

DePaul University School for New Learning
Winter 2018-2019
UPDATED Syllabus: AI 185 / SNC 185

The Beatles and the Creative Process

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Course description: The Beatles are significant in many ways: they were an unprecedented show business phenomenon; they were leaders of sixties cultural rebellion; and they stand, for many, as a signal instance of popular entertainment attaining the status of high art. This course will examine the musical craftsmanship of the Beatles, focusing on their work as songwriters and record makers. Recent audio and print releases documenting the group's performing and recording history provide a unique and detailed glimpse of the Beatles' creative process. We will utilize these materials to closely trace the development of the group's work while using other resources to place it in a larger historical and cultural context. The goal is to shed critical light on this recent chapter in cultural history. That discussion will, in turn, highlight questions about creativity in a modern context where commerce vies with art, technology redefines performance, and an emerging global village culture transforms concepts of originality and tradition.

Faculty: John Kimsey received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Illinois at Chicago and is an Associate Professor in DePaul's School for New Learning (SNL). He teaches and writes about modern literature, popular culture and intersections between the two and has also worked extensively as a professional musician. In 1992, he was nominated Best Guitarist in the Chicago Musician awards. His resumé includes numerous publications in the field of Popular Music Studies, including several essays on the Beatles. These can be found in *Reading the Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism and the Fab Four* (SUNY Press, 2006); *It Was Forty Years Ago Today: Sgt. Pepper and the Beatles* (Ashgate Press, 2008); *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles* (Cambridge University Press, 2009) and *Fifty Years with the Beatles: Their Impact on Contemporary Culture* (University of Lodz Press, 2010). He has also lectured on the Beatles and creativity at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum. His song cycle, *Twisted Roots: Music, Politics & the American Dream Blues*, was awarded a DePaul Humanities Center grant in 2003. Jazz composer/historian Ben Sidran called it "an ingenious way to integrate political and social commentary into a musical architecture." In 2014, he received DePaul's Excellence in Teaching Award. His chapter on the Beatles in Rishikesh will appear in "*The Beatles Through A Glass Onion: Reconsidering the White Album*, forthcoming in Spring from U of Michigan Press.

Note:

This course is offered by DePaul University's School for New Learning (SNL). It can be taken by students in SNL's competence-based BAIFA program for as few as one or as many as two SNL competences. (One competence = 2 credit hours; two competences = 4 credit hours)

It can be taken by students in SNL's credit hour-based Bachelor of Arts in Professional Studies program for 4 credit hours on the course's CCA (Arts) roster.

It can also be taken by non-SNL students for 4 Liberal Studies credit hours in the Liberal Studies Program's Arts & Literature Domain.

If you are an SNL student in the competence-based program, proceed with the section immediately below. If you are a on-SNL student taking this course for Liberal Studies credit, skip to the heading further below (on p.3), "Liberal Studies Credit".

Competencies Offered (for SNL students)

SNL students may register for as many as two of the following competences.

- A1X** Can view works of popular music through an interpretive 'lens' and can discuss strengths and weaknesses of the lens in question.
- A3X** Can describe and analyze the interaction between a popular music phenomenon and at least one philosophical/spiritual problem or perspective.
- A5** Can define and analyze a creative process.
- H2G** Can evaluate the role and impact of mass media or information technology on society.
- S3F** Can analyze the integration of new technology into a specific field of human endeavor from at least two perspectives.

How the course addresses these SNL competencies:

The **A1X** competence is addressed by the course focus on songcraft and record making as art forms as well as various approaches to interpreting these forms.

The **A3X** competence is addressed by the course focus on such artworks in relation to 60s-era trends in spirituality and philosophy.

The **A5** competence is addressed by the course focus on analyzing the Beatles' multifaceted creative process.

The **H2G** competence is addressed by the course focus on the role of mass media in the development of 20th-century popular music.

The **S3F** competence is addressed by the course focus on the development of sound recording and its impact on the development of 20th-century popular music.

For more information on individual competences, see the handout "Key Readings Broken Out By Competence", to be distributed in class.

Liberal Studies Credit (for Non-SNL students registered for SNC AI185)

Students from colleges within DePaul other than SNL may register for 4 credit hours in this course and thereby fulfill the Arts & Literature portion of their Liberal Studies requirement. **Learning Outcomes for the Liberal Studies / Arts & Literature Domain are as follows:**

-- Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a work of art is about and/or how it was produced (i.e., they should be able to explain the content of that work and/or its methodology of production).

--Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.

--Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.

--Students will be able to contextualize a work of art. They will be able to do so with respect to other works of art in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre. They will also be able to contextualize a work of art in terms of contemporaneous aesthetic, social or political concerns, discussing how these might shape the work's reception and how that reception might differ amongst various people and historical periods.

How the course addresses these Liberal Studies Arts & Literature outcomes:

These outcomes relate directly to the course focus on the artistic aspects of Beatle music (in the three areas of composing, performing and producing); the course focus on form and content as key aspects of popular music artifacts; the course focus on specialized vocabularies which have been developed to address the course's various topics; and the course focus on reception of works of popular music by audiences of the 1950s and 1960s.

The Liberal Studies Program's description of the Art & Literature domain:

Courses in the Arts & Literature domain ask students to extend their knowledge and experience of the arts by developing their critical and reflective abilities. In these courses, students interpret and analyze particular creative works, investigate the relations of form and meaning, and through critical and/or creative activity come to experience art with greater openness, insight, and enjoyment. These courses focus on works of literature, art, theatre, or music as such, though the process of analysis may also include social and cultural issues. Students who take courses in this domain choose three courses from such choices as literature, the visual arts, media arts, music, and theater. No more than two courses can be chosen from one department or program.

Learning Experience:

A variety of learning strategies will be employed, including listening sessions; classroom lectures and discussions; print readings; journals of the readings; group exercises; and short papers.

Course Materials -- Print Texts:

There are numerous required readings for this course and they are all available in PDF form at the DePaul University Library website as electronic reserves in the Ares system. Just go to library.depaul.edu and click on the Services tab in the banner across the top. The second item in the dropdown menu is Course Reserves Services. Click on that it will take you to the Course Reserves Services page. On the right you'll see a heading that says Access Our Reserves and below that, a blue box saying "Log in to Ares Course Reserves." That will take you to the login page for the Ares system. Log in using your Campus Connect User ID and password. You will then get a page listing the courses in which you're enrolled that have readings posted in Ares. Click on the title of this course and the list of our electronic reserve readings will be displayed.

It is my view that there is no single textbook currently in print that is adequate to the purposes of this course, so I have used the Electronic Reserve system to assemble my own custom anthology, composed of articles and chapters by a range of authors on a variety of topics. These E-Reserve materials will in effect serve as our print text.

Course Materials -- Sound Recordings:

The Beatles released 12 albums on (or through) their UK label, EMI / Parlophone and these are listed below. Having access to all 12 is ideal. For this course, you are required to purchase the titles that appear in bold, as well as the singles collection, ***Past Masters***.

Please Please Me (1963)

With the Beatles (1963)

A Hard Day's Night (1964)

Beatles For Sale (1964)

Help! (1965)

Rubber Soul (1965)

Revolver (1966)

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967)

Magical Mystery Tour (1967)

The Beatles [aka the White Album] (1968)

Abbey Road (1969)

Let It Be (1970)

All 12 of these albums have recently been remastered for CD. The CDs are widely available from retail outlets, both brick-and-mortar and online. *In addition, all the albums are available for digital download from iTunes. Also, the albums have recently become available from streaming services such as Spotify.*

Evidence students will submit:

Class participation. Students are expected to do the appropriate reading for each class session in a timely fashion. They are also encouraged to demonstrate that they have done so by participating in class discussion. In addition, students will submit the following pieces of written work:

Journal entries. Each week (excepting week 1), students will submit a journal entry (around 1 to 1.5 typed pages in length) on a reading chosen from the list of readings scheduled for that week. This will make for a total of 9 journal entries by course's end. These journal entries will be collected each week and returned, with the instructor's feedback, the following week. The format for journal entries is presented on p. 12 of this syllabus.

Short Papers

SNL students registered for two competences will submit a short paper (5-7 pages long) addressing each of the competencies for which they're signed up. They will submit one such paper (addressing one competency) at midterm time (week 6) and another such paper (addressing another such competency) at finals time (week 11). This totals up to two short papers by the end of the course. For information on paper topics, see below.

SNL students registered for one competence will submit one short paper addressing that competence at either midterm time (week 6) or finals time (week 11). This totals up to one short paper by the end of the course.

Non-SNL students taking the course for Liberal Studies credit will submit two short papers (5-7 pages long). They will submit one such paper at midterm time (week 6) and another such paper at finals time (week 11). This totals up to two short papers by the end of the course. For information on paper topics, see below.

Re topics for papers: Students will choose topics from an array of essay questions prepared by the instructor. The instructor will provide one array of such questions for the midterm paper and a second array of such questions for the final paper. The instructor will see to it that the essay questions are attuned to the needs of students. SNL students will be provided with questions attuned to specific SNL competences. LA&S students will be provided with questions attuned to the Arts & Literature requirements of the Liberal Studies program. Also, it's always possible for a student to write on a topic of his/her own choosing, providing the instructor approves it.

In sum, the evidence requirements for the course are: class participation; journal; one short paper; and, for students registered for two competences/four credit hours, another short paper. Point-wise, the breakdown is as follows:

Class participation	10
Journal	27
Short paper (midterm)	30
Short paper (final)	30

Criteria for Assessment:

Journal entries

A single journal entry is worth a maximum of 3 points, with 3 points indicating excellent work; 2 points indicating average work; and 1 point indicating work that is somehow lacking.

Short papers

Assessment Rubric for Short Papers

A designates work of high quality. An A paper (27-30 pts)

develops an argument cogently and creatively across the length of an essay;

reflects thorough understanding of and engagement with pertinent texts (audiovisual and/or print) and the issues at hand;

draws insightful connections and/or generates thoughtful questions concerning the topic and the specified materials;

cites sources consistently in appropriate citation style;

is virtually free of grammar lapses.

B designates work of good quality. A B paper (24-26 pts)

develops an argument effectively across the length of an essay;

reflects adequate understanding of and engagement with pertinent texts (audiovisual and/or print) and the issues at hand;

draws clear connections and/or generates apt questions concerning the topic and the specified materials

cites sources consistently in appropriate citation style;

is mostly free of grammar lapses.

C designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment. A C paper (21-23 pts)

develops some ideas but does so in a superficial or simplistic manner;

reflects limited understanding of or engagement with pertinent texts (audiovisual or print) and the issues at hand;

draws connections, some of which are unclear, and/or raises questions, some which are inapt, concerning the topic and the specified materials;

cites sources inconsistently and/or occasionally uses appropriate citation style;

contains several grammar lapses.

D designates work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment. A D paper (18-20 pts)

shows little development of ideas;

reflects little or no understanding of pertinent texts (audiovisual and/or print) and the issues at hand;

does not draw clear connections or raise coherent questions concerning the topic and the specified materials;

does not cite sources appropriately;

contains numerous grammar lapses.

Such work is expected to conform to college-level standards of mechanics and presentation.

In assessing such work, your instructor strives to be clear, flexible, forthright and empathetic.

Course Grading Scale:

The grading scale is based on 100 percent of the required assignments. Thus (in terms of percentages):

A = 95 to 100 A- = 91 to 94 B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87 B- = 81 to 84 C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76 C- = 69 to 72 D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64 F = 60 or below

Please note: Grades lower than a C- do not earn credit or competence in the School for New Learning.

Policy on Attendance:

You are expected to attend all class sessions. If you miss a class, it is incumbent on you to check with the instructor or a fellow student about any information or handouts you may have missed. Students who miss more than one class session may not have met the requirement for a passing grade.

Policy on Late Submissions

Written assignments that are submitted late will receive reduced points. Written assignments that are more than one week late will receive zero points.

Policy on Pass/Fail Grades:

It is assumed you are taking the course for a letter grade (A, B, C, etc.). However, it is possible to take the course on a Pass/Fail basis if you wish to do so. If you do wish to take the course on a Pass/Fail basis, you must inform the instructor (by e-mail) of your wish to do so by the beginning of Week Three.

Policy on Academic Integrity:

This course abides by the university's strictures against plagiarism and its policies on Academic Integrity as described in the DePaul Student handbook. All work done for this course must observe the Guidelines for Academic Integrity as outlined in the *Code of Student Responsibility* (in the *DePaul Student Handbook*). The code's Plagiarism Policy reads as follows:

Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's; copying of

any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with proper acknowledgement; submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else; and the paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion. Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the college or the university taking further punitive action including dismissal from the university.

Policy on Incompletes:

It is expected that students will complete course assignments by specified due dates within the quarter. In circumstances that the instructor determines to be exceptional, when the student is unable to complete required coursework by the established due dates, the student may request that a grade of Incomplete (IN) be issued. This request must be made formally, in writing, by completion of IN Request Form that the student signs. The form specifies the final date by which all outstanding coursework must be completed. Failure to submit outstanding work by the specified due date will result in a grade change from IN to W or FX for each enrolled competence, along with serious academic and/or financial consequences. **After the final submission deadline, the student will have no further opportunities to submit work for a passing grade.**

Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability

For information on Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability, see the Appendix at the end of this syllabus.

Writing Help

For information on Writing Help, see the Appendix at the end of this syllabus.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

The readings listed below are posted online at the DePaul Libraries website, unless otherwise noted. Just go to library.depaul.edu and click on the Services tab in the banner across the top. The second item in the dropdown menu is Course Reserves Services. Click on that it will take you to the Course Reserves Services page. On the right you'll see a heading that says Access Our Reserves and below that, a blue box saying "Log in to Ares Course Reserves." That will take you to the login page for the Ares system. Log in using your Campus Connect User ID and password. You will then get a page listing the courses in which you're enrolled that have readings posted in Ares. Click on the title of this course and the list of our electronic reserve readings will be displayed.

Week One 1/9

Introduction to the course; Why are the Beatles important?; Tracking a complex creative process; Composing/performing/recording; Conceptions of popular culture

Readings:

Kimsey, "High Culture & Popular Culture" (handout)

"Multi-Track Recording as the Beatles Knew It" (handout)

Week Two 1/16

Contexts: Post-war Liverpool; The 1950s in the UK & US; Rock and roots musics

Readings:

- Miles, "Being Born in Liverpool Carries With It Certain Responsibilities"
- Martin, "There, beneath the blue suburban skies. . ."
- Frith, "Popular Music, 1950-1980," pp. 18-38; 46-48
- Dormen & Edidin, "Original Spin"

Week Three 1/23

Songcraft I; Blues, genre and convention; Music in class; The Beatles take off

Readings:

- Hertsgaard, "Mach Schau!: the Hamburg-Liverpool Apprenticeship"
- MacDonald, "John and Paul: the Start of a Partnership"
- Hertsgaard, "Starting A Reputation: *Please Please Me*"
- MacDonald, "The People's Music"

Listening:

Please Please Me; "From Me to You" from *Past Masters* Disc 1

Week Four 1/30

Mania, spectacle and sociology; Screening of *A Hard Day's Night*

Readings:

- Sloan, "Say You Want A Revolution"
- Ehrenreich et al, "Beatlemania: A Sexually Defiant Consumer Subculture?"
- Tompkins, "I Want To Hold Your Hand"
- Ebert, "A Hard Day's Night"

Listening:

A Hard Day's Night; "I Feel Fine", "She's A Woman", "Yes It Is" & "I'm Down" from *Past Masters* Disc 1

Week Five 2/6

Meeting Mr. Dylan; A new style; *Rubber Soul*; Songcraft II; Changing conceptions of creativity; Screening of *Shakespeares in the Alley*

Readings:

- Hertsgaard, "We All Want to Change the World"
- Campbell, "From Romance to Romanticism: the Beatles 1964(5)-1970"
- Boden, "Creativity in a Nutshell," pp. 1-5
- Eisenberg, Excerpts from "Phonography," pp. 109-129; 155-159

Listening:

Rubber Soul; "Day Tripper" & "We Can Work It Out" from *Past Masters* Disc 2

Week Six 2/13

Psychedelia, spirituality and the global village: Indian and world music; Art and altered states of consciousness; Screening of excerpts from *Monterrey Pop*

Midterm assignments due

Readings:

Emerick, "Innovation and Invention: the Making of *Revolver*"

Newman, "Hunting Tigers Out in India"

MacDonald, Excerpts from *Revolution in the Head*, pp. 164-170; 180-181

Kozinn, "*Help!* and *Rubber Soul*"

Listening:

Revolver; "Paperback Writer" & "Rain" from *Past Masters Disc 2*

Midterm Papers due

Week Seven 2/20

Sgt. Pepper as (Counter) Cultural Moment; Screening of *It Was Twenty Years Ago Today*

Readings:

MacDonald, Excerpts from *Revolution in the Head*, pp.188-198; 201-220

Stevens, "Intuition and Intellect"

Martin, "Record Production"

Kocot, "The Indian Beatle(s): From 'Norwegian Wood' to 'The Hare Krishna Mantra'"

Listening:

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band; "Penny Lane" & "Strawberry Fields Forever" from *Magical Mystery Tour*

Week Eight 2/27

The *Sgt. Pepper* debate: Transcendent masterpiece or toy balloon?; Zappa's critique of hippie

Readings:

Shoales, "Rock Music Today"

Goldstein, "We still need the Beatles, but. . ."

Kofsky, "Frank Zappa Interview"

Keightley, "Reconsidering Rock," pp. 131-142

Listening:

Magical Mystery Tour

Week Nine 3/6

Mystery Tours; Surrealist artists and techniques; Burroughs & the cut-up method; *The White Album*, Yoko Ono and the avant-garde; Can you ever get back again?

Readings:

Miles, "Avant-Garde London"

Everett, Excerpts on Yoko Ono

MacDonald, Excerpts from *Revolution in the Head*, pp. 232-236

Brothers, Excerpts from *Help!*, pp. 278-294

Listening:

The Beatles (aka the White Album); "Lady Madonna", "Revolution" & "Hey Jude" from *Past Masters Disc 2*

Week Ten 3/13

And in the end: *Abbey Road*; Legacies; the Beatles in the 21st century

Readings:

Brothers, Excerpts from *Help!*, pp. 294-313

Smith, "Following the Genius with Four Heads: Why I Became A Composer"

Kimsey, "Spinning the Historical Record: Lennon, McCartney and Museum Politics"

Listening:

Abbey Road; "Get Back," "Don't Let Me Down" & "You Know My Name, Look Up the Number" from *Past Masters Disc 2*

Monday, 3/18: Final papers due

Format for Journal Entries

For a given reading, fill up about 1–1.5 typed pages responding to the following questions:

1. What is the text about? (Try to be concrete and literal at this point; don't jump to "interpretation".)
2. Describe something from your own experience you are reminded of by the text.
3. What is the most important passage in the text? Why?
4. Which other text we have read seems to most agree with this one? Which other text we have read seems most to disagree? Explain your choices.
5. Consider this week's required Listening selections. From that array of recordings, pick one – it might be a single song, it might be an entire LP – that got your attention. Then briefly explain why it got your attention.
6. Pretend the text is *not* about whatever you said it was about in #1. Pretend it's about something else, something hidden or unstated. What is this other thing that the text is "really" about?

Appendix

For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter, preferably within the first week of class, and make sure you have contacted:

PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 in the Schmidt Academic Center, room 220 or;

The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-7290, DePaul University Student Center, room 307.

Writing Help

For help with organizing your ideas, grammar, citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, sample SNL assignments and much more, see the Writing Guide for SNL Students at **<https://snlapps.depaul.edu/writing/>**

For on-campus and online tutoring, see the DePaul U Center for Writing-Based Learning at **condor.depaul.edu/writing/**