

BRIT-290: British Music from the Beatles to Ed Sheeran

Dr. Kristen Strandberg

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Course meets: MW, 9am-12pm, in person, with weekly experiential learning excursions

Course Description:

Explore the vastly differing sounds of British music from the 1960s to the present! We will examine social, political, and cultural movements that shaped British musical styles including rock, punk, Britpop, and the varied music of today. We will discuss artists such as The Beatles, Queen, Elton John, Coldplay, Harry Styles, Dua Lipa, Ed Sheeran, and more, with field trips to important sites such as the famous Abbey Road crosswalk and recording studio.

Credit Hour Statement: “This class meets the federal credit hour policy of 3 hours of supervised study per week for approximately 15 weeks for each hour of credit, or a total of 45-75 hours for each credit. For this 3 credit course students are expected to devote a minimum of 135 hours.”

Course Learning Outcomes:

- To appreciate the contributions of significant British musicians and bands to the global music scene.
- To understand the cultural, social, and historical contexts that influenced the development of British music.
- To analyze the evolution of musical styles and genres within the British music industry.
- To critically evaluate the impact of British music on society and popular culture.
- To think critically about voices missing from these trends, including women in early British popular music and people of color.

Required Materials

All course readings and listening examples will be posted to Blackboard.

Course Schedule

Readings are comprised of a mix of scholarly and popular sources. Readings are tentative and on some class days readings will be split among the students. All students will complete all listening examples posted on Blackboard.

Week 1 (7/14-18): The 1960s, Part 1

Wed, 7/16: Introduction to British Music; British Music in the 1960s

- Historical background: The emergence of British popular music
- The Beatles: origins and early years

Reading and listening examples will be available on Blackboard.

- Listening will include various examples from the musicians/bands listed above.
- Readings may include excerpts from the following, along with examples from popular mainstream media:

- Elizabeth Sharkey, *Why Britain Rocked: How Rock Became Roll and Took Over the World*
- Kenneth Womack & Anthony DeCurtis, *The Cambridge Companion to The Beatles*

Fri, 7/18: Experiential Learning in London: Abbey Road with Beatles Walking Tour and Hard Rock Café museum

Week 2 (7/21-25): The British Invasion, Progressive Rock, Punk

Mon, 7/21: The Beatles, continued; other British Invasion bands

- The Beatles: later styles and broader impact
- The Rolling Stones, The Who, and the international style

Reading and listening examples will be available on Blackboard.

- Listening will include various examples from the musicians/bands listed above.
- Readings may include excerpts from the following, along with examples from popular mainstream media:
 - Barry J. Faulk, *British Rock Modernism, 1967-1977: The Story of Music Hall in Rock*.
 - Alan Whiticker, *British pop invasion: how British music conquered the world in the 1960s*.
 - Kenneth Womack & Anthony DeCurtis, *The Cambridge Companion to The Beatles*.

Wed, 7/23: Progressive Rock, Punk, and the Outlier: Elton John

- Progressive Rock: defining the genre
 - Exploring Progressive Rock: Genesis, Pink Floyd, Yes
- Punk: definitions and origins
 - Exploring punk: The Sex Pistols, The Clash
- Elton John: defying genre

Quiz 1

Reading and listening examples will be available on Blackboard.

- Listening will include various examples from the musicians/bands listed above.
- Readings may include excerpts from the following, along with examples from popular mainstream media:
 - Emily Robinson, "Ahead of their time: From progressive rock to the progressive alliance," *Juncture* (Winter, 2015).
 - Dave Thompson, *London's Burning: True Adventures on the Front Lines of Punk, 1976-1977*.
 - Barry J. Faulk, *British Rock Modernism, 1967-1977: The Story of Music Hall in Rock*.
 - Matthew Gelbart, "A Cohesive Shambles: The Clash's 'London Calling' and the Normalization of Punk," *Music & Letters* (May 2011).
 - David Simonelli, "BBC Rock Music Programming on Radio and Television and the Progressive Rock Audience, 1967-1973," *Popular Music History* (April 2007).
 - Ruth Adams, "The Englishness of English Punk: Sex Pistols, Subcultures, and Nostalgia," *Popular Music & Society* (October 2008).

- “Elton John,” *Oxford Music Online*.
- Phil Allcock, “Authorship and performance in the music of Elton John,” *The Cambridge Companion to the Singer-Songwriter*.
- Tom Doyle, *Captain Fantastic: Elton John’s Stellar Trip Through the ‘70s*.

Thurs, 7/24: Experiential Learning in Liverpool: Beatles Story Museum and Magical Mystery Tour

Week 3 (7/28-8/1): New Wave, Britpop & Post-Britpop

Mon, 7/28: Another Outlier; New Wave; Britpop and Post-Britpop

- Queen’s unique styles
- New Wave and its relationship to punk
 - The Police, Duran Duran
- Britpop and Post-Britpop: British identity and American comparisons
 - Oasis, Blur
 - Coldplay, Radiohead

Reading and listening examples will be available on Blackboard.

- Listening will include various examples from the musicians/bands listed above.
- Readings may include excerpts from the following, along with examples from popular mainstream media:
 - Andy Bennett, *British Progressive Pop 1970-1980*.
 - Allan Jones, “UK New Wave,” in *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*.
 - Annie Zaleski, *Duran Duran’s Rio*.
 - Martin Roach, *Coldplay: When will we be kings*.
 - Marianne Tatom Letts, *Radiohead and the resistant concept album: How to disappear completely*.
 - Phil Rose, *Radiohead and the Global Movement for Change*.
 - John Harris, *The Last Party: Britpop, Blair, and the Demise of English Rock*.

Potential documentary screening: [Live Forever: The Rise and Fall of BritPop](#)

Tues, 7/29: Experiential Learning in London: Walking tour

Wed, 7/30: Social commentary and Immigration: non-mainstream voices

- British hip hop: from the fringes to the mainstream
 - The Streets, Dizzee Rascal, and Roots Manuva
 - Skepta, Stormzy
- Immigrant populations in Britain
 - Indian immigrants and their music
 - Polish immigrants and their music
 - Awakening Music production company and the Islamic sound

Reading and listening examples will be available on Blackboard.

- Listening will include various examples from the musicians/bands listed above.
- Readings may include excerpts from the following, along with examples from popular mainstream media:
 - Simon Reynolds, “Who says the British can’t rap? The UK’s new wave of MC’s confront American hip hop isolationism,” in *Bring the Noise: 20 Years of Writing About Hip Rock and Hip Hop*.
 - Rupa Huq, “Asian kool? Bhangra and beyond,” in *Dis-Orienting rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Dance Music*.
 - Otterbeck, *The Awakening of Islamic Pop Music*

Week 4 (8/4-8): Music of the 2010s-2020s

Mon, 8/4: Diverse sounds and blurred genres

- The indie scene
 - Arctic Monkeys, Florence + The Machine, and Mumford & Sons
- Amy Winehouse’s unique styles and influences

Reading and listening examples will be available on Blackboard.

- Listening will include various examples from the musicians/bands listed above.
- Readings TBD.

Wed, 8/6: Modern singer-songwriters and fusions between past and present

- The rise of singer-songwriters
 - Adele, Ed Sheeran, and Sam Smith
- More artists of today
 - Dua Lipa, Harry Styles, Ellie Goulding

Reading and listening examples will be available on Blackboard.

- Listening will include various examples from the musicians/bands listed above.
- Readings TBD.

Quiz 2

Thurs, 8/7: Experiential learning: Walking tour of Manchester music sites

Week 5 (8/11-12): Wrapping up

Mon, 8/11: Final presentations

Grade Distribution

Daily participation and discussion leading Students will take turns leading part of the discussion each class day.	30%
Quizzes (x2) Quizzes will take place in weeks 2 and 4, consisting of listening examples to identify unique styles and characteristics of the music we've discussed.	35%
Final presentation Each student will undergo a special project on the topic of their choice. The final presentation grade category will consist of several scaffolded assignments.	35%

Honor Code:

All students at the University of Evansville agree to the University honor code: *I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid, nor will I tolerate an environment that condones the use of unauthorized aid.*

Course AI Policy:

In this course, submission of any work that is not entirely your own is considered academic dishonesty. This includes the use of AI to improve your writing or language. The use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT are prohibited and constitute a violation of academic integrity as examples of unauthorized aid.

Disability Policy:

The University of Evansville is committed to providing an accessible and supportive environment for students with disabilities. It is the policy and practice of the University of Evansville to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Students should contact Disability Services at 812-488-2663 to seek services or accommodations for disabilities. Written notification to faculty from Disability Services is required for academic accommodations.

Institutional Equity and Title IX:

UE is committed to fostering an atmosphere free from harassment and creating an inclusive campus for all members of the University community regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, ethnicity, country of origin, ability, or veteran status. All Faculty members are considered Responsible Employees and required to report instances of discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence to the Office of Institutional Equity

You may also choose to speak to a Confidential Resource about your experience. Confidential Resources at the University include:

Counseling Services: 812-488-2663, counselingservices@evansville.edu

Crayton E. and Ellen Mann Health Center: 812-488-2033, healthcenter@evansville.edu

Spiritual Formation Coordinator: 812- 488-5265, spiritualformation@evansville.edu

If you or someone you know has been harassed, assaulted, or discriminated against you can find the appropriate resources by contacting the Assistant Director of Institutional Equity and Title IX Coordinator: email titleix@evansville.edu ; phone (812) 488-5261. For more information visit <https://www.evansville.edu/offices/titleix/policy.cfm> .

Non-discrimination Statement

The University of Evansville expects all members of its community to treat each other with respect and civility. Harassing behaviors directed towards any member of our community will not be tolerated. As part of its commitment to non-discrimination, the University specifically prohibits harassment based on any other characteristics set forth in its nondiscrimination statement as follows: including race, color, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, creed or religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status and all federally protected groups/classes. Any form of harassment undermines the mission of the University and negatively impacts the University community as a whole. For more information contact the [Center for Inclusive Excellence](#).

Campus Safety

All members of the UE community are automatically enrolled in the Ace Alerts Emergency Alert System. When the system is activated, emergency notification information is sent in the following manner: calls to campus IP phones, text messages, emails, campus housing speaker system, active threat sirens (non-weather related), digital signage, and AlertUS desktop on campus-owned computers.

To contact the Office of Public Safety:

Emergencies: 812-488-6911

Non-emergencies: 812-488-2051

Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals

The University of Evansville seeks to resolve all student concerns in a timely and effective manner through policies and processes documented in the University [Course Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#).

Student Resources

Access the links below to connect with departments and resources that are here to support all UE students.

[Academic Services](#): Contact the Center for Academic Advising to connect with academic support services including supplemental instruction, tutoring, and time management and study skills help.

[Blackboard Guides](#): Blackboard is the University of Evansville's course management system for online courses. Guides on using Blackboard can be found within [MyUE](#).

[Writing Center](#) : The Writing Center provides access to writing resources, appointments for one-on-one writing help, and assistance with any stage of the writing process.

[Counseling Services](#): Counseling Services provides general, short-term counseling that assists students in identifying barriers and setting goals while improving coping strategies to achieve personal and academic goals.

[University Libraries](#): Conduct research, access resources, and contact librarians for any research related help.