55 years of country-rock, 1965-present:

Creating a new American musical genre--how two immensely popular genres of music merged to create a timeless style, uniquely American in every aspect.

This class will cover the historically significant country-rock movement which started in LA in 1965 and spread across the country, changing the musical landscape of popular music. We will explore how two roots-oriented genres--country music and rock and roll--borrowed from each other and merged to create a new genre which has since spawned many sub-genres, each with its own unique approach to country-rock. We will look at several artists and their key albums, including: The Byrds, the Buffalo Springfield, Crosby, Stills and Nash, the Flying Burrito Brothers, Gram Parsons, Poco, the Eagles, Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris, John Prine, Steve Earle and others, as well as trends in instruments, arrangements and lyric-writing that made up the songs.

Course Outline:

WEEK ONE: Country becomes cool: How the seminal country-rock of Los Angeles spread like wildfire across the country. The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, the Crosby Stills and Nash. LA in the late 1960’s.

Listening:
Mr. Tambourine Man: The Byrds, 1965 Columbia
Buffalo Springfield, Buffalo Springfield 1966 ATCO
Buffalo Springfield, Buffalo Springfield Again 1967 ATCO
The Notorious Byrd Brothers, 1968 Columbia
Crosby Stills and Nash, Crosby Stills and Nash (debut) 1969, Atlantic

Reading:

Viewing:
Woodstock, dir. by Michael Wadleigh (1970)
Festival Express, dir. by Bob Smeaton (2003)

WEEK TWO: Pickup trucks and pot: The redneck hippie prince of country-rock: Gram Parsons joins the Byrds, forms the Flying Burritos with Chris Hillman, then goes off into a short-lived but memorable and historic career as a solo artist.

Listening:
Sweetheart of the Rodeo, 1968 Columbia
The Gilded Palace of Sin, The Flying Burrito brothers, 1969 A&M
Burrito Deluxe 1970 A&M
GP, Gram Parsons 1973
Grievous Angel, Gram Parsons, 1974 (released posthumously) Reprise

Viewing:
Festival Express, dir. by Bob Smeaton (2003)
Return to Sin City - A Tribute to Gram Parsons (2005)
**Reading:** Twenty Thousand Roads: The Ballad of Gram Parsons and his cosmic American Music, by David Meyer 2008
**Calling me Home:** Gram Parsons the Roots of Country Rock, Bob Kealing, 2012

**WEEK THREE:** The mid 1970's brings the second wave: Poco, Neil Young, Pure Prairie League, Rick Nelson, New Riders of the Purple Sage.

**Listening:**
Poco, Picking up the Pieces, 1969 Epic
Poco, Poco, 1970 Epic
Nashville Skyline, Bob Dylan, 1969, Columbia
After the Gold Rush, Neil Young, 1970 Reprise
New Riders of the Purple Sage: New Riders of the Purple Sage 1971 Columbia
Bustin’ Out, Pure Prairie League, 1972 RCA

**Reading:**

**WEEK FOUR:** The Boys of Summer: The incredible legacy of The Eagles: How four guys from all over the USA became America’s most popular band of all time.

**Listening:**
The Eagles, the Eagles, 1972 Asylum
Desperado, the Eagles, 1973 Asylum
On The Border, the Eagles, 1974 Asylum
One of these Nights, the Eagles, 1975 Asylum
Hotel California, the Eagles, 1976, Asylum
Cass County, Don Henley, 2015, Capitol

**Reading:**
Eagles: Taking It to the Limit, by Ben Fong-Torres, 2011

**Viewing:**
Hell Freezes Over DVD 1994
History of the Eagles documentary DVD 2013

**WEEK FIVE:** The woman who created country-rock; Linda Ronstadt. In this class we look at this incredibly versatile and talented singer, appreciating an artist who ran the gamut from folk and country to rock, pop and beyond, who has made a lasting impression on American music, with a major shout-out to Emmylou Harris.

**Listening**
Linda Ronstadt, Linda Ronstadt, 1972 Capitol
Heart Like a Wheel, Linda Ronstadt, 1974, Capitol
Emmylou Harris, Pieces of the Sky, 1975, Warner Brothers
Reading:
*Simple Dreams, a musical memoir, by Linda Ronstadt, 2013*

Viewing:
*Linda Ronstadt: The Sound of my own voice, feature film, 2019*

**WEEK SIX: Americana 1975-present—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, Steve Goodman.

Reading:
*True to the Roots: Americana Music revealed, by Monte Dutton, 2006*
*Right by Her Roots: Americana Women and Their Songs by Jewly Hight, 2011*

Listening:
*Rodney Crowell, Diamonds and Dirt, 1988*
*Guitar Town, Steve Earle, 1986 MCA*
*Stolen Moments, John Hiatt 1990 A&M*

Viewing: *Lucinda Williams - Live from Austin, Texas DVD 1998*