

Course description, class outline and syllabus Instructor: Peter Elman

Title: “A Round-Trip Road Trip of Country Music, 1950-present: From Nashville to California to Texas--and back.”

Course Description:

An up close and personal look at the golden era of American country music, this class will explore key movements that contributed to the explosive growth of country music as an industry, art form and subculture. The first half of this course will focus on three major regions: Nashville, California and Texas, and concentrate on the period 1950-1975. The second half will look at the women of country, discuss the making of a country song and record, look at the work of five great songsmiths, visit the country music of the 1980’s, and end with an examination of Americana music. The course will do this through lectures, photographs, recorded music, film clips, question and answer sessions, and the use of live music. The instructor will play piano, guitar and sing, and will choose appropriate examples from each region, period and style.

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Course outline by week, with syllabus; suggested reading, listening and viewing

Week one: The rise of “honky-tonk” music, 1940-60: Up from bluegrass—the roots of country music. Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Hank Williams, Kitty Wells, Lefty Frizzell, Porter Wagoner, Jim Reeves, Webb Pierce, Ray Price, Hank Lochlin, Hank Snow, and the Grand Old Opry.

Reading:

The Nashville sound: bright lights and country music Paul Hemphill, 1970-- the definitive portrait of the roots of country music.

Listening:

20 of Hank Williams Greatest Hits, Mercury, 1997

30 #1 Country Hits of the 1950s, 3-disc set, Direct Source, 1997

Viewing:

O Brother Where Art Thou, 2000, by the Coen brothers

America’s Music: The Roots of Country 1996, three-part, six episode documentary.

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Week two: Country goes uptown: The Golden Years of the Nashville Sound 1960-1975;

Eddy Arnold, Chet Atkins, Conway Twitty, Faron Young, Sonny James, Roger Miller, George Jones, Charlie Pride, Charlie Rich, Mel Tillis.

Reading:

Country music, U.S.A., by Bill C. Malone and Jocelyn R. Neal, the third revised edition, 2010—all about country music, with a special section on the Nashville Sound.

Listening:

Billboard #1’s: Classic Country, 1950-1980, mainly 1960’s--30 song CD.

George Jones: 16 Biggest Hits, Epic, 1998

Viewing:

Nashville, by Robert Altman, 1975

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Week three: Let’s Go To Luckenbach, Texas: Outlaw Country 1965-present: Johnny Cash,

Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Paycheck, Kris Kristofferson, Billy Joe Shaver, Guy Clark, Townes van Zandt, Jerry Jeff Walker, Gary Stewart, Delbert McLinton, Rodney Crowell: fields and farms, dancehalls and dives, Austin, Texas.

Reading:

Outlaw: Waylon, Willie, Kris, and the renegades of Nashville, by Michael Streissguth, 2013
Wrong's What I Do Best: Hard Country Music and Contemporary Culture, by Barbara Ching

Listening:

Johnny Cash, At Folsom Prison, 1968
Honky-Tonk Heroes, Waylon Jennings, 1973
Red-Headed Stranger, Willie Nelson, 1975
Gary Stewart, Out of Hand, 1975
Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard, Pancho and Lefty

Viewing:

I Walk the Line. Joaquin Phoenix, Reese Witherspoon 2005
Payday, Rip Torn, 1973
Heartworn Highways, documentary, 1981

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Week four: California cotton fields: Bakersfield Country 1950-present: the sons of Tom Joad: Buck Owens, Wynn Stewart, Red Simpson, Merle Haggard and Dwight Yoakam. Plus a tribute to Marty Robbins.

Reading:

Merle Haggard: the running kind, by David Cantwell, 2013
The Birth of the Bakersfield Sound, by Lawton Jiles, 2013

Listening:

Marty Robbins: Gunfighter ballads and trail songs, 1962
Buck Owens: All-Time Greatest Hits, Vol.1
Merle Haggard: 20 greatest hits

Viewing:

Billy Mize and the Bakersfield Sound, Billy Mize 2014

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Week five: The women of country: 1955-1975; roll call at the hall of fame: Kitty Wells, Patsy Cline, Wanda Jackson, Brenda Lee, Skeeter Davis, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Tammy Wynette.

Reading:

Tammy Wynette: tragic country queen, Jimmy McDonough 2010
Dolly: the biography, Alanna Nash, 2002

Listening:

Patsy Cline's 12 greatest hits, 1957-63, (this record is an absolute must!!)
Loretta Lynn's Greatest Hits, Volume 1, 1968
Tammy Wynette, Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad, 1967
Pieces of the Sky, Emmylou Harris 1974

Viewing:

Coal Miner's Daughter, Sissy Spacek, Levon Helm, 1980
Sweet Dreams, Jessica Lange, 1985

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Week six: The country song and the country record: How the great songsmiths can make your day—or break your heart; an in-depth look at five of the greats. A look at the “A team” and other studio musicians who created the Nashville Sound.

Reading:

He Stopped Loving Her Today: George Jones, Billy Sherrill, and the Pretty-Much Totally True Story of the Making of the Greatest Country Record of All Time, by Jack Isenhour, 2011

Listening:

I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry, Hank Williams

I Fall to Pieces, Patsy Cline

Funny How Time Slips Away, Willie Nelson

He Stopped Loving Her Today: George Jones

Viewing:

Tender mercies, Robert Duvall

I Saw the light, by Marc Abraham, 2015

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Week seven: Country music merges with rock into the 1980's: Alabama, Rosanne Cash, Barbara Mandrell, Kathy Mattea, Reba McIntire, Ronnie Milsap, George Strait, Patty Loveless, Vince Gill, The Judds, Garth Brooks, and Tanya Tucker

Reading:

River of Time: My Descent Into Depression and How I Emerged With Hope: by Naomi Judd

Behind the Grand Ole Opry Curtain: Tales of Romance and Tragedy Hardcover – October 8, 2008 by Robert K. Oermann

Listening:

Barbara Mandrell, Spun Gold, 1983

Kathy Mattea, Willow in the Wind, 1989

Ronnie Milsap, There's No Gettin' Over Me, 1981

George Strait, Right or Wrong, 1983

Patty Loveless, Honky Tonk Angel, 1988

Vince Gill, When I Call Your Name, 1989

Viewing:

Urban Cowboy, 1980

Honeysuckle Rose, 1980

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Week eight: Americana—what it is, how it developed; similarities, differences from country: John Prine, Steve Earle, John Hiatt, Patty Griffin, Nancy Griffith, Gillian Welch, Delbert McClinton, Rodney Crowell, Lucinda Williams, Emmylou Harris again!!

Reading:

True to the Roots: Americana Music revealed, by Monte Dutton, 2006

Right by Her Roots: Americana Women and Their Song by Jewly Hight, 2011

Listening:

Rodney Crowell, Diamonds and Dirt, 1988

Emmylou Harris, Pieces of the Sky

Guitar Town, Steve Earle, 1986 MCA

Stolen Moments, John Hiatt 1990 A&M

Viewing:

Lucinda Williams - Live from Austin, Texas DVD 1998

Delbert McClinton - A Musical Conversation & Journey 2008

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These audios and videos will be played in class:

****almost all videos are available on youtube**

week one

Play CD #1: Hey Good Lookin', Hank Williams —1951
Play video #1: Blue Yodel #1, Jimmie Rodgers--1929
Play video #2: Wildwood Flower, Carter family 1952
Play CD #2: San Antonio Rose, Bob Wills—1938
Play video #3: Walking the floor over you—Ernest Tubb 1961
Play CD #3: Blue Moon of Kentucky, Bill Monroe—1947
Play CD #4: Move it on Over, Hank Williams—1947
Play video #4: Cold Cold Heart, Hank Williams, from Kate Smith show--1952
play video #5-- I Can't Help it if I'm Still in Love With You, w/Anita Carter
Play CD #5: Your Cheatin' Heart, Hank Williams—1950
Play CD #6: If you've got the \$ I've got the Time, Lefty Frizzell—1950

week two

play CD #1: I Walk the Line, Johnny Cash, 1956
play CD #2: Make the world go away, Eddy Arnold
play CD #3: Why Baby Why, Webb Pierce 1956, by George Jones
play video #1: In the jailhouse now, Webb Pierce/Red Sovine
play CD #4: Help Me I'm Falling--Hank Locklin, 1960
play video #2: Crazy Arms, Ray Price, 1956 /Ralph Mooney
play CD #5: He'll Have to Go - Jim Reeves, 1959, by Joe Allison
play video #3: Hello Walls, Faron Young, 1961
play CD #6: It's Only Make Believe, Conway Twitty, 1958, by Twitty
play video #4: Hello Darlin', Conway Twitty, 1970
play CD #7: Green Green Grass of Home, Porter/1965--by Curly Putnam
play CD #8: The Race Is On-- George Jones—1964--by George Jones
play video #5 White Lightning, George Jones, 1962
play video #6: The Grand Tour, George Jones, from TV show 1974
play CD #9: Folsom Prison Blues—Johnny Cash—1968
play video #7: Ring of Fire, Johnny Cash, 1968, with Carters
play CD # 10: Is Anybody Goin' To San Antone, Charlie Pride
play CD #11: King of the Road, Roger Miller, 1965, by Roger Miller
Last date by Floyd Cramer (live)

week three

play CD #1: Red-headed Stranger: Willie Nelson
play video #1: Funny How Time Slips Away, Willie Nelson, 1997
play CD #2: Only Daddy That'll Walk the Line, Waylon Jennings 1968
play video #2: From Lost Highway: Willie Nelson
play CD #3: Are you sure Hank done it: Waylon w/ lyrics/desktop!!
play CD #4: Good-hearted Woman: Waylon and Willie 1976
play video #3: Lost Highway: Waylon, Billy Joe,

play video #: Lost Highway--Sunday AM: John/Kris
play live: Me and Bobby McGee
play CD #5: Luckenbach, Texas: Waylon/Willie—1976
play CD: Pancho and Lefty, Townes Van Zandt 1975
play video #5: Mr. Bojangles--Jerry Jeff Walker, 2002
play CD #6: Desperadoes Waiting for a Train—Guy Clark
play CD #7: Highwayman: Highwaymen—1985

week four

play video #1--California Cotton Fields—Merle 1971
CD #1 Wishful Thinking - Wynn Stewart 1959
play live: Six Days on the Road--Dave Dudley—1963
play video #2---*Lost Highway*: Buck Owens 16:17
CD #2 Love's Gonna Live Here - Buck Owens 1963
play video #3---Together Again—Buck Owens 1967
CD #3 Buckaroo (instrumental)—Buck Owens 1964
CD #4 Streets of Bakersfield—Buck Owens (with lyrics) 1973
CD #5 Guitars, Cadillacs—Dwight Yoakam
play video #4--From *Lost Highway*: Merle Haggard
play live--Mama Tried/Lonesome Fugitive--Merle Haggard
CD #6 Today I Started Loving You Again—Merle Haggard
play video #5---It's All Going to Pot—Willie and Merle—2015
play video #6---That's the Way Love Goes--Merle Haggard 2009
CD #7 Singing the Blues--Marty Robbins
CD #8 Big Iron—Marty Robbins
play video #7, El Paso, Marty Robbins 1960

Week five

Play CD #1: Sweet Dreams—Patsy Cline—starts the class, play piano in Ab
Play CD #2: It wasn't god who made honky-tonk angels—Kitty Wells
Play CD #3: Right or Wrong—Wanda Jackson
Play CD #4: I'm Sorry—Brenda Lee
Play CD #5: End of the World—Skeeter Davis—play piano in Bb
Play video #1: Walkin' after Midnight—Patsy Cline
Play CD #6: I Fall to Pieces—Patsy Cline
Play CD #7: Crazy—Patsy Cline
Play video #2: She's Got You—Patsy Cline
Play video #3: Loretta Lynn--Don't Come Home a-Drinkin'
Play CD #8: I'm a honky-tonk girl—Loretta Lynn
Play CD #9: Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad—Tammy Wynette
Play video #4: I Don't Wanna Play House--Tammy Wynette

Play CD #10: Stand By Your Man—Tammy Wynette

Play CD-#11: Jolene—Dolly Parton

Play video #5: Coat of Many Colors--Dolly Parton

Play video #6: I will always love you—2006-- Dolly Parton/ play piano C week six

CD #1: She's acting single, I'm drinking' doubles—Gary Stewart 1975

Play video #1: I Can't Keep You in Love with Me—Louvin Bros, 1961

CD #2: The Christian Life—The Byrds 1968, by the Louvins

Play video #2: When I stop dreaming—Henley/Parton 2015, by Louvins

CD #3: If I could only win your love-- Emmylou Harris 1975, by Louvins

**CD #4: Love Hurts—Gram Parsons and Emmylou Harris/Felice/Boudleaux Bryant
play live: Bye Bye Love, by the Bryants**

play video #3: Rocky Top—Osborne Brothers—1967 by the Bryants

CD #5: Oh Lonesome Me—Don Gibson, 1957, by Don Gibson

CD #6: I Can't Stop Lovin' You—Ray Charles, 1962, by Don Gibson

CD #7: Heartaches by the number--Ray Price, 1959, by Harlan Howard

CD #8: Streets of Baltimore—Bobby Bare, by Harlan Howard, Tompall Glaser

**CD #9--He Stopped Loving Her Today—George Jones, 1980, by Bobby
Braddock and Curly Putnam**

play live: Queen of the Silver Dollar, by Shel Silverstein

**Play video #4: Catfish John—Alison Krause, with Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and
Randy Scruggs, 2003, by Bob McDill and Allen Reynolds**

week seven:

play CD#1 : Don Williams/Emmylou Harris, If I needed you 1981

play video #1: Don Williams, Good Ole Boys Like Me 1980

play video #2: Alan Jackson: Gone Country, by Bob McDill 1994

play CD#2: Rosanne Cash, Seven-year Ache, 1981

play video #3: Rosanne Cash, My baby thinks he's a train, 1988

play CD#3: Ronnie Milsap, Daydreams about night things 1975

play video #4: George Strait, Amarillo by Morning 1983

play video #5: Reba McIntire, Fancy 1991

play CD#4: Judds, Grandpa...the good old days w/lyrics 1986

play CD#5: Kathy Mattea, 18 wheels and a dozen roses 1988

play CD#6: Patty Loveless, Blame it on your heart 1993

play video #6: Patty Loveless/Kathy Mattea, Someday Soon 1993

play CD#7: Trisha Yearwood, She's in love with the boy 1991

play CD#8: Lacy J. Dalton, Losing kind of Love w/lyrics 1980

play CD#9: Vince Gill, I still believe in you 1992

play CD#10: Vince Gill, Whenever you come around 1994, by Vince

play video #7: Randy Travis/Josh Turner 3 wooden crosses 2006

week eight

play CD#1: Bluebird Wine, Emmylou Harris

play video #1: I couldn't leave you if I tried—Rodney Crowell

play CD #2-- Back when we were Beautiful Emmylou/Crowell

play video #2: Passionate Kisses Lucinda Williams

play video #3: Car Wheels on a Gravel Road: Lucinda

play CD #3--Thing called love—John Hiatt

play CD #4—Buffalo River Home—Hiatt

play video #4 Have a Little faith—Hiatt

play CD #5—Miss Ohio—Gillian Welch

play video #5—Gillian Welch, from “Lost Highway”

play CD#6 two more bottles of wine, Delbert McClinton

play video #6: Guitar Town—Steve Earle

play video #7: Copperhead Road—Steve Earle

play video #8: love at the five and dime--Nanci Griffith

play CD#6—Paradise by John Prine

play video #9—Souvenirs, John Prine with Steve Goodman

play CD#7—Angel from Montgomery—John Prine