Comparative Literature 230: Literature & Society

**Topic: International Rock’n’Roll Cultures**

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Lecture 201: Online Web

Spring 2018 • 3 credits • GER HU

**COMPARATIVE LITERATURE 230: INTERNATIONAL ROCK’N’ROLL CULTURES** is an interdisciplinary online literature course that explores the literary, musical and artistic expressions of the “rock’n’roll” lifestyle, a global music culture that has been mythologized by its most ardent supporters and demonized by its harshest critics. This online course explores the various life stories, industry narratives and experimental visions of various international rock and pop legends and their protective impresarios, devoted fan followings, and self-righteous critics. We will study a variety of texts and films, as well as albums, songs, music videos, and live concerts, all of which raise fundamental questions about the meaning and general sustainability of the rock’n'roll lifestyle from its inception in the early 20th century to the present day. We will also pose the following questions: How do artists measure success or respond to failure? How does rock’n’roll become a vehicle for the formation of subcultures, youth movements, and emerging political ideas? In what way does the rock’n’roll lifestyle enable musicians and fans from around the world to claim generational, sexual, ethnic and national identities for themselves? Our readings will tentatively include Mikael Niemi’s best-selling Swedish novel *Popular Music from Vittula* and Ryu Murakami’s coming-of-age novel *Sixty-Nine*. We will also study films like *A Hard Day’s Night*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *La vie en rose*, and selected rock operas and concert tours. Students will also have the opportunity to create their own “rockzine,” a creative final project devoted to any aspect of the rock’n'roll lifestyle of their choice. Satisfies GER (HU) and L&S International req. Affiliated with Cultures & Communities.

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