark Blake. The class will also divide into small groups who will review and present the musical material, album by album, according to guidelines of their choosing. This is very much a student-directed class, the professor acting as guide rather than lecturer.

## Grades

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Grades will be based on the following:

Weekly assignments (written discussion points based on reading assignments)	25 Points
Oral presentations (album reviews)	25 Points
Three essay exams	25 Points
Participation (attendance and class engagement)	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

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### **Required (available in paperback or Kindle format):**

Blake, Mark. *Comfortably Numb: The Inside Story of Pink Floyd*. Da Capo Press. Cambridge, MA, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-0-306-81752-6

Mason, Nick. *Inside Out: A Personal History of Pink Floyd*. Chronicle Books. San Francisco, 2004. ISBN-13: 978-0-8118-4824-4.

### **Recommended, not required (available in paperback only):**

Povey, Glenn. *Echoes: The Complete History of Pink Floyd*. Chicago Review Press (An A Capella Book). Chicago, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-1-56976-313-1.

**Pink Floyd**  
**Schedule of Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments**

**Spring 2019**

WEEK	ALBUM	DATE	Mark Black <i>Comfortably Numb</i>	Nick Mason <i>Inside Out</i>
1.	<b>Preliminaries</b>	<b>Jan. 9</b>		
2.	[1] <i>The Piper at the Gates of Dawn</i> (1967)	<b>Jan. 16</b>	<b>Chpts. 1-3</b>	<b>Chpt. 1-3</b>
3.	[2] <i>Saucerful of Secrets</i> (1968)	<b>Jan. 23</b>	<b>Chpt. 4</b>	-----
		Jan. 25	Last day to drop w/o "W," or to change letter grade to P/NP, etc.	
4.	[3] <i>Madcap Laughs</i> (Sid Barrett) (rec. 1968, rel. 1970)	<b>Jan. 30</b>	-----	<b>Chpt. 4</b>
5.	[4] <i>Atom Heart Mother</i> (1970)	<b>Feb. 6</b>	<b>Chpt. 5</b>	-----
6.	[1] <i>Meddle</i> (1971)	<b>Feb. 13</b>	-----	<b>Chpt. 5</b>
7.	<b>FIRST MIDTERM</b>	<b>Feb. 20</b>		
		Feb. 22	Last day to change P/NP to letter grade.	
8.	[2] <i>Dark Side of the Moon</i> (1973)	<b>Feb. 27</b>	<b>Chpt. 6</b>	<b>Chpt. 6</b>
9.	[3] <i>Wish You Were Here</i> (1975)	<b>Mar. 6</b>	<b>Chpt. 7</b>	<b>Chpt. 7</b>
10.	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>Mar. 13</b>		
11.	[4] <i>Animals</i> (1977)	<b>Mar. 20</b>	-----	<b>Chpt. 8</b>
12.	<b>SECOND MIDTERM</b>	<b>Mar. 27</b>		
13.	[1] <i>The Wall (Part 1)</i> (1979)	<b>Apr. 3</b>	<b>Chpt. 8</b>	<b>Chpt. 9</b>
		Apr. 5	Last day to drop with a "W"	
14.	[2] <i>The Wall (Part 2)</i> (1979)	<b>Apr. 10</b>	-----	<b>Chpt. 10</b>
15.	[3] <i>Momentary Lapse of Reason</i> (1987)	<b>Apr. 17</b>	<b>Chpt. 9</b>	<b>Chpt. 11</b>

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|-----|--|------------------------|-------------|----------|
| 16. | [4] <i>The Division Bell</i><br>(1994) | Apr. 24                | Chpt. 10-11 | Chpt. 12 |
| 17. | FINAL EXAM                             | Monday, May 6, 9:00 am |             |          |

## Devices

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The professor requests that cell phones, iPads, laptop computers, and all communications devices will not be used during class, the exception being when you are presenting an album with your group.

## Statement of Academic Conduct

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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

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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/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/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.

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### **Bibliography (books consulted while creating and updating this course)**

- Blake, Mark *Comfortably Numb: The Inside Story of Pink Floyd.*  
Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2011.  
ISBN-13: 978-0-306-81752-6
- Brackett, David *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader (Third Edition)*  
Oxford University Press, New York, 2005  
ISBN 978-0-19-981170-0
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- Charlton, Katherine *Rock Music Styles: A History.* Seventh edition.  
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- Cianc, Bob *Great Rock Drummers of the Sixties*  
Hal Leonard Publishing Corp., Milwaukee, 1989  
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- 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
- Dallas, Karl *Pink Floyd: Bricks in the Wall*  
Shapolsky Publishers, New York, 1987  
ISBN 0-933503-88-1

- Editors of *Billboard*. *Rock Movers and Shakers*.  
Billboard Publications, New York, 1989.
- Editors of *Rolling Stone Magazine* *The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll*.  
Rolling Stone Press, New York, 1981.
- 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
- Larson, Thomas E. *History of Rock & Roll*  
Kendall Hunt, Dubuque, 2010.  
ISBN 987-4652-0532-2
- Lazell, Barry *Rock Movers and Shakers*  
(editor) Billboard Publications, New York, 1989  
ISBN 0-8230-7608-3
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Chronicle Books. San Francisco, 2004.  
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- Pattison, Robert *The Triumph of Vulgarly:  
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
- Povey, Glenn *Echoes: The Complete History of Pink Floyd*  
Chicago Review Press (An A Capella Book),  
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ISBN-13: 978-1-56976-313-1
- 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

Smith, Joe

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

Stambler, *Irwin*

*The Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock and Soul*  
St. Martin's Press, New York, 1989  
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