

COURSE SYLLABUS: BOB DYLAN THE UNLIKELY EVOLUTION OF A GENIUS

This course will cover the first 15 years of Dylan's career when he went from being a "complete unknown" to becoming the poet laureate of his generation. It is hard to fathom the extent to which Dylan transformed our understanding of popular music during the 1960's and 70's. He reinvented and modernized folk music, changed how popular music was conceived through stunning image-driven poetry, and demonstrated that complicated issues of life can be explored within the context of lyrics and music. He was doing this while utilizing a variety of music genres (folk, blues, country, ballads, R&R, Roots, gospel, etc.).

We will meet for 10 consecutive weeks from 10-12AM, beginning on Feb. 29 and ending on May 2. We will be at Covenant Presbyterian Church in the basement meeting room.

Each week there will be a few "assigned" readings and we will listen to and discuss his music from the topic of the week. Our focus will be to explore his evolution as an artist.

Session #1: The back story: Growing up Robert Zimmerman, becoming Bob Dylan

Session #2: From a Woody Guthrie want-to-be to writing folk music both topical & poetic

Session #3: Dylan begins writing protest songs and starts becoming known

Session #4: Pop music is changed forever: Using abstract images and symbolism in his songs, Dylan forever changes how we view what music can be

Session #5: Dylan goes electric and turns R&R upside down

Session #6: Dylan disappears, The Basement Tapes & The Band

Session #7: Dylan goes to Nashville, John Wesley Harding & Nashville Skyline

Session #8: Blood on the Tracks and Desire, Dylan returns with a vengeance

Session #9: The Rolling Thunder Review: A minstrel show followed by looking for salvation

Session #10: Odds & Ends: Dylan's evolution so far and how it continues over the decades