

## **Iconic Figures of Popular Music: The Doors**

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Fall 2019

Course no. MUSC 424

Section no. 47256

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](mailto:biersach@usc.edu)

### **The Premise**

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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**

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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

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

## Texts

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### 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 Sugeran, 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**  
**Schedule of Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments**

**Fall 2019**

WEEK	TOPIC	DATE	Hopkins/ Sugarman NO ONE HERE GETS OUT ALIVE	Densmore RIDERS ON THE STORM
1.	Preliminaries	Aug. 28		
2.	[1] <i>The Doors</i> (1967)	Sept. 4	Forward, Chpts. 1-3	Chpts. 1-5
3.	[2] <i>The Doors</i> (1967) (1967)	Sept. 11 Sept. 13	Chpt. 4 Last Day to Drop, Add, etc.	Chpts. 6-8
4.	[3] <i>Strange Days</i> (1967)	Sept. 18	Chpt. 5	Chpt. 9
5.	[4] <i>Strange Days</i> (1967)	Sept. 25	— —	Chpt. 10
<b>6.</b>	<b>FIRST MIDTERM</b>	<b>Oct. 2</b>	— —	— —
7.	[1] <i>Waiting for the Sun</i> (1968)	Oct. 9 Oct. 11	Chpt. 6-7 Last day to drop w/o a “W,” or to change P/NP to letter grade.	Chpt. 11-12
8.	[2] <i>Waiting for the Sun</i> (1968) [3] <i>Soft Parade</i> (1968)	Oct. 16	Chpt. 8	Chpt. 13
9.	[4] <i>Soft Parade</i> (1969)	Oct. 23	— —	Chpt. 14
<b>10.</b>	<b>SECOND MIDTERM</b>	<b>Oct. 30</b>	— —	— —
11.	[1] <i>Morrison Hotel</i> (1970)	Nov. 6	Chpt. 9	Chpts. 15-16
12.	[2] <i>Morrison Hotel</i> (1970)	Nov. 13 Nov. 15	— — Last day to drop with a “W”	Chpt. 17
13.	[3] <i>L.A. Woman</i> (1971)	Nov. 20	Chpt. 10	Chpt. 18
14.	Holiday	Nov. 27	— —	— —

15.	[4] <i>L.A. Woman</i> (1971)	Dec. 4	Chpt. 11-12 & Afterward	Chpt. 19-22 & Afterward
16.	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>Dec. 16</b>	<b>Monday, 9 – 10 am</b>	

## **LAPTOP COMPUTERS, PRINTERS, AND CELL PHONES**

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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**

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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](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html).

## **Academic Integrity**

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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**

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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**

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### **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



- Hopkins, Jerry and  
*No One Here Gets Out Alive*  
 Warner Books. New York, 1980.  
 ISBN: 9780446697330
- Kubernick, Harvey  
*Canyon of Dreams:  
 The Magic and the Music of Laurel Canyon*  
 Sterling, New York, 2009  
 ISBN 978-1-4027-9761-3
- Larson, Thomas E.  
*History of Rock & Roll*  
 Kendall Hunt, Dubuque, 2012.  
 ISBN 978-1524948696
- Lazell, Barry  
 (editor)  
*Rock Movers and Shakers*  
 Billboard Publications, New York, 1989  
 ISBN 0-8230-7608-3
- Leary, Timothy  
*The Politics of Ecstasy*  
 Ronin Publishing, Berkeley, 1990  
 ISBN 0-914171-33-X
- 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 Vulgarly:  
 Popular Music in the Mirror of Romanticism*  
 Oxford University Press, New York, 1987  
 ISBN 0-19-503876-2
- Rees, Dayfdd and  
 Crampton, Luke  
*VHI Rock Stars Encyclopedia*  
 DK Adult, New York, 1999.  
 ISBN 978-0789446138
- 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
- Taruskin, Richard and  
 Gibbs, Christopher H.  
*The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition.*  
 Oxford University Press, New York, 2013.  
 ISBN 978-0195097629.