Course title and description

Instructor: Peter Elman

Title: “The Fab Four and the Stones”: How America surrendered to the advance guard of the British Invasion, and how these two groups defined rock and roll in the 1960’s.

Course Description:
In 1964, the Beatles and the Stones came, saw and conquered. What we tend to forget is that they took our pride and joy, our original musical art form—rock and roll—and shoved it back in our faces, showing us how it could and should be done, making history and untold millions doing it. This course will examine the theme of how American rockabilly and rhythm and blues was the musical launching pad for arguably the two greatest bands of all time, and the uncanny way in which their careers paralleled each other.

The course will do this by examining six phases in the history of each band, one phase for each week, and explore how two groups of young talented Brits parlayed their love and obsession with American music into fame and fortune. Although the Rolling Stones have been together since 1962, our class will only look at that period when both bands were active, 1962-1969. We will take a look at why one band lasted nine years—but their music will last forever--while the other band has been out there playing gigs and making records for 54 years. This six-week course takes a closer look at the music that inspired these legendary bands, their roots-based influences, and their incredible output of inspired work that was created in the 1960’s.

Course Outline:

Watch out, world! The heady days of 1963: Don’t look now, but these guys just might be more than great cover bands…

The craziness that was 1964: We can write songs; the rock and roll band as a creative force. Best friends John and Paul, their yin and yang personal and musical differences fueling their creative tension and drive, discover that two heads are better than one.

The middle periods, 1965: For the boys from Liverpool, waves of brilliant albums that will last forever—every cut a memorable, sing-along winner. While for the other, an artistic breakthrough, their first all--original record. Mick and Keith’s tempestuous relationship pushes away band founder Brian Jones, and the Stones are established as a force in the music world.

Prisoners of their own success, 1966-67: How their popularity drove them to great heights—but made it difficult to do what they loved to do—play live.

The game changes: 1968-69. The Beatles’ long and painful goodbye breaks hearts around the world--while the Stones never stop working, and settle in for the long haul.

Course Specifics: This course will consist of six sessions, one session per week, and each class will be two hours long. The class will take place at the Freight and Salvage, with its fine stage, piano, audio and video capabilities. The instructor will break the course up chronologically, with each class featuring one period in the history of the two bands. Each session will include the following:

• A thorough, fast-moving background lecture about each period, including; the roots of the musical style most associated with it, the socio/cultural forces that came together to allow the
movement to thrive when it did, key musical and cultural influences of the two groups, and personal stories from the instructor. With accompanying photographs, charts and maps.

• Each half of each class will focus on one of the two groups
• Audio, video, film clips and photographs of these artists performing songs most associated with the different period, presented on the projector, in a basic power point type format, with accompanying commentary by the instructor.
• A live music component, where the instructor will demonstrate on piano, guitar and voice key songs that were the trademark of those periods in the development of each group.
• A question/answer period where the students, round-table fashion, get to critique, comment on, participate (see “activities”) and weigh in on what was presented during that class.