

Week Four

Unit Two: The History of Popular Music (Writing for the Humanities and the Social Sciences)

Monday: 4/23/07 (Computer Lab: NMC-Language Lab-Kerr Hall 2160)

- Reading: "Blues Falling Down Like Rain" (**The piece is in our course reader**). Also, review the popular music timeline at <http://kclibrary.nhmccd.edu/music-2.html> (for music from 1900-1950) and <http://kclibrary.nhmccd.edu/music-3.html> (1950-2000).
- Assignments: **Bring in two copies of your final draft of our first paper for peer and teacher review.**
- Class Activities: The beginnings of American popular music—minilecture and listening session. (We will look at <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/speccoll/pa/cylindersgenre.html> to hear early-recorded music.) Online Discussion Topic: why is it important to know the history of music?

I Blues: Where Does it Come From? (20 min)

A. Roots of the Blues:

B. The American writer, Washington Irving is credited with coining the term 'the blues,' as it is now defined, in 1807. (Tanner 40) The earlier (almost entirely Negro) history of the blues musical tradition is traced through oral tradition as far back as the 1860s. (Kennedy 79) **From:** <http://thebluehighway.com/history.html> \Following the Civil War (according to Rolling Stone), the blues arose as "a distillate of the African music brought over by slaves. Field hollers, ballads, church music and rhythmic dance tunes called jump-ups evolved into a music for a singer who would engage in call-and-response with his guitar. He would sing a line, and the guitar would answer it." (RSR&RE 53) (author's note: I've seen somewhere, that the guitar did not enjoy widespread popularity with blues musicians until about the turn of the century. Until then, the banjo was the primary blues instrument.) By the 1890s the blues were sung in many of the rural areas of the South. (Kamien 518) And by 1910, the word 'blues' as applied to the musical tradition was in fairly common use. (Tanner 40) **From:**

<http://thebluehighway.com/history.html>

C. But, the problem was that the blues weren't sung according to the European ideas of even tempered pitch, but with a much freer use of bent pitches and otherwise emotionally inflected vocal sounds. (Machlis 578) These 'bent' pitches are known as 'blue notes'. **From:**

<http://thebluehighway.com/history.html>

D. 12 Bar Blues: Play for them.

E. Blues of the 20s and 30s:

a. Show timeline.

b. Play More Robert Johnson:

http://www.publicdomain4u.com/html/robert_johnson.htm

c. Bessie Smith: <http://www.jazz-on-line.com/artists1.htm>

d. Leadbelly (1940s-1950s): <http://www.publicdomain4u.com/html/leadbelly.htm>

F. Blues gets electric: 1950s and 1960s:

a. Birth of Chicago blues:

i. Muddy Waters: http://www.jazz-on-line.com/Muddy_Waters.htm

G. The Blues Now: Smaller, Not as Diverse, Aging.

a. Show Timeline.

H. Blues Connection to Rap:

- a. 12 bar, I, IV, V progressions.
- b. Improvisation (freestyling)
- c. Sampling:
 - i. Beck, Moby, Wu Tang Clan

King, Albert

- 1. *King of the Blues Guitar*. (Atlantic 1969)
- * "Cold Feet"

Wu-Tang Clan - "Protect Ya Neck (The Jump Off)" (From:

<http://www.the-breaks.com/search.php?term=Wu+Tang+Clan&type=6>)

- d. Interestingly This: In the 1920s, several civil rights leaders were so concerned about the sexual and violent content of popular blues and jazz songs that they established a record company to "undertake the job of elevating the musical taste of the race." Promoted by W.E.B. DuBois and A. Philip Randolph, two of the most important civil rights leaders of the 20th century, Black Swan Records pledged to distribute "the Better Class of Records by Colored Artists," which meant recordings of "respectable" European classical music. <http://www.rjgeib.com/biography/ventura/geib-great-art-challenge/rap-jazz.htm>
- I. Blues Timeline: <http://blues.about.com/library/bltimeline.htm>
- J. CAT: What have you Learned about the blues? What is something more that you wish to know?

II Blues Readings: Online Work (25 min)

- A. Go to moodle site, and login: <http://moodle.id.ucsb.edu>
- B. Respond to this prompt for about ten minutes:
 - a. What did you learn about "Blues Music," and how do you think blues music, now, does or doesn't matter in popular music? Also, what do you, as a listener of music, think of blues music—be honest.
- C. Respond to folks with the following:
 - a. An open question (not yes/no question): Example: When you say that that blues music matters in terms of rap, what do you mean specifically? Can you elaborate.
 - b. A response that builds: I agree with you about how blues music might not matter that much in terms of samples of rap or hip-hop music, but have you considered. . .
- D. Read and respond to your respondents.
- E. Read what other folks have written.
- F. My Questions:
 - a. What do you make of the tragedy of Johnson and Smith? Do they remind you of any current musicians?
 - b. What do you think would have been some historical facts that would have impinged upon folks?
 - c. **Key Question:** What role did race play in the development of blues? Class? Gender?

III Pop Window Work: On Song of Their Choice in Groups (20 min)

- A. Handout a copy of the pop window to everyone, point out its location on the sheet.
- B. Tell them to divide up the tasks.
- C. Have them choose a free song, from one of the following sites:
 - a. Old Songs: <http://www.publicdomain4u.com/>
 - b. Even Older Songs: <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/speccoll/pa/cylindersgenre.html>
 - c. Rap Songs: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip_hop_music
 - d. Current Popular Bands: <http://www.myspace.com/>
- D. Be ready to present what you find out to us all. Be ready to talk about the way that music seems to work—via the “pop window.”

IV Social History: What is It? (20 min)

- A. Ask them to look for definitions of “social history” online using the following:
 - a. Google Scholar: <http://scholar.google.com>
 - b. Google: <http://www.google.com>
 - c. Dictionaries:
 - i. The OED: <http://library.ucsb.edu/eresources/databases/data-frames.html> (look under “O”)
 - ii. Merriam-Webster Online: <http://www.webster.com/>
 - d. Sample of Social History: The Context of Early Rock and Roll
 - i. Have them read pages 1 and 2.
 - ii. Questions:
 1. What does it mean to say that “rock and roll” is a social construct?
 2. What kind of rebellion does the author think that rock and roll offered?
 3. **Key Question:** How does the author see changes in 1950s culture playing into rock and roll? How might our culture play into our reading and acceptance of music in the 21st century?

V Introduce Next Paper (10 min)

- A. Writing: What movement, group, or aspect of popular music do you want to write about and why?
- B. Read aloud and talk about how to narrow focus.

VI Questions about Current Paper (5 min)

Wednesday: 4/25/07

- Reading: “Classic Rocker—the First Generation” and “Classic Rockers—the Second Generation” from *A Social History of Rock and Roll* by Paul Friedlander. (**The piece is in our course reader**).
- Assignments: **Start Paper Number 2. The first draft is due on 5/7/07.**
- Class Activities: Peer review. Primary vs. secondary sources. Discussion of Reading. Writing exercise to start paper number two. **Coffee house lyric and poetry reading.** **Work on dictionary of terms.**

Lesson for Wednesday: 4/25/07

- Reading: “Classic Rocker—the First Generation” and “Classic Rockers—the Second Generation” from *A Social History of Rock and Roll* by Paul Friedlander. (**The piece is in our course reader**).
- Assignments: **Start Paper Number 2. The first draft is due on 5/7/07.**
- Class Activities: Primary vs. secondary sources. Discussion of Reading. Writing exercise to start paper number two. **Coffee house lyric and poetry reading. Work on dictionary of terms.**

I Dictionary of Terms (25 min)

- A. Race, Class, and Gender as Terms for Social History PowerPoint. (5 min)
- B. Divide up terms.
- C. Give out dictionaries, ask them to define them on overheads.
- D. Have them present their definitions.

II Working with Terms: Freewrite (15 min)

- A. What is a group, musical movement, performer, or song that you would be interested in writing about in paper two?
- B. By looking through the lenses of race, class, and gender, what can you see in your group, musical movement, performer, or song?
- C. Research Question Definition at end: Think about a question that you have about your group, musical movement, performer, or song that you want to explore. It should be an exploratory question, and it should be something that interests you.
 - a. The question heuristic: **How does** _____ (artist/subgenre/musical technology, or song) affect the _____ (history of the time/future performers/future history), and what is the **significance** of this effect?
- D. Share questions, talk about how to research them—using packet and online databases, which we’ll begin to use Monday.

III Friedlander Discussion (20-25 min)

- A. Put up overhead.
- B. Design questions.
- C. Do group discussion.
- D. My questions:
 - a. What are the different kinds of lyrics that Friedlander talks about? How are they, in your opinion, important or unimportant in understanding how things work in rock and roll?
 - b. What did you notice about the racial make up of the first two sets of “classic” rock and roll performers? What do you think the significance is of this?
 - c. What role, if any, did gender play in the formation of early rock and roll? Think about Little Richard. Think about Elvis.
 - d. Is rock and roll, as it starts, performed by the wealthy, the poor, the working class? Which class is it performed for? What’s the significance of this?
 - e. **Key Question:** How might rock and roll affect the formation of rap?

IV Primary vs. Secondary Sources: What Are (5 min)

- A. Go over the distinction: <http://www.princeton.edu/~refdesk/primary2.html>

V. Evaluating Sources (15 min)

- A. Buddy Holly Interview: <http://www.fiftiesweb.com/crash.htm>.
B. Or John Lennon Interview.
C. Do Sheet.
D. Talk about it.

VI Citing Materials (20 min)

- A. Do the work.
B. Give the overheads.
C. Present a couple.

Week Five

Unit Two: *The History of Popular Music (Writing for the Humanities and the Social Sciences)*

Monday: 4/30/07 (Computer Lab: NMC-Language Lab-Kerr Hall 2160)

- Reading: David Ritz's "The Last Days of Brother Ray." (**The piece is in our course reader**).
Optional Reading: Also, listen to this online interview with "Brother Ray":
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/arts/highlights/010412_raycharles.shtml if you're interested in hearing more about Ray Charles. Click on the link labeled, "**Listen to the programme here**." Also, bring in your **handbook** for editing and reference work.
- Class Activities: Early rock and roll listening session. Discussion: "What is Soul?" Clip from *Ray*. Does race play a role in rock and roll?

Wednesday: 5/2/07

- Reading: "Rap's Got Roots" from Richard Oliver and Time Leffel's *Hip-Hop Inc.: Success Strategies of the Rap Moguls*.
- Class Activities: Discussion of rap. Rap listening session. Looking at lyrics. Social History of rap learning stations.