

Writing 100 G
Rock and Roll as Social History
Fall 2006

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Class meetings: M, W, F 2:20 to 3:10

Office Hours: M, F 9:00 – 10:30; T, TH 1:00 – 2:00 and by appointment

Introduction

This is a writing course. Its most fundamental objective is to improve the writing skills of students and to enhance the quality of the writing done by students. Towards achievement of this goal, students will complete several writing assignment in conjunction with use of **The Bedford Handbook** that will serve as one of the three principal texts in the course. Substantively, this course will examine the interplay between rock and roll and social change in the United States. The course will focus on major cultural and social change from the post World War II period to the present and will consider how rock and roll music has been both a product and an agent of those changes. Writing assignments will utilize this topic to serve the course's writing goals.

The **Writing 100 Guidelines** distributed with this syllabus discusses the general objectives of the course but the following outline lists the specific topics that will be the focus of exploration and practice in an effort to improve the quality of student writing.

- 1) Construction of clear and effective writing.
 - a) Sentence and paragraph construction
 - b) Essay composition
 - c) Concreteness
 - d) Transitions

- 2) Effective use of language.
 - a) Tone and voice
 - b) Language, word choice, meaning, connotation
 - c) Economy of language
 - d) Rhetorical strategies

- 3) Critical thinking and analytical writing
 - a) concreteness and evidence
 - b) annotation and note taking
 - c) conversing with the text – asking questions
 - d) heuristics (answering questions)
 - e) clustering
 - f) paraphrasing
 - g) integration

- 4) Grammar and mechanics
 - a) active verbs
 - b) subject verb agreement
 - c) parallelism and shifts
 - d) modifiers
 - e) complete sentences
 - f) pronouns
 - g) run on sentences
 - h) commas

- 5) Writing in different genres
 - a) writing in response to prompts
 - b) journal writing
 - c) narrative
 - d) analytical
 - e) persuasive
 - f) research

Texts

Brackett, David, editor, **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Hacker, Diana. **The Bedford Handbook for Writers, 7th ed.** (Boston: St. Martin's, 2006)

Marcus, Greil **Mystery Train**, 4th ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1997)

Nuzum, Eric, **Parental Advisory: Music Censorship in America**, (New York: Harper Collins, 2001)

Assessment of Student's Grade

The student's final grade will be determined on the basis of a 300 point system. The assignments for the course and their values are listed below. It should be noted that in completing all writing assignments students will *generally* be expected to follow the writing process outlined in the **Writing 100 Guidelines**. Much of the work produced during the writing process will be evaluated but not graded. The intent here is to offer feedback that improves the quality of the final product. Failure to complete, the various steps in the process may result in a reduction of the final grade on a given assignment, however.

Composition of the Student's Grade

Narrative essay	40 points
Persuasive essay	50 points
Analytical essay	70 points
Research paper	100 points
Grammar quizzes	20 points
Instructor evaluation	20 points

Writing Sample

The students will write an 500 to 750 word essay in response to the following prompt based on assigned reading for the class: *What does Robert Johnson's story tell us about America?* **This assignment will be ungraded.**

Narrative Essay

Students will write a three to four page essay describing an experience with "live" rock and roll music. If possible, the student should write about music presented in a concert, at a dance or in some other public forum. The presentation of the music need not be by anyone famous, but the subject of the writing should not focus on listening to recorded music in private or at a party. The one exception can be if the public venue was a dance that featured a DJ. The final essay will be due **9/18**.

Analytical Essay

In this assignment, students will write a three to five page essay in which they examine a set of essays (book chapters) written by Greil Marcus. The student's goal or purpose will be to analyze how those writings convey the author's ideas about the nature of America in the late 1960s to the early 1970's as expressed through the music of a set of performers in that era. Each student will need to identify the key themes that are important to Marcus and provide evidence from the text (i.e. quotations, citations) to support the report of those themes. The final essay will be due **10/23**.

In constructing this essay, students should consult the Hacker text on p.470 and consider the following questions:

1. What do you think Marcus is trying to say and how can you demonstrate that?
2. What are the themes/observations of each chapter?
3. What themes/observations run through the three chapters?
4. What do these themes/observations seem to say about America?
5. How well does Marcus he convey his ideas? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments?

Persuasive Essay

Students will write a three to four page persuasive essay concerning issues reflected in the music or popular culture of the 1980's. A list of possible topics will be presented in class. The essay will offer an argument to support a particular assertion or judgment about the selected topic. The essay should include at least three separate arguments in support of the conclusion that the writer presents. Each argument must be supported by logical or empirical evidence. The final essay will be due **11/13**.

Research Paper

Students will write an 8 to 10 page research paper focusing on a topic of their own choice that is relevant for the course. In this paper, the student should include material that indicates how the topic fits into the social history of the United States. This could include a discussion of how the subject matter reflects a particular historical period, how it served as an agent of social change, how the music was an indicator of reaction to the social, economic or political events, or how the music symbolized significant social and cultural values of a particular point in time. Students will also attend a session with the Reeves Library Staff to assist you in completing the assignment. In completing this assignment, students will be required to complete the following steps:

Assignment	Due Date
Choose topic	9/22
Preliminary source list	10/18
Notes on at least three of the sources	11/8
Thesis statement and Outline	11/20
Draft	11/29
Final product	12/8

Grammar and Syntax Quizzes

As part of the effort to achieve quality improvements in student writing, it is necessary that students achieve a working mastery of the rules and conventions of good grammar and proper syntax. To assess the students' level of mastery and to provide incentives to improve in these areas, students will be required to take ten quizzes on specific grammar and syntax issues. Each quiz will include ten items. Students can score a total of 20 points on the quizzes.

Students scoring an 8 or better on a quiz the first time it is given will receive two points for the quiz and not be required to take a second quiz. Students scoring less than 8 on an initial quiz will be required to take a second quiz on the same topic or issue. Students scoring an 8 or better on the second quiz will receive one point for the quiz. Students receiving less than 8 on the second quiz will receive no points for the quiz.

Student Programming

Students in this course have often expressed an desire to have more focus on contemporary (post 1990's) music. To accommodate this and include an opportunity for oral presentations, the class includes three sessions (12/1-12/4-12/8), in which members of the class will be responsible for making in class presentations in relation to contemporary music and social developments. Each student will be given 5 to 10 minutes for their presentation. These presentations should include:

- The selection and presentation of a piece of music
- Distribution of the lyrics
- An explanation of why that piece of music was selected including a statement about how the music is representative of a key social, cultural or political development

Biographical information about the artists and personal observations about why the music was chosen are acceptable but will not constitute a sufficient response to the third bullet above.

The presentation will be evaluated as part of the instructor evaluation portion of the grade.

Instructor Evaluation

The instructor will evaluate the student's performance on all elements of the course not included in the above writing assignments. This will include class participation, student presentations and any other contribution to the class not evaluated in one of the other components of the grade.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments:

Class Assignments

8/28 Introduction to the course

Read for writing sample: “Prologue” pp. 1-7 and “Robert Johnson” pp. 19-35 in Greil Marcus, Mystery Train

8/30 The Writing Process

Read: Hacker pp. 2-75

9/1 Culture theory and interpretation

Read: J.D. Considine, “Fear of a Rap Planet,” pp. 408-413 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader, Cameron Crowe, “David Bowie Interview,” pp. 277-282 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader and “Rock and Roll Meets the Popular Press,” pp. 100-102 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader

Read: Hacker pp. 146-151 for Quiz 1 on *active verbs*

9/6 Writing to learn and prewriting; Cultural theory continued: Narratives and culture

Read: Erika Linderman, “Prewriting Techniques,” ON RESERVE

Writing sample due

9/8 Prewriting for narrative essay, complete sentences, paragraph construction

Read: Robert Palmer, “Introduction,” An Unruly History of Rock and Roll, ON RESERVE

Read: Hacker, pp. 76-99 and 152-158 for Quiz 2 on parallelism

9/11 Post World War II America – Race, prosperity, ideology and language

Read: Kyle Crichton, “Thars Gold in Them Hillbillies,” pp. 13-16 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader, Leroi Jones, “Blues People: The Negro Experience in White America and the Music That Developed from It,” pp. 18-25 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader; “Jumpin the Blues with Louis Jordan,” pp 36-40 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader; “Country Music as Folk Music, Country Music as Novelty,” pp. 49-54 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader

Draft of Narrative essay

9/13 Revisions and peer editing

Read: Nancy Somers, “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers,” **ON RESERVE**; Hacker, pp. 42-75

9/15 The 1950’s teen culture, consumerism and the response to prosperity

Video: “David Halbertstam’s 1950s: The Beat”

Read: Hacker: 168-184 for **Quiz 3** on misplaced and dangling modifiers and shifts

9/18 the 1950’s teen culture, consumerism and the response to prosperity continued

Read: Robert Palmer, “Delinquents from Heaven, Hoodlums from Hell,” **ON RESERVE**

Narrative essay final draft due

9/20 Transition to 60s

Read: “The Music Industry Fights Against Rock and Roll: Dick Clark’s Teen Pop Empire and the Payola Scandal,” pp.104-109 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**; “Urban Folk Revival,” pp. 123-127 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**

Read: Hacker, pp. 238-247 for **Quiz 4** on sentence fragments

9/22 Critical thinking and the analytical essay; Innocence and Idealism at the beginning of the 1960’s agenda

Read: “From R&B to Soul,” Bob Dylan Interview,” pp. 133-140 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**; “The Beatles, the ‘British Invasion,’ and Cultural Respectability,” pp. 170-174 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**; “A Hard Days Night,” pp. 174-177 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**; **Start to Read:** Greil Marcus, **Mystery Train**, pp. 39-119

Preliminary research paper topic due

9/25 Library

Read: Hacker, pp. 527-554

9/27 Race in the 1960's

Read: "From R&B to Soul" pp. 140-144 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**; "No Town Like Motown." pp. 144-150 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**; "The Godfather of Soul and the beginnings of Funk," pp. 150-160 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**

Read: Hacker, pp. 248-257 for **Quiz 5** on run on sentences

9/29 Critical thinking and analyzing texts; Heuristics, listing and clustering; Race in the 1960's

Read: Hacker 467-480; **Be sure to have read:** Greil Marcus, **Mystery Train**, pp. 65-95

10/2 Rhetorical strategies, word choice and the civil rights movement in the 1960's

Read: "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and 1964 interview with Malcolm X, **distributed in class**

Read: Hacker, pp. 205-237

10/4 Vietnam and Conversation with the text

Read: Howard Zinn, "Vietnam: The Impossible Victory," **ON RESERVE**

Read: Hacker, pp. 258-271 for **Quiz 6** on subject-verb agreement

10/6 Student politics and opposition to Vietnam War

Read: Eric Nuzum, **Parental Advisory: Music Censorship in America**, pp. 162-174

First draft analytical essay due

10/11 Word choice, rhetorical strategies and the Counterculture

Read: Richard Goldstein, "Pop Eye: On 'Revolver'," pp. 178-181 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**; Ellen Willis, "Records: Rock, Etc. – The Big ones," pp. 189-193 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**;

10/13 Counterculture

Read: "Festivals: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly," pp. 223-229 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**; "Where did the Sixties Go?" pp. 230-236 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**; Greil Marcus, **Mystery Train**, pp. 39-119

Read: Hacker, pp. 271-278 for **Quiz 7** on pronoun-antecedent agreement

10/16 Counterculture and revisions

Read: Greil Marcus, Mystery Train, pp. 39-119

Second draft analytical essay due

10/18 The Fragmentation of Popular Culture

Read: “Festivals: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,” pp. 223-229 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader; “Where did the Sixties Go?” pp. 230-236 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader;

Preliminary source list

10/20 The “Me” Decade

Read: “James Taylor: One Man’s Family of Rock,” pp. 239-242 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader; Malka, “Joni Mitchell: Self Portrait of a Superstar,” pp. 243-247 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader; W.A. Brower, “George Clinton: Ultimate Liberator of Constipated Notions,” pp 260-265 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader; Domenic Milano, “Keith Emerson,” pp 284-286 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader

Read: Hacker, pp. 279-285 for Quiz 8 on pronoun reference

10/23 Writing Workshop: Students’ Assessment of Their Writing

Final draft analytical essay due

10/25 Writing workshop: research paper

Read: Hacker, pp. 555-572

10/27 Chords of discontent and change

Read: “Punk,” and “Punk Across the Atlantic,” pp. 308-319 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader; “Get On Up Disco,” pp. 298-308 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader

10/30 Evaluating arguments

Read: Eric Nuzum, Parental Advisory: Music Censorship in America, pp. 2-208; Hacker, pp. 489-516

11/1 Persuasive essay workshop

Read: Hacker, pp. 489-516

Read: Hacker, pp. 372-398 for Quiz 9 on commas

11/3 Post modern popular culture

Read: “A ‘Second British Invasion,’ MTV, and Other Postmodernist Conundrums,” pp. 329-340 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader

11/6 Post modern popular culture; assessment of workshop assignments

Video: Run Lola Run

Persuasive essay draft due

11/8 Post modern popular culture continued

Video: Run Lola Run

Research paper notes due

11/10 Peer editing, Plagiarism and Citation

Read: Hacker pp. 572-585

11/13 Materialism and Americanism in the 1980’s

Read: Simon Frith, “The Real Thing – Bruce Springsteen,” pp. 355-360 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader

Final draft persuasive essay due with response to peer editor

11/15 Culture Wars and integrating sources

Read: Nuzum (review); Camille Paglia, “Venus of the Radio Waves,” 345-349 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader; Harry Allen, “Hip-Hop Madness: From Def Jam to Cold Lampin’, Rap is Our Music,” 395-399 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader; Jon Pareles, “There’s a New Sound in Pop Music: Bigotry,” 401-405 in The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader

11/17 Workshop on thesis and outline

Read: Hacker, pp. 398-404 for Quiz 10 on commas and semicolons

11/20 1980's oppositional forces and the return of social conscience

Read: J.D. Considine, "Fear of a Rap Planet, pp. 408-413 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader** (review); Al Flipside, "What Is This Thing Called Hardcore," pp. 382-384 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**; "From Indie to Alternative," "Riot Girl," and "Grunge Turns to Scrunge," pp. 435-448 in **The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader**

Research paper thesis and outline due

11/27 Writing workshop: research paper

11/29 The 1990's: technology and popular culture- what is reality?

Read: Sherry Turkle , "**Identity in the Age of the Internet ,**" **ON RESERVE**

Draft research paper due

12/1 Student Programming I

12/4 Student programmed II

Final draft of research paper

12/6 Student programmed III

12/11 Course evaluation