“SONGWRITERS ON SONGWRITING: Killer Hooks, Essential Songs & Songwriters of the Rock Era…and those they’ve influenced.”

Music Industry 105        Instructor:  David Leaf
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

With a special focus on the songwriting renaissance of the rock era, this course will study the work of the greatest and most successful songwriters of the post-WWII rock generation (circa 1950-1994) as well as contemporary writers/artists who draw primary influence from the rock era’s songs and records.

The main focus of the course will be on songwriters. The class will be presented with creative as well as practical industry guidance from industry figures that will primarily include noteworthy practitioners of the art and craft of songwriting. The course will also feature two music publishers. (NOTE: The first half of the online class focuses on legendary figures in music; the second half on contemporary figures who are prominent in the music industry today.)

Essentially, each guest will talk about their all-consuming love for music and how that leads to a “Life in Song.” Through demonstration (at their instrument of choice), professional songwriters will discuss their songwriting life as well as their individual creative process. With these guests, we'll touch on the source of their passion for music, their origin story (how each became a songwriter), their musical education, the hard work it took to make it, “the gift” and craft (inspiration and perspiration) behind their success.

During the course of the summer session, you will be screening exclusive interviews conducted and videotaped at The Herb Alpert School of Music at UCLA. These will be “show and tell” conversations as each guest is guided through their individual lives in music by noted music documentary writer/director David Leaf.

For the online version of the course, we will see each class as it took place in Popper Theater in Schoenberg Music Building. You will watch as Leaf encourages these singular creators to share how they've been able to take sounds from their head and heart and bring them to the world.

And for the online class, with the advantage of both hindsight and video replay, we can focus on the best moments to enhance the educational value of each conversation.
A complete listing of the songwriters we'll be studying can be seen on the class rundown section on the CCLE home page.

**HOMEWORK:**
In advance of each class, there will be extensive preparation (listening, reading, screening of DVDs and research).

Reading/viewing/listening assignments will be posted at the course website as preparation for the special guests.

For each songwriter, artist or record producer, the student should first read that creator’s Wiki biography, go to the individual’s website to study their work and, perhaps most importantly, listen to/watch the suggested songs in the Spotify list/links. There are also links to specific articles to read and documentaries to watch (those links provided at CCLE under the listing on the left side of the home page titled “Video Reserves.”). Note that there are two different online sources at this link, one titled “Video Reserves” and the (misnamed) “Digital Audio Reserves.” Both have links to the assigned documentary.

The class preparation assignments are posted at the course website on the left hand side and must be done before you view each of the classes.

After watching each lecture, you are required to concisely answer the following three questions and post that assignment at CCLE. These reports should be at least 250 words but no more than 500 words.

1) What were the three most important things you learned about songwriting and a life in music from the class?

2) What was the most surprising thing you learned from the class?

3) What was the most inspiring life lesson you learned from the class?

As detailed below, there is book report and a final report as well as the above writing assignments will be based on what happened in each class.

**READING, LISTENING & SCREENING**
In addition to readings specific to the guests, listening and viewing assignments that will be specific to each class’s genre and the individual special guests, this book is the assigned text:

Poe’s book will not only tell a great story about what is called “song plugging,” but throughout Poe’s book are dozens of valuable lessons in how to achieve success...whether or not your chosen field is the music business.

**GRADING and ASSIGNMENTS**
In addition to the class reports (as described above), there will be additional writing assignments (one book report, a final report and 6-8 documentary screening reports that will be posted next week).

**BOOK REPORT (DUE JULY 11TH)**
2-3 PAGES TOTAL...750-1,000 WORDS

**DOCUMENTARY REPORTS**
1-2 PAGES TOTAL...APPROX 500 WORDS

**FINAL PAPER/PROJECT (DUE AUGUST 3RD)**
10 PAGES... 3,000 WORDS (APPROXIMATELY)

The book report should be POSTED BY 9 a.m. of the assigned day it is due and it should be posted at CCLE.

These reports should be post in the assignment spots at CCLE. You should try to do two of these a week.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Based on past experience, given the compressed schedule of a summer session course, it is easy for a student to fall behind on work. So the above dates are suggested deadlines, designed to keep you on track to finish the course on time.

That's said, all assignments must be completed and posted by August 5th, or you will automatically receive an “F” for that assignment.

**BOOK REPORT #1: RANDY POE book report**

Answers should be very specific, succinct and to the point.

1)What are the three most important/inspiring life lessons you learned from the book and why?

2)What are the three most important music business lessons you learned from the book and why?

3)How does all of this relate to/inform your career goals/life and why?
Final Project

From the list of “essential songwriters” of the Rock Era (at the end of the syllabus) pick one of the songwriters. Talk about that songwriter’s primary influences, the era in which they first became prominent and how both of those impacted/showed up in their work.

Choose three of their songs from their career. Using those songs, discuss why those songs were important to their career/their growth as an artist, how the songs impacted the era in which they were released, became influential to the rock songwriting canon and the next generation (or two) of songwriters and are ultimately essential parts of their body of work. Discuss why decades after they were first written/recorded/released they continue to resonate.

Grading Scheme:
Class Reviews 25%
Additional Screening Assignments 25%
Book Report 25%
Final Report 25%

IF GETTING AN “A+” OR AN “A” IS IMPORTANT TO YOU, YOU SHOULD DO AT LEAST ONE OF THE EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL BE SENT OUT NEXT WEEK.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR:
The course is taught by award-winning filmmaker and music biographer, writer/director/producer David Leaf.

Among his relevant credentials to teach/produce/curate this course are his extensive career in music event television, feature documentaries and the biographies he’s written on such songwriting legends as Brian Wilson and the brothers Gibb (the Bee Gees).

From 1986-1988, Leaf wrote and co-produced the National Academy of Songwriters “Salute To The American Songwriter”. He also wrote “The Billboard Awards” for nine years (1992-2001), and was a consulting producer on “A&E’s Live By Request” music series (2001-2004).

In 2002-2003, he wrote and produced The Songwriters Hall of Fame event for television. Among the major tribute concerts and TV specials/documentaries he’s written and/or produced are those that focused on the music of such legendary songwriters and artists as Stevie Wonder, Billy Joel, Buddy Holly, Brian Wilson, the Bee Gees, Elvis Presley, Ray Charles and Ella Fitzgerald.

You can watch a sample of Leaf’s work at www.leafprod.com
Course Narrative and Rationale

It began over sixty years ago, during the early days of the rock and roll revolution, a popular songwriting renaissance that lasted over a quarter century. During its heyday, especially as it reached remarkable heights in the 1960s and 1970s, a tremendous number and variety of memorable songs were written, recorded and became rock “standards,” songs that are part of the cultural firmament decades after their creation.

Popular songs were born (at pianos and on guitars) everywhere---in tiny apartments, in noisy garages, in cars, in hole-in-the-wall record company studios, in cubbyholes in Manhattan’s Brill Building or in a small hit factory in Detroit, from cities up and down the Mississippi (e.g. Memphis and New Orleans) to suburban Southern California towns (e.g. Hawthorne), from natives of Minnesota and Texas and all over the country (and eventually all over the world) who found a seemingly magical combination of melody, rhythm and rhyme and created so many memorable songs that perhaps even the biggest iPod couldn’t hold them all.

Songwriters came in all ages, sizes, sexes and colors---songs were written by individuals, by writing teams, by members of a group, by teenagers just breaking into music, by record company owners, by husbands and wives, by singers who couldn’t play an instrument, by great composers who could seemingly churn out an endless stream of memorable tunes and their lyrical collaborators, who had a knack for packing a powerful story into three minutes (or less). This art form, created, by young American men and young women, inspired young citizens of the British Empire who ultimately led a 20th Century cultural invasion of America, and through iconic artists, rock and roll’s place as a global force exploded.

In rock and roll, there were songwriters who became famous singing their own songs and others---composers, musicians and lyricists, many of whose names are generally unknown outside the music business----who write the songs, to borrow the lyric from a hit song about a popular songwriter, that make the whole world sing.

And yet, the solitary act of songwriting remains almost a secret art form that is a genuine mystery (on occasion even to the songwriters themselves), as if these masters of music, these superstars of songwriting, just plucked the tunes from the air.

“SONGWRITERS ON SONGWRITING: Killer Hooks, Essential Songs & Songwriters of the Rock Era…and those they’ve influenced” is the course that will shine a spotlight on the greatest songwriters of the rock era through the stories (and the sounds) of the songs they wrote.
These are the songs that to this day call up powerful emotions, memories, feelings, a sense of time and place that continue to resonate and continue to amaze us with a staying power that nobody ever expected because “teen music,” as the adults first called it, was supposed to be disposable junk, not eternal.

The course will focus on the writers and artists who creatively flourished and reached their peak starting in the mid-1950s through the 1980s. We’ll also meet 21st Century songwriters whose primary influence is the work of these legendary songwriters.

“SONGWRITERS ON SONGWRITING: Killer Hooks, Essential Songs & Songwriters of the Rock Era” begins with the music created during the pre-home computing, pre-internet, pre-Napster, pre-download (and even the pre-MTV) era, a time when popular music was central not only to youth culture but to the politics and social movements of the times. The music of that rock era renaissance is still everywhere---from supermarkets to satellite radio, from TV to the movies, from elevators to hard drives to “the cloud,” these are the songs that maintain a very special place in America and in the world. Songwriting reached such still-remarkable heights that those songs are often the focus of a week on “American Idol” or a special episode of “Glee,” are on baby-boomer iPods as well as those of their kids and grandkids. And even UCLA’s students.

Those songs also continue to influence today’s creators, and we’ll follow “the long tail” back to its source, as we come to understand how each generation’s most popular songs have their roots deeply embedded in the music that came before.

In “SONGWRITERS ON SONGWRITING,” our special guests will take us on a journey through their body of work, by telling us their own personal musical history. By focusing on their individual stories, the creators of this memorable music “model” what it means to spend your “life in song” and this will help students understand the depth of devotion to music and to craft that goes into great songwriting.

As essential as the music is, this class isn’t solely a series of trips through musical bodies of work. We will also come to understand how the music of the rock era influences 21st Century sounds. And our special guests---active professionals in the rapidly-evolving music industry---will give us a variety of perspectives and insights into the essential role songwriters continue to play in the music business.
Prominent and successful figures from the industry---including (of course) successful songwriters but also music publishers---will come to class and through an interactive presentation (including an interview by the professor), talk about both the creative and business sides of songwriting.

That way, the class will get a sense of not only the hard work behind the rock era and today’s greatest songs and records but also come to understand what it takes to get those songs in front of the public and make a living as a songwriter.

The arc of the course will be to take students through key songwriting genres of the rock era renaissance, discuss the art and craft of songwriting and explore the pre-rock influences that made rock and roll a diverse and potent multi-generational songwriting genre, all the while taking care not to ignore the practical elements of the business....what it took and still takes to get a song recorded and how great songs are still vital to the music and film business.

The course will aim to be as illuminating as the art form itself, giving insight to music fans and perhaps even more importantly, giving non-fans a true appreciation of why a particular song or songwriter truly matters.

Of utmost importance, for each of our guest’s life in music, we'll hear how “The Four Ds”...devotion, dedication, discipline and determination...lead to “Destiny,” the place where preparation meets opportunity and their successful “life in song.”

Ultimately, while songwriting is the focus of the course, it is through the stories of our guests that we'll learn the life lessons that are the path to success regardless of your chosen field. Our line-up for Summer 2015 includes the following songwriters and music industry figures:

**Mike Stoller** *(A member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame & Songwriters Hall of Fame)*
**Barry Mann & Cynthia Weil** *(Members of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Songwriters Hall of Fame)*
**Jimmy Webb** *(Chairman of the Songwriters Hall of Fame)*
**Lamont Dozier** *(A member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Songwriters Hall of Fame)*
**Burt Bacharach** *(A member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame)*
**Mac Davis** *(A member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame)*
**Dan Wilson** *(A Grammy Award winning songwriter)*
**Jody Gerson** *(CEO/Chair Universal Music Publishing)*
**Mike Posner** *(Songwriter/Producer/Artist)*
**Chris Braide** *(Songwriter/Producer/Artist)*
**Evan Taubenfeld** *(Songwriter/Producer/Artist/Music Publisher)*
**Jon Platt** *(President, Warner Chappell Music Publishing)*
**Claude Kelly** *(Songwriter/Producer/Artist)*
FINAL PROJECT Songwriters List

Below is the artist list from which you will choose your artist. As this list isn’t completely comprehensive…and is highly subjective…other songwriters may be approved for the final project by permission of the instructor. The decade indicated is when the artist first had major success as a songwriter and/or artist.

Keep in mind that once you’ve made your selection, you need to send me an e-mail letting me know who you will be writing for.

Also, if you choose artists who are known, in part, for their landmark videos (e.g. Michael Jackson, Madonna), their various personae (e.g. David Bowie), you still need to focus on their songwriting, not their image or their amazing concerts.

That’s because great artists can sometimes turn songs into massive hits through landmark videos, touring, etc. So it may be more difficult to write about the songwriting separate from everything else. This isn’t meant to discourage you from choosing an artist who is also an amazing performer. It’s that when somebody is such a great artist interpreting and performing songs that it makes it more challenging to focus on them as a songwriter.

NOTES:

1) The Beatles: I did not forget about the songwriting team of John Lennon and Paul McCartney. They are not included on this list because one goal of this assignment is to encourage you to pick a songwriter whose work may be new to you. You may write about either Lennon or McCartney as songwriters based on their solo careers.

2) The past 25 years.

I have not forgotten about Kurt Cobain, Thom Yorke, Billie Joe Armstrong or any of the other remarkable songwriters who have come to prominence in the past quarter century. Please don’t ask to write about them as one of the goals of this course is for you to learn about a songwriter from the first quarter century of rock history.

3) Also, as this is not a class about hip hop, please don’t ask to write about NWA, Jay-Z, Tupac, Eminem, Kanye West, Kendrick Lamar, et al.

What follows is the approved list. Feel free to choose any songwriter on the list, but I would encourage you to both pick somebody whose work you are not already familiar with and whose career as a successful songwriter spans at least two decades. If there’s a songwriter from the rock era that isn’t on the list but you would like to make the subject of your report, please send me an email at furize@aol.com for approval.
FINAL PROJECT Approved Songwriters List

1950s
Chuck Berry
Otis Blackwell
Sam Cooke
Fats Domino
Buddy Holly
Jerry Lee Lewis
Little Richard
Leiber/Stoller
Lloyd Price

1960s
Rod Argent
Burt Bacharach
Bert Berns
Bob Crewe/Bob Gaudio (Four Seasons)
Barry/Greenwich
David Bowie
James Brown
Felix Cavaliere
Peter Cetera (Chicago)
Eric Clapton
Leonard Cohen
Ray Davies
Mac Davis
John Denver
Neil Diamond
Donovan
The Doors
Bob Dylan
John Fogerty
Marvin Gaye
Barry/Robin/Maurice Gibb
George Harrison
Isaac Hayes
Jimi Hendrix
Holland/Dozier/Holland
Mick Jagger/Keith Richards
Goffin/King
Terry Kirkman
Kris Kristofferson
Robert Lamm (Chicago)
Mann/Weil
Curtis Mayfield
Joni Mitchell
Justin Hayward
Van Morrison
Graham Nash
Randy Newman
Laura Nyro
Otis Redding/Steve Cropper
Smokey Robinson
Bob Seger
Paul Simon (Simon & Garfunkel & solo)
Stephen Stills
Sly Stone
Pete Townshend
Norman Whitfield/ Barrett Strong
Brian Wilson
Steve Winwood
Stevie Wonder
Neil Young

1970s
Philip Bailey
Becker/Fagen
Thom Bell/Linda Creed
Lyndsey Buckingham
Glenn Frey
Daryl Hall
Don Henley
Michael Jackson
Billy Joel
Elton John/Bernie Taupin
Carole King
Jeff Lynne
Barry Manilow
John Mellencamp
Freddie Mercury, Brian May, Roger Deacon (Queen)
Christine McVie
Stevie Nicks
Dolly Parton
Tom Petty
Plant/Page
Lionel Richie
Leon Russell
Carly Simon
Bruce Springsteen
Sting
Tyler/Perry (Aerosmith)
FINAL PROJECT Songwriters List  CONT’D

1980s
Phil Collins
Madonna
Prince
REM
U-2

Songwriters not on the list by approval of instructor only