

Bruce Springsteen: America's Poet Laureate

Thursdays, 7:00-9:00pm

September 16th - October 21st

6-Weeks on Zoom with Pete Elman

Week-by-Week Course Outline and Syllabus

Suggested reading and viewing for the course, suggested listening by week, plus audio playlist and video clips for each week which represent songs and performances specific to that week.

Reading:

Born to Run: The Bruce Springsteen Story, Dave Marsh, 1979

Springsteen, Robert Hilburn, 1985

Glory Days: Bruce Springsteen in the 1980s, Dave Marsh, 1987.

Springsteen: Point Blank by [Chris Sandford](#), 1999

Bruce Springsteen: Songs, 2001

It Ain't No Sin To Be Glad You're Alive: The Promise of Bruce Springsteen, Eric Alterman, 2001

Bruce Springsteen: Two Hearts: The Definitive Biography, [Dave Marsh](#), 2005

The Ties That Bind: Bruce Springsteen A to E to Z. Gary Graff, 2005

Bruce, Peter Carlin, 2012

Talk About a Dream: The Essential Interviews of Bruce Springsteen, Chris Phillips, editor of Backstreets magazine, 2013

Springsteen on Springsteen: Interviews, Speeches, and Encounters, 2013

Boss: Bruce Springsteen & E Street Band --Illustrated History, Gillian Garr, 2016

Born to Run, Bruce Springsteen, 2016

Viewing (documentary films):

Born To Run: 30th Anniversary 3-Disc Set (CD/2DVD) 2005

The Promise: The Darkness on the Edge of Town Story, 2010

No Nukes, 1980-- first official appearance of [Bruce & the E Street Band](#) on film

The Ties That Bind: The River Collection, 4 CD--3 DVD box set, 2015

Bruce Springsteen and the E-Street Band DVD - Blood Brothers 2001

Bruce Springsteen - The Complete Video Anthology, 1978-2000, 2001

Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band - Live in New York City, 2001,

Western Stars: a concert film 2019

Week 1: 1949-71; “He only wanted to play the goddam guitar.” Childhood in New Jersey: Catholicism, family life, alienation, the loner. His first bands; *The Castiles, Earth, Child, Steel Mill, Dr. Zoom and the Sonic Boom*. Columbia comes calling; John Hammond and the legendary audition, *Greetings from Asbury Park*.

Listening: *These first five albums represent the roots/influences of Bruce’s music.*

Elvis Presley, *30 #1 hits*, (released in 2002)

Chuck Berry, *The Great Twenty-Eight* (released in 1989)

Roy Orbison *Greatest hits*, 1962

Phil Spector, *Wall of Sound: The Very Best of Phil Spector* 1961-1966

Bob Dylan, *Highway 61* 1965

[Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J. 1973](#)

****playlist for week one:**

Born to Run

Seaside Bar Song, 1973, outtake from Wild Innocent—

Paradise by the “C”

from Greetings from Asbury Park

The Angel

Mary Queen of Arkansas,

For you

Does this bus stop at 82nd street?

Blinded by the light

Spirit in the night

Growin’ Up

****special video clips for week one:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COFHGFZxtnY>

Elvis, 1956 “Hound Dog”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jenWdylTtzs>

Beatles, 1964, I want to hold your hand”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjVh89sHDnI>

Bruce live: So hard to be a saint in the city

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNNJh1fLRx8>

Bruce live: Spirit in the Night

Week 2: 1973-75: “I have seen rock and roll future, and its name is Bruce Springsteen.” the “new Dylan” strays from his rock and roll roots, and returns with a vengeance with *The Wild the Innocent and the E Street shuffle*. *Thunder Road* and the endless highway: The musically diverse and commercial triumph that was *Born to Run*; An in-depth look at the members of the legendary E Street band, and a look at the accompanying tours that established them as rock and roll’s premier live act.

Listening:

[The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle](#) 1973

Tracks, 1998

Born to Run, 1975

Hammersmith Odeon, London '75

Live/1975–85

****playlist for week two:**

From the wild, the innocent and the E street shuffle

E Street shuffle

Incident on 57th street

Sandy

NYC Serenade

Rosalita on piano

From Born to Run

Thunder Road

She’s the one

Backstreets

Meeting across the river

Jungleland

****special video clips for week two:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_ISDQy03LY

Sandy, 4th of July, Asbury Park, from London, live

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlsBJxH1CWg>

Rosalita, live, Phoenix 1978

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5kXnq5IjdU>

Thunder Road, live 1975

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnNnYjIF1Us>

Backstreets, from London 1975

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzrtlXuiV3Y>

Tenth avenue freeze-out, from Tempe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMyXw35IgYA>

Jungleland—from London 1975

Week 3: 1976-82: Legal limbo and professional purgatory. Bruce writes dozens of powerful songs while the lawyers put his career on hold. *Darkness on the Edge of Town* is released to unprecedented critical acclaim, as the live show reaches epic levels. The double album, *The River*, cements Springsteen position as the face of American rock and roll as the Reagan years commence; the political Bruce emerges;

Listening:

Darkness on the Edge of Town, 1978

The Promise (tracks from 1977-78) 2010

The River 1980

[The Ties That Bind: The River Collection](#), 2015

****playlist for week three:**

from darkness on the edge of town

Badlands

Prove it all Night

Darkness on the Edge of Town

Racing in the Street

Promised Land

from the River

Ties that Bind

Sherry Darling

The River

Hungry Heart

Independence Day

Cadillac Ranch

****special video clips for week three:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8HXvt-v5v0>

Houston '78, Darkness on the Edge of Town

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRdNwHmUiiQ>

Promised Land, Tempe, 1980

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utVR3EgQkHs>

No Nukes, The River 1982

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrZ-F-NzWTo>

Music Cares/Because the Night, with Patty Smith

Week 4: 1982-85: Introspection, and then superstardom beckons and Bruce responds. The acoustic album *Nebraska* and its brutal depiction of American life during the Reagan years.; the seven hit-single phenomenon that was *Born in the USA*; indoor coliseum and outdoor stadium tours and pop culture calls; fan magazines, remixes, a live double LP hits #1, and love and marriage—with the wrong girl. With the help of therapy, Bruce confronts his depression.

Listening:

Nebraska 1982

Born in the USA, 1984

Live/1975–85

18 Tracks, 1999

***playlist for week four*

from nebraska

Nebraska

Johnny 99

Atlantic City

from Born in the USA

Born in the USA

Cover Me

I'm on Fire

Darlington County

No Surrender

Dancing in the Dark

Bobby Jean

My Hometown

***special video clips for week four:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3eu1gW-bQ8>

Official music video, Atlantic City 1982

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OjW1TDANxk&list=TLPQMTkwMzIwMjBi6JE9iXuuWA&index=6>

“Taxi Driver” clip, ‘you talkin’ to me?’ 1976

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vQpW9XRiyM>

Glory days official music video 1984

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=129kuDCQtHs>

Dancing in the Dark official music video 1984

Week 5: 1986-2001: The aftermath of the hurricane: Bruce tries new things and “breaks up” the E Street band. The brilliant break-up album, *Tunnel of Love*, Exit actress Julianne Phillips, enter Jersey girl Patti Scialfa. Bruce moves to LA; CBS releases *Human Touch and Lucky Town* on the same day; *The Ghost of Tom Joad* thrusts Bruce back into America’s conscience.

Listening:

Tunnel of Love 1987

Human Touch 1992

Lucky Town 1992

The Ghost of Tom Joad 1995

Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band: Live in NYC, from 1999-2000 tour, 2001

*****playlist for week five***

from Tunnel of Love

Tunnel of Love

Two Faces Have I

Brilliant Disguise

All that heaven will allow

Walk Like a Man

from Other LPs

Human Touch

Streets of Philadelphia

from Ghost of Tom Joad

Ghost of Tom Joad acoustic

Sinaloa Cowboys—with photos

Youngstown medley

Galveston Bay

*****special video clips for week five:***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9BNoNFKCBI>

We are the world 1983

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idnJnjV_8rg

Brilliant Disguise 1986

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkFQHScyti0>

One Step Up 1986

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85cNRQo1m3A>

Human Touch 1992

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueIYdZrglVo>

Living Proof 1992

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z2DtNW79sQ>
Streets of Philadelphia

Week 6: 2001-2020: the rock and roller grows up: Back to Jersey to raise a family. The horror of 9/11 and Bruce's heartfelt, heroic and historic response, *The Rising*; the introspective *Devils & Dust* gives way to the rootsy *Seeger Sessions* album and subsequent tour. **The rock and roll poet turns 60:** *E Street Radio*, The title song from the *Wrestler*, the deaths of Danny and Clarence. Barack Obama—with Bruce on board—brings hope and change to America, the Kennedy center and numerous other awards; a slew of albums, each to fit the times. Meanwhile, the greatest rock and roll band on the planet continues, incredibly, to improve with age, conquering the landscape, one city at a time, delivering hope, love, inspiration and community—and kick-ass rock and roll. *Born to Run*; *the definitive autobiography*, *Bruce on Broadway*, *Western Stars*, *Letter to You*.

Listening:

The Rising (2002)

[Devils & Dust \(2005\)](#)

[We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions \(2006\)](#)

[Magic \(2007\)](#)

[Wrecking Ball \(2012\)](#)

Western Stars (2019)

Letter to You (2020)

*****playlist for week six:***

from the Rising

Lonesome Day

The Rising

Into the Fire

from other LPs

Radio Nowhere

The Wrestler

Outlaw Pete

We Take Care of our Own

This American Land

Land of Hope and Dreams

Western Stars

Tucson train

from letter to you

Letter to You

Ghosts

House of 1000 Guitars

***special video clips for week six:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKYYChoQIvI>

Nothing Man 2002

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CapO4lucqH4>

My City of ruins, Barcelona

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKIBLJtYigE>

Barack awards Bruce the presidential medal of freedom, 2016

Western Stars, a documentary film by Thom Zimny (2019), available on Amazon Prime Video

Letter to You, a documentary film by Thom Zimny (2020), available on Apple TV