OSPOXFRD 72: **The British Invasion**

Wednesdays 2:00-5:00
Stanford in Oxford
Spring Quarter, 2011
Mark Applebaum; applemk@stanford.edu
Office Hours: after class and by appointment

Course Description

How is it that the British were so effective at celebrating, appropriating, reinterpreting, and exporting American popular music culture? By examining the remarkably rich legacy of British popular music one comes to a unique and deep understanding not only of British culture, but also of America as seen through British eyes and heard through British voices.

The course examines three generations of British popular music in the 1960s and 1970s: first, the music of the "British Invasion," focusing on the Beatles (and extending to the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, the Who, etc.); second, the development of progressive rock (art rock) as embodied in groups such as Pink Floyd, Yes, King Crimson, Genesis, and Emerson, Lake, and Palmer; and third, the emergence of punk in both its revolutionary (e.g., the Clash) and nihilistic (e.g., the Sex Pistols) forms.

The course will attend to several important narratives and issues that emerge in the music: the manner in which marginal American culture—first African-American blues and later the nascent New York punk scene—is venerated by foreigners and largely neglected by Americans; the United States' subsequent mainstream consumption of a transformed and repackaged American minority culture; the erosion of America's post-war cultural hegemony in what might be glibly dubbed "The (British) Empire Strikes Back;" an understanding of why Britain is uniquely suited to appreciate American cultural impulses (and the reverse); England's Art School tradition and its genealogic relevance in British popular music; art rock's questionable allegiance with the class-based establishment; and punk rock's attack on the monarchy. Finally, an examination of concurrent (extra-musical) historic events in the United States and the United Kingdom aspires to create a rich context that extends beyond the musical discourse. The course also invites a concise examination of essential antecedents including African-American blues and English skiffle. A concluding coda will address Anglo-Caribbean racial politics (e.g., punk rock's unexpected marriage to reggae via *Rock Against Racism*) in a fitting bookend to the blues.

Course Texts

(1) Tim Riley: *Tell Me Why: The Beatles: Album by Album, Song by Song, the Sixties and After*.
(2) Edward Macan: *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture*.

Additional readings, in moderation, may be placed on reserve.
Film screenings may be announced.

Evaluation

10% *A Day in the (British and/or American) Life*; 2-4 minute presentation.
20% Group presentation on a given topic; 8-12 minutes total. (Bonus points for the first group.)

10% Quizzes; graded in class.
10% Composition of five quiz questions on two weeks' reading and the past two lectures.
Submitted by email 24 hours in advance to the entire group; four times: quizzes 2-5 only.
Due via email at 2:00pm on Tuesdays, May 3, May 17, May 31, and June 14.

15% British Rock Concert Report 3-5 pages (due May 25).
30% Symposium Presentation (June 22).

5% Attendance and Participation, including class preparation, class discussion, punctuality, and three required events:

Tuesday, May 3: Class Dinner, location TBA, 6:45pm.
Thursday, May 12: Fluxus Tour, Class Dinner, 5:00pm departure from Stanford House.
At your own schedule: British Rock Concert.

Extra Credit Performance: The Oxford Jazz Festival, St. Michael at North Gate Church, Saturday, April 23, 2:45pm.

Notes: Late assignments, including quizzes, will not be accepted.
Laptops and other wireless communication devices are prohibited in the classroom.

Students with Documented Disabilities

Students who have a disability that may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class, must initiate the request as soon as possible.

COURSE TOPICS subject to modification

April 20
Introduction
Nose-Bleed Music Theory
What is the music trading on?
Quiz 1

Thursday, April 28—NOTE DATE!
American Antecedents: The Blues, Louis Jordan, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Elvis, Buddy Holly
A Day in the (British/American) Life 1

May 4
The Beatles, part I
Film Screening: Albert and David Maysles' *The Beatles: The First U.S. Visit*
A Day in the (British/American) Life 2
Group Presentation 1: Lonnie Donagan/Skiffle
Quiz 2
Read: *Tell Me Why: The Beatles: Album by Album, Song by Song, the Sixties and After*. Chapters 1-6.

Extra Credit Film Marathon: *A Hard Day's Night*, *Help!*, *Magical Mystery Tour*, *Yellow Submarine*, *Let It Be*; date TBD.

May 11
The Beatles, part II
A Day in the (British/American) Life 3
Group Presentation 2: Brian Epstein, The Business of the Beatles
Read: *Tell Me Why: The Beatles: Album by Album, Song by Song, the Sixties and After*. Chapters 7-12.

May 18
A British Invasion Sampler: The Rolling Stones, The Who, The Kinks, Dusty Springfield, The Yardbirds, The Hollies, The Zombies, The Troggs, Donovan, Manfred Mann, Chad & Jeremy, Procol Harum, The Moody Blues, Herman's Hermits
The Emergence of Heavy Metal: Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple
A Day in the (British/American) Life 4
Group Presentation 3: The Rolling Stones, an introduction to their early years
Quiz 3

May 25
Progressive Rock I
Pink Floyd; Emerson, Lake, & Palmer; Yes; King Crimson, Genesis
Concert Reports Due
A Day in the (British/American) Life 5
Group Presentation 4: Psychedelia: San Francisco and London
Group Presentation 5: *Tommy* and the Rock Opera
Read: Edward Macan: *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture*. First half.

June 1
Progressive Rock II
Art Rock in the Mainstream: Queen and the emergence of A.O.R.
A Day in the (British/American) Life 6
Group Presentation 6: The Concept Album
Quiz 4
Read: Edward Macan: *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture*. Second half.

June 8
American Punk Antecedents: The Velvet Underground, MC5, Iggy Pop
CBGB Punk Generation I: The Ramones, The New York Dolls, Patti Smith
Anarchy in the U.K.: The Sex Pistols
Film: *The Filth & The Fury*
A Day in the (British/American) Life 7
Group Presentation 7: The Clash, an introduction to their early years

June 15
Film: *Classic Albums: Never Mind the Bollocks*
The Clash
A Day in the (British/American) Life 8
Group Presentation 8: RAR—Rock Against Racism
Group Presentation 9: Reggae in England
Quiz 5

June 22
Class Symposium, open to the public.
Note: pending the number of enrolled students, this session may go late (e.g. to 6:00); please clear your schedule accordingly.