

MUMH 2060 History of Rock Fall 2026 Monday/Wednesday/Friday 12:20pm-1:10pm Business Leadership Building (BLB) Room 180
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Instructor:

Dr. Brian F. Wright (he/him/his)

Email: brian.wright@unt.edu

Office: MUSI 305

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 1:30-2:30pm, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant:

Sophia Huffman, SophiaHuffman2@my.unt.edu

Communication Expectations:

For questions regarding course material and content, please reach out directly to Dr. Wright via email. For questions about grading, Canvas, or any other matters, please reach out to the TA first. When in doubt, feel free to email both of us together. While we will try to reply promptly, given the size of this class, it may take some time for us to respond.

Course Description:

This course investigates key moments in the history of American popular music from approximately 1945 to 2005, exploring popular music's effect on American society; the expression of ethnic, racial, and gender identity through musical performance; the evolution of recording and listening technology; and the business practices of the music industry.

Regular use of sound and video recordings of music will play an integral role in the class, but prior musical ability (including the ability to read music) is not required or expected. There are no prerequisites for this course, and it fulfills the Creative Arts and Component Area Option A of the UNT Core Curriculum.

Welcome to UNT!

As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. UNT's full Non-Discrimination Policy can be found in the UNT Policies section of the syllabus.

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Course Objectives:

By the end of the course:

- Students will identify, examine, and describe the role of popular music in the formation of identity. In order to most effectively examine these issues, students will introduce problems and questions; present, interpret and analyze historical documents and contemporary scholarship related to the music being studied in this course; consider the context and credibility of source material; develop and present arguments; and present conclusions, while assessing their implications. (**Core LO: Critical Thinking**)
- Students will evaluate and communicate how popular music has both reflected and shaped American society. To communicate effectively, students will be asked to present a central idea; organize material cohesively; develop content; and apply rules of Standard English in their arguments. (**Core LO: Communication**)
- Students will identify issues of social responsibility by engaging with musics from a wide variety of cultural contexts. Students will acknowledge and apply diverse perspectives; acknowledge and apply civic responsibility; and articulate insights about personal attitudes, behaviors, or beliefs as they relate to the history of American popular music. (**Core LO: Social Responsibility**)
- Working as a part of a team, students will participate in frequent in-class group activities and will work together to complete a collaborative final project. (**Core LO: Teamwork**)

Course Materials:

Required:

- **iClicker Student Account** (provided by UNT) and **a compatible device**, such as a laptop or smartphone, **to use in class each day.**
- **Microsoft Word** (provided by UNT)

Suggested:

- Access to a **music streaming service** such as Spotify, Tidal, Apple Music, etc.

No textbook is required for this class. All assigned materials will be uploaded to our course's Canvas site

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Course Requirements (Assignments):

1. Course Overview Quiz (5% of your final grade)
 - a. A short 50-point quiz designed to demonstrate your understanding of the course and its expectations.
2. iClicker Reef Polling (25% of your final grade)
 - a. During lectures, you will be asked some interactive questions via iClicker. There are 29 opportunities to earn full points. Your four lowest scores will be dropped.
3. Group Activity Days (10% of your final grade)
 - a. There are 10 class periods set aside for group discussions and in-class work.
4. Music & Media Reports (30% of your final grade)
 - a. Over the course of the semester, there are 7 “Music & Media Report” assignments. THESE ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE BEFORE CLASS ON THE DAY THEY ARE ASSIGNED. Your lowest score will be dropped.
5. Final Group Project (worth 30% of your final grade)
 - a. For your final project in this class, you will work with a team of other students to collaboratively research and write an essay on an artist from the 21st century that you think speaks to an important aspect of American culture and/or history. This project will be divided into the following six phases, spread out over the semester (more information about each phase can be found on Canvas):
 - i. Phase 1: Artist Selection (2.5%)
 - ii. Phase 2: In-Class Research Day (2.5%)
 - iii. Phase 3: Artifact Analysis (5%)
 - iv. Phase 4: In-Class Presentation and Q&A (5%)
 - v. Phase 5: Collaborative Essay (10%)
 - vi. Phase 6: Teamwork Reflection (5%)

Final Grade Percentage Breakdown:

- A: 89.5%-100.0%
B: 79.5%-89.4%
C: 69.5%-79.4%
D: 63.5%-69.4%
F: 0.0%-63.4%

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Course Evaluation:

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. SPOT evaluations will be conducted in the final weeks of class and all students that complete this course's evaluation will be given extra credit.

Rules of Engagement:

While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated. Additionally, you are expected to treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.

Course Policies

Technology Policy:

Research shows that laptops in the classroom decrease engagement and can make learning harder. They are also extremely distracting for other students. **Laptops, tablets, and smartphones are therefore not allowed in class except when being used for completing I Clicker polls.**

Attendance Policy:

Rather than take formal attendance, your attendance will be recorded based on your participation in iClicker polls each day. If you have any issues with iClicker, it is your responsibility to tell Dr. Wright or the TA directly after class.

Since this class focuses on in-class discussion and group work, attendance is crucial to your success in this course. Therefore, six unexcused absences will result in your final grade being dropped by 10%; nine unexcused absences will result in an automatic failure for the course.

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If you cannot attend class, for whatever reason, please contact me or the TA directly. Discretion over whether you will be able to make up (or be excused from) coursework will take place on a case-by-case basis.

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE FEELING SICK. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and that of others in the community, is far more important.

Late Work Policy:

Late work will not be accepted in this class without a reasonable excuse. If you must submit something late, please contact me or the TA as soon as possible. As with attendance, whether you will be able to submit (or be excused from) late work will take place on a case-by-case basis at the instructor's discretion.

Plagiarism, AI Use, and Academic Integrity:

NOTE: ALL WRITTEN MATERIALS IN THIS CLASS WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY SCANNED FOR PLAGIARISM VIA TURNITIN

Class Guidelines:

It is important when writing a research paper to make it absolutely clear when you are using someone else's idea(s). This is done through proper attribution and citation practices, which we will discuss multiple times in class. Plagiarism occurs when you accidentally or purposefully do any of the following:

- Use someone else's words either verbatim or nearly verbatim without attribution
- Use someone else's evidence, line of thinking, or idea without attribution
- Turn in someone else's work as your own
- Turn in previously submitted work as new work without instructor approval

If you are unsure if something constitutes plagiarism, please consult me, the TA, and/or the web resources I've linked to in Canvas.

AI Policy:

AI tools may be used for limited support, such as brainstorming possible research questions, organizing notes, or proofreading. They may not be used as a substitute for your own close listening/viewing, source evaluation, argument development, or teamwork reflection. You and your group are responsible for all claims, interpretations, observations, and sources included in your work. You may be asked to explain your group's claims, source choices, or analytical observations during

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class discussion, presentation Q&A, or follow-up conversations with the instructor. Materials that cannot be discussed, defended, or traced to your team's research process may not receive credit. Lastly, your final essay must include a brief statement describing whether and how AI tools were used.

UNT Policy:

Students caught cheating, plagiarizing, or violating the AI policy will receive a "0" for that particular assignment. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Academic Integrity), who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

LINK: <https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003.pdf>

UNT Policies

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

See: [Student Code of Conduct](#)

Link: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect.

See: [Eagle Connect](#)

LINK: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

ODA STATEMENT

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter. You can now request your Letters of Accommodation ONLINE and ODA will mail your Letters of Accommodation to your instructors. You may wish to begin a private discussion with your professors regarding your specific needs in a course. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access.

See: [ODA](#)

LINK: disability.unt.edu. (Phone: (940) 565-4323)

Health and Safety Information

Students can access information about health and safety at:

<https://music.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness>

Registration Information for Students

See: [Fall Academic Calendar Information](#)

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

Semester Calendar, Fall 2026

See: [Fall Semester Calendar](#)

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress

Undergraduates

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to

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successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total hours registered. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

Students holding music scholarships must maintain a minimum 2.5 overall cumulative GPA and 3.0 cumulative GPA in music courses.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended that you to schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

See: [Financial Aid](#)

LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

Graduates

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per term. Music scholarships require a 3.5 cumulative GPA. Students cannot exceed maximum timeframes established based on the published length of the graduate program. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended you schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college, an advisor in UNT-International or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course.

See: [Financial Aid](#)

LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

COUNSELING AND TESTING

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor for students in need. Please visit the Center's website for further information:

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See: [Counseling and Testing](#)

Link: <http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>.

For more information on mental health resources, please visit:

See: [Mental Health Resources](#)

Link: <https://disparities.unt.edu/mental-health-resources>

ADD/DROP POLICY

Please be reminded that dropping classes or failing to complete and pass registered hours may make you ineligible for financial aid. In addition, if you drop below half-time enrollment you may be required to begin paying back your student loans. See Academic Calendar (listed above) for additional add/drop Information.

Drop Information: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

STUDENT RESOURCES

The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:

See: [Student Resources](#)

Link: <https://success.unt.edu/aa-sa-resources>

CARE TEAM

The Care Team is a collaborative interdisciplinary committee of university officials that meets regularly to provide a response to student, staff, and faculty whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others.

See: [Care Team](#)

Link: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team>

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Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

***** Readings, Music & Media Reports, and Other Assignments Are to Be Completed Before the Class for Which They Are Assigned*****

Date	Topic	Reading(s)	Assignment(s)
American Popular Music Prior to 1950			
8/17	Intro to Class / Why Study Popular Music?		
8/19	Foundations I: Blues, Country, and Pop		
8/21	Foundations II: New Technologies, Crooners, and R&B		Course Overview Quiz
The 1950s			
8/24	Early Rock 'n' Roll		Music & Media Report 1
8/26	Elvis Presley		
8/28	Discussion: Race, Cover Songs, and Appropriation	“‘Miss Rhythm’ Speaks Out” “Highway Robbery Across the Color Line in Rhythm and Blues”	Group Activity 1
8/31	Doo Wop, Girl Groups, and Early Soul		
9/2	Payola, the Twist, Surf Music		
The 1960s			
9/4	Motown, Stax, and Atlantic		
9/7	No Class [Labor Day]		
9/9	The Beatles & the British Invasion		Music & Media Report 2

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9/11	Discussion: Beatlemania and Moral Panic	“Beatlemania Frightens Child Expert” “Excerpt of <i>Communism, Hypnotism, and the Beatles</i> ”	Group Activity 2
9/14	Garage Rock and Blues Revivals		
9/16	Urban Folk, Soul, and Folk Rock		
9/18	Discussion: Music and Protest	“Music in the Civil Rights Movement” “How Music and Chants Bring Protestors Together”	Group Activity 3
9/21	Psychedelic Rock and Music Festivals in the 1960s		Music & Media Report 3
9/23	Early Funk, Late-‘60s Soul, and Black Pride		
9/25	In-Class Workday: Artist Selection		Final Project Phase 1
The 1970s			
9/28	Hard Rock and Heavy Metal		
9/30	Glam Rock and Shock Rock		
10/2	Discussion: Misogyny and Rock Culture		Group Activity 4
10/5	Singer-Songwriters		Music & Media Report 4
10/7	From Funk to Disco		
10/9	In-Class Workday: Finding Sources		Final Project Phase 2
10/12	American Punk & New Wave		

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10/14	British Punk and Post-Punk		
10/16	Discussion: The Live Concert Experience	"Live Music Matters"	Group Activity 5
The 1980s			
10/19	MTV, pt. 1		Music & Media Report 5
10/21	MTV, pt. 2		
10/23	Discussion: Can You Separate the Art from the Artist?	"How the Myth of the Artistic Genius Excuses the Abuse of Women"	Group Activity 6
10/26	Hair Metal		Final Project Phase 3
10/28	Hip Hop, pt. 1		
10/30	Discussion: Music and Censorship	"Is As Nasty as They Wanna Be Obscene?"	Group Activity 7
The 1990s and Beyond			
11/2	Grunge and Alternative Rock		
11/4	Country Music: Back in the Mainstream		
11/6	In-Class Workday: Outlining and Dividing the Workload		Group Activity 8
11/9	Boy Bands and Teen Pop		Music & Media Report 6
11/11	Hip Hop, pt. 2		

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11/13	Discussion: Supporting Artists in the Age of Streaming	“Musicians Say Streaming Doesn’t Pay. Can the Industry Change?”	Group Activity 9
11/16	Nu-Metal, Rap Rock, and Post-Grunge		
11/18	Popular Music Since 2010		Music & Media Report 7
11/20	In-Class Workday: Polishing Drafts		Group Activity 10
11/23- 11/27	NO CLASS [THANKSGIVING BREAK]		
11/30	Final Project Presentations I		Final Project Phase 4
12/2	Final Project Presentations II		
12/9	Final Project Presentations III	[NOTE: CLASS MEETS AT 10:30AM]	

Group Essay and Group Assessments (Final Project Phases 5 and 6)
Must Be Submitted Through Canvas by
Thursday December 10 at 11:59pm