Glory Days: A Bruce Springsteen Symposium

Thursday, September 13, 2012

11 am – 2 pm Registration for Pre-Conference Tour and Symposium, Pollak Theatre Lobby

12 – 5 pm Tour of Asbury Park/Freehold/Belmar, led by Stan Goldstein and Jean Mikle - Tour begins and leaves from Monmouth University, Pollak Theatre

This walking tour will feature many historical stops in Springsteen lore from his boyhood home to many of the musical clubs in Asbury Park where Bruce and others helped to generate the Asbury Park sound.

6 – 7 pm Registration for Symposium and On-Site Ticket Sales for Pre-Conference Concert, Wilson Hall

7 – 9 pm Just Around The Corner Film Screening and Q&A with Joe Amodei, President, Virgil Films, Bob Benjamin and Joe D’Urso, Wilson Hall Auditorium

JUST AROUND THE CORNER tells the story of Bob Benjamin and his fight to find a cure for Parkinson’s disease. Bob and a few others started the Light of Day Foundation. The screening will focus not only on Light of Day but Bruce’s message of giving back that is a part of all of his shows. This is the ultimate giving back movie as all of the proceeds go directly to the LOD Foundation.

9 pm Pre-Conference Concert with Joe D’Urso and Joe Rapolla, Wilson Hall Pompeii Room

Come listen to wonderful music from Joe D’Urso and Joe Rapolla. This event is sure to get participants ready for a wonderful symposium!

Friday, September 14, 2012

7:30 am – 5 pm Conference Registration, Pollak Theatre Lobby

8:30 – 8:45 am Conference Opening Remarks, Pollak Theatre

8:45 – 10:45 am The Catholic Spirituality of Bruce Springsteen- A Rock & Roll Reflection, Fr. Kevin Keelen, Pollak Theatre

With a concentration on the albums, The Rising & The Ghost of Tom Joad, and many other songs, Fr. Keelen offers this two hour lecture on the distinctly Catholic themes and spirituality behind much of Bruce Springsteen’s music. The lecture focuses primarily on Catholic Social Teaching and the Paschal Mystery- life, death and resurrection, with much reflection stemming from 9-11.

10:45 – 11 am Break

11 am – 12:30 pm Breakout Sessions, Bey Hall

1. Springsteen and Storytelling: (Bey Hall, Room 222)
   Panel Title: “Sitting Round Here Trying To Write This Book: Bruce Springsteen and Literary Inspiration”
Moderator: April Lindner, Professor, English Department, St. Joseph’s University, Pennsylvania

What’s Happened to the Seeds I’ve Sown: Springsteen as Literary Influence, April Lindner, Professor, English Department, St. Joseph’s University, Pennsylvania

Fittingly for an artist who has drawn inspiration from John Steinbeck, Flannery O’Connor, and Walker Percy, Bruce Springsteen has in turn sown many seeds in the garden of contemporary fiction, inspiring writers as diverse as Bobbie Ann Mason, Stephen King, Harlan Coben, Jonathan Trotter, Tiffanie de Bartolo, and T. C. Boyle. I will explore Springsteen’s place in this chain of literary indebtedness and read a passage directly inspired by Springsteen from my own novel, Jane, a modernization of Jane Eyre in which the Mr. Rochester character is a legendary rock star on the brink of a comeback.

The Triggering Tune: Springsteen Songs as “Places” of Inspiration, Ann E. Michael, Writing Coordinator, DeSales University, Pennsylvania

In Richard Hugo’s book on poetry inspired by place, The Triggering Town, the poet explores how certain small towns reliably act as “triggers” for his work, loosening in his imagination a combination of memory, memoir, and concrete images that inspire creative writing. Hugo’s observations coincide with my own experience while working on memoir-based, lyrical-narrative poems; in this instance, however, the trigger is the music of Bruce Springsteen, whose songs also stem from place and memory. My focus is on the triggers that inspire and enable the kind of transference of place to mind, or soul to soul, that makes Springsteen’s and Hugo’s compositions effective. A reading of a few poems from my in-progress collection, Barefoot Girls, will illustrate the concept of the “triggering tune.”

“The Long Walk Home”: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Costs of Citizenship, Jane Satterfield, Associate Professor, Loyola University Maryland

From “Born in the USA” to “No Surrender” to “Devils and Dust,” the songs of Bruce Springsteen are known for their empathy with veterans: the soldiers who protect us and risk their lives only to return home to indifference and an uncertain future. Springsteen’s portraiture of warriors’ homecomings reveals the desolate psychic and physical spaces of wartime America. From overhead drones to radio silence to abandoned Veterans Hall, Springsteen vividly captures the social disconnection shared by civilians and soldiers who struggle valiantly against defeat in the face of the towering and twinned cultures of commerce and war. As the daughter of a Viet Nam-era vet, I’ll explore the influence of these themes in poems in my recent poetry and prose and read a selection from my forthcoming book of poems, Her Familiars (Elixir, 2013).

Raw to the Bone: Transported Toward Truth and Memory by Springsteen’s River Songs, Beth Kephart, Adjunct Faculty, University of Pennsylvania
When you’re teaching memoir, you’re teaching the truth. When you’re teaching the truth, you are teaching vulnerability, ache, and raw confession. Music transports us to that bold and bracing cliff of true—rock and roll especially, and Bruce Springsteen in particular. I wish to explore the working of Springsteen’s music—the sound of it, the lyric center—upon the psychic space of memoir writers. What happens when we listen to Springsteen’s river songs, for example? How does rasping out words that are not our own transport us toward telling our own naked tales? My exploration of the topic is part of a broader effort to capture the making of memoir in a book due out next year from Gotham.

“Ain’t Ever Gonna Ride In No Used Car Again”: Fathers, Sons, and Uncertain Victories, Ned Balbo, Associate Professor, Department of Writing, Loyola University Maryland

From the resilience of “Youngstown” to the defiance of “Wrecking Ball,” from the resolve of “Born to Run” to “Independence Day”’s farewell truce, Bruce Springsteen has traced the route of blue-collar life from the father to the son, from the factory to the streets, from work that gives life meaning to unemployment’s bitterness. I plan to explore the crossroads where both worker and artist stand, driven forward to escape the threat a wasted life, yet vigilant to the ways they’ve been shaped by home and fathers, on one hand grateful, yet compelled to break away. In doing so, I’ll examine the same themes in my third book, The Trials of Edgar Poe, which carries Bruce Springsteen’s mark in its poems of fatherly disconnection and working class survival.

2. Springsteen and Politics/Activism: (Bey Hall, Room 223)
   Moderator: Kevin Dooley, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Monmouth University

Bruce Springsteen and Chris Christie: Exploring the Similarities Between Two Dissimilar Men, Richard A. Lee, Assistant Professor of Journalism, St. Bonaventure University, New York

Although Bruce Springsteen and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie are worlds apart ideologically, the two men share a common bond. Not only were they born and raised in New Jersey; they rose to national prominence largely because they are from the Garden State. Unlike other public figures who emerged from the state, their public personas are inextricably linked to New Jersey.

In this paper, I will explore the similarities between these two dissimilar men. Despite their differences, Christie is an avid Springsteen fan who has attended over 100 Springsteen concerts. While Christie generally is extremely vocal and direct in his criticisms of those on the other end of the political spectrum, he chooses his words about Springsteen carefully and is respectful in his public comments about the Boss. Likewise, Springsteen has refrained from directly criticizing the
governor, although Christie’s political agenda clearly is out-of-step with the Boss. For example, in 2011 Springsteen penned a letter to the editor of his local newspaper criticizing the state’s fiscal policies, but never mentioned Christie by name.

To learn more about the relationship between these two men, I will examine the points at which their lives and careers have intersected, including a chance meeting on a flight, Christie’s attempt to have Springsteen play at his inauguration, and Christie’s recent challenge to Springsteen to play a Labor Day concert in Atlantic City.

As an individual who has covered both music and politics in New Jersey, I believe I am well-positioned to conduct such an analysis.

The GOP Secret Love Affair with Bruce, Ryan J. Peene, Associate, MBI GluckShaw Public Affairs, New Jersey

As an unabashed activist, Bruce’s music evokes many responses amongst true fans of the opposite political persuasion - but we’re a devoted breed. Some have believed, as Ronald Reagan did, that the meaning of some of his greatest works were of flag waving, patriotic, nationalistic pride - which obviously was not the case.

While many on the national level seem to condone Springsteen’s liberal stances, at home in the Garden State one of his greatest champions is the most popular Republican governor in the country - Chris Christie. I’d like to present on the themes of Springsteen’s most recent works, as compared to that of his older works of fast cars, chasing girls, and drinking beer in the soft summer wind to the “me” only themes that are amplified in his most current works.

And conclude why it’s ok to disagree and still be a huge fan.

Rock’s Greatest Year: Springsteen, Mellencamp, Geldof in the Summer of 1985, John Duffy, Writer & Graduate Student, Millersville University, Pennsylvania

Much as been written about Bruce Springsteen’s mid-1980s efforts at highlighting the rise of hunger and joblessness through his fundraising efforts for local food banks shelters and advocacy groups. But rarely have those efforts been discussed in context with those of other contemporary pop figures like Bob Geldof and John Mellencamp. While the plight of America’s growing industrial underclass a credit crisis in agriculture and biblical famine in sub-Saharan Africa may seem unconnected the fact that all three problems were faced primarily by pop musicians and their audiences says much about the lessons learned from the 1960s about the intrinsic power of pop music. Being more an observer than a participant in the upheavals of the 1960s Springsteen like Mellencamp and Geldof was among a generation of Anglo-American pop musicians who while largely apolitical became nonetheless unconsciously radicalized by what they saw and heard as young people. Only in adulthood when confronted with such contemporary challenges (unaddressed or neglected by earlier progressives and ignored by government institutions) was this consciousness awakened. In my discussion I will demonstrate
how all three men helped lead a new kind of counterculture one that grew out of a rejection of Reagan and Thatcher’s mean-spirited neoliberalism and ultimately created the footing for today’s increasingly depolarized global outlook. If it was a counterculture that seemed more restrained diffused even tame it was one that over the course of two decades was ultimately more successful and transformative than the confrontation and chaos of the Woodstock generation.

3. **Springsteen and Community/Philanthropy** (Bey Hall, Room 225)
   Moderator: David Wilson, Reporter-At-Large, Bloomberg News, New Jersey

   *Giving His Heart More Room: Bruce Springsteen’s Private Foundations*, David Wilson, Reporter-At-Large, Bloomberg News, New Jersey

   Bruce Springsteen has supported more than 300 non-profit organizations since the mid-1980s, when he began contributing to food banks and other community groups in cities where he performed. Two private foundations are responsible for much of Springsteen’s philanthropy. His Thrill Hill Foundation Inc. handed out $3.3 million to charities across the U.S. through 2010 and ended the year with $4.8 million available for future donations. Through The Foundation Inc., he paid for $1.5 million of house repairs for low-income homeowners in New Jersey through 2010. This paper will examine the history of both foundations, mainly through federal tax returns. The topics covered will include Springsteen’s contributions, the uses of the funds, the recipients of grants, and the relationship between the foundations and his other charitable efforts.

   *A Reason to Believe the Greatest Fans in the World Take Care of Their Own*, Donna Maria Gray, Editor, Founder, Bruce Funds, New Jersey

   At first I felt inspired to help out-of-work friends who couldn't afford to see Springsteen. “I'll pay for your ticket; you can buy me a drink when we’re there.” When my mother became too weak to attend anymore, I began to look for fellow fans who might need help, to honor how much his concerts lifted my mother’s spirits. Then I felt inspired by a woman battling cancer who said Wrecking Ball was her mantra, and going to see Bruce would be a triumphant celebration of survival. Most fans agree there is a magical elixir in the energy of a Springsteen show; People trade in their aches, pains, debts, and worries for a few hours of a soulful, rock and roll revival. This is how Bruce Funds blossomed naturally. Bruce Funds is a pay-it-forward, 100% donation-based effort driven by Springsteen fans to help other Springsteen fans. Our primary focus is on offsetting the cost of a fan trying to attend one concert. In just 3 months, we’ve helped 3 fans who otherwise would not have been able to attend a show, including one fan as far away as South Africa. Thanks to social media, we are developing a national and global following. Bruce Funds is a reason to believe the greatest fans in the world take care of their own. I
would be honored to participate in a discussion about philanthropy or social media at the Glory Days Symposium.

Be Connected to Others like Bruce Springsteen is Connected to The E Street Band, Caleb Shulman, Trainer, Blue Sky Associates of Upstate New York

My goal is for people to have closer relationships because of Bruce Springsteen.

I will tell people a few examples I've heard talking to other fans. For example, a friend that I met at the closing stand of shows at Giants stadium, was from a coal mining family. He was deeply moved by the song Factory because of the line "And you just better believe boy, somebody's gonna get hurt tonight..." because he lived it. It moved me to know he lived Bruce's music and helps me be a more sensitive person.

Then people will pair up with a person they don't know and discuss something they get from Springsteen's music or shows, within a 2 minute time limit for each person. We'll hear some examples, and then talk about what that means to people to connect to others like that. I have Springsteen friends and we've bought tickets for each other, avoiding scalper costs. My wife and I (she wasn't my wife then), waited for 10 hours to get into the last show of the reunion tour and didn't get in—it made us closer.

We'll talk about what people learned at the end and ask people what they will do with the knowledge. (I'll be ready with examples to encourage them to speak about their own thoughts)

4. Springsteen and Community: (Bey Hall, Room 226)
   Moderator: Jerry Zolten, Associate Professor of Communications Arts & Sciences and American Studies, Penn State Altoona

   Gospel Influences in the Music and Performances of Bruce Springsteen, Marianne Murawski, Chair, College of Humanities, University of Phoenix, Philadelphia Campus, Pennsylvania

   Bruce Springsteen, a Gospel musician? Most people do not view a rock star as being a Gospel musician. Yet through the years, there have been references to the preaching by Bruce Springsteen and even the Church of Bruce.

   When Gospel music is mentioned, most people envision a church setting. The sounds of sweet harmony are performed by a long robed choir who sways to the music while clapping to the beat. Periodically, the congregation joins in, singing, swaying, and clapping to the music. Shouts of joy and inspirational words such as “Amen” and “Hallelujah” arise from the congregation as
they are moved by the music, the preacher, and their spirit. The preacher leads the congregation through an emotional journey filled with moments of inspiration, redemption, and renewal.

What if the church setting is changed to a concert hall, and the choir is replaced by the E Street Band? The concertgoers become the congregation who sings, sways, and claps to the music. Shouts of joy and inspirational words in the form of “Amen” and “Hallelujah” are replaced with the sounds of “Bruuuuce” filling the concert hall until the preacher finally takes the stage. Bruce’s performances have been described by his fans as being inspiring, redeeming, and renewing.

Bruce has become a master of incorporating Gospel elements into his music and performances throughout his career. This presentation will explore Gospel music, its relationship to the development of rock music, and Bruce’s use of elements of Gospel in his music and performances.

“@AshleyLaur: OMG I GOT AMAZING SEATS!!!! FREAKING OUT!!!!!!! Bruce Springsteen, here we come!!!!”

Much has been written about Springsteen fans. Linda K. Randall (2011), for example, explores how fans in the “global Springsteen cultural community . . . find[] and give[] meaning in an increasingly complex world” (pp. x – xi). In his ethnography of Springsteen concertgoers during the 1992 – 1993 World Tour, Daniel Cavicchi (1998) describes the complex and intimate relationship that fans have with Springsteen the human being, with Springsteen’s music, and with one-another. Fandom, according to Cavicchi, is a community-driven activity with an expansive “social category, referring to a mode of participation with a long history in various cultural categories . . . “ (p. 4). These categories include “writing and reading fanzines, participating in computer lists, attending concerts, [and] sharing Bruce stories . . . “ (p. 194). The latest cultural space for fans of all media is Twitter. Using Twitter’s open application programming interface (API) search capabilities, since 20 February 2012 I have archived 433,690 tweets that include the word “springsteen” with the goal of creating the first large-scale study of Springsteen fans on Twitter. Building on work by Cavicchi, Randall, and fan cultures scholars Henry Jenkins, Matt Hills, and others, I will present early results of the study, specifically regarding tweets about and during Springsteen concerts. Initial observations of the data suggest that Twitter reinforces important Springsteen community values and adds new ones by making easier the ability to build relationships over vast geographical distances and share ideas and artifacts that reinforce their commitments to Springsteen and his music.

Meet Me: Springsteen and Companionship, Stevan Weine, Professor of Psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago

Night after night, in the ways that he points at you, looks in your eyes, lets you strum his guitar, lets you hoist his body, or sweats delivering his songs, Bruce Springsteen invites his listeners to
meet him, body and soul. Springsteen has the remarkable ability to give listeners the sense that right here and now he is here for us and we are here for him and together we can make something truly extraordinary. The songs he writes and performs document and celebrate companionship between friends, family members, co-workers, buddies, soldiers, and lovers. Whether in a stadium or your bedroom, you hear: what is at stake when we take care of our own and when we do not; where we can go together which we could never do by ourselves; how you and your honey can make it alright, and; how to sustain a friendship when your friend is gone. Year after year, companionship is also played out with the E Street Band, whose members are there every night, even in death. In massive arenas and stadiums, scores of fans stand uncomfortably shoulder-to-shoulder and yet feel the thrill of a heart to heart connection. Springsteen’s companionship is a social obligation, more transcendent than either friendship or citizenship, which comes with practical, existential, ethical, spiritual, and sexual dimensions. It is a “hopeful presence” which Springsteen has spent his career cultivating and exploring. I discuss the mystery of how he does it with us through songwriting, performing, activism, and politics.

5. **Springsteen and Critical Theory: (Bey Hall, Room 227)**

Moderator: K.L. Poe, Professor of English, McHenry County College, Illinois

“Jack of All Trades”: Springsteen As Retro-Postmodern Artist, Elizabeth Seymour, Instructor in Anthropology, Communications, History & Women’s Studies, Penn State Altoona, Pennsylvania

Springsteen, through his music, lyrics and on-stage performances, merges different influences to explore and embody vibrant elements of American life. Throughout his five decade long career, he has drawn on influences from both African American and white artists to create a unique voice, one that comments on the lives of working class individuals and the impact of socio-cultural changes in the United States from the 1960’s until today. His work explores these changes through variance in tone and form, fusing elements from other artists, and creating a unique and powerful, singular American voice.

This paper explores Springsteen’s work, characterizing his style as retro-postmodern, and focusing on the development of his working class masculinity and his search for the American Dream through the exploration of different nostalgic elements in his stage performances, storytelling, and musicality. Springsteen as retro-postmodern artist, uses archaic and vernacular forms of American music and musicianship as a point of departure, which he then takes to a different place, mixing elements and styles. By doing this, he builds a postmodern pastiche of musical, lyrical, narrative, cinematic and performative elements which together make a modern sound with a decidedly retro flair. While this gives his work a nostalgic feel, it also allows him to use these familiar elements to critique a simple nostalgic reading of his work. I argue that he uses familiar and powerful, mythic and iconic images in new ways to critique American society and to highlight the distance between myth and reality via this retro postmodern approach.
Hard Times: Springsteen and the Dickensian Voice, Alan Rauch, Professor of English, UNC Charlotte, North Carolina

The mantle of social critic, though worn by musicians such as Steve Earle and John Prine, rests squarely on the shoulders of Springsteen, who has taken "Hard Times" as a thematic credo in virtually all of his music and most notably in "Wrecking Ball." Springsteen shares much with Charles Dickens, one of the last great (and yet still active) voices of social criticism. This paper will go beyond mere similarities between the two (roots in financial difficulty, a fascination with ghosts, and an adult life of leisure), in order to explore the inherent advantages and problems of their critiques of social equity, bureaucracy, and alienation.

Springsteen at the Rock Hall: A Critique of Agency and Constructivism, Brian McAlonie, Vice President, Museum Services/Thinking Outside The Square, New York

This dissertation utilizes the exhibition From Asbury Park to the Promised Land: The Life and Music of Bruce Springsteen at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum (Rock Hall) as a lens from which to explore agency and constructivist theory.

Chapter 1 begins by acknowledging that objects can play an active role in our social lives, and hence, exhibit agency. From here, agency is examined from a popular music culture perspective, utilizing Bruce Springsteen, Neil Young, Jimmy Page, and The Edge, and their relationships with their guitars, as vehicle to gain increased perspective. Following, this construct of agency is compared with consumption, consummativity and fetishism theories. Next, phenomenology is utilized to posit that agency is a transactional process negotiated between individuals and objects, where each are actively involved in determining it. Lastly, this transactional construct of agency is explored and utilized to critique the Springsteen exhibition.

Chapter 2 examines constructivism – the theory that individuals actively construct meaning within a socio-cultural context – using a similar popular music culture perspective. Museums are acknowledged as being focused on their educational role due to an emphasis on visitors and their needs. This leads to a discussion of communication theory and how the transmission and cultural models impact museum education and learning. Following, utilizing phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, it is hypothesized that meaning making, like agency, is similarly transactional, negotiated between human beings and a world of stimuli. This distinction is utilized to inform the theory of constructivism and to analyze the Springsteen exhibition.

Canon and Archive: Bruce Springsteen and Cultural Memory, K.L. Poe, Professor of English, McHenry County College, Illinois

If Springsteen’s songs can be seen as narratives, it follows that the theory of cultural memory can be applied to the study of these narratives. As Springsteen’s work is an ongoing example of canon (ongoing cultural messages), it also functions as archive, preserving a particular type of remembrance. But because memory is subjective, it is left to the listener, scholar, critic to determine the cultural messages present and their context. This paper will examine several songs
to apply theories of cultural memory, with an eye toward moving these songs into a pedagogical framework for further study.

6. **Springsteen and Rhetoric: (Bey Hall, Room 228)**
   
   Panel Title: *A Life-Long Conversation: Springsteen’s Rhetorical Moves*
   
   Moderator and Presenter: Scott Wagar, Ph.D. Candidate, Miami University, Ohio
   
   Additional Presenters:
   
   Caroline Dadas, Assistant Professor, Montclair State University, New Jersey
   
   Kate Ronald, Professor, Miami University, Ohio
   
   Jessica Restaino, Assistant Professor, Montclair State University, New Jersey
   
   The study and practice of rhetoric has long focused on determining the “available means of persuasion” in any given circumstance -- but scholars of the past century have extended rhetoric’s reach to include the ways in which communicators identify with, connect with, and even listen to others. Our panel focuses not only on Springsteen’s attempts to persuade but also on his efforts to build connections through his music, lyrics, and performances. The first presenter uses scholar Kenneth Burke’s notion of rhetorical identification to read Springsteen’s career, considering the stumbling blocks Springsteen has faced in invoking identification with listeners. The second presenter draws on the concepts of remix (Lessig) and rhetorical velocity (DeVoss and Ridolfo) to argue that Springsteen encourages the wide circulation and reinterpretation of his ideas in a variety of media by anchoring his songs in topoi such as social justice and human rights. The third speaker connects Springsteen’s work to the ancient concept of the rhetorical “sublime,” tracing Springsteen’s pursuit of the sublime for himself and his audiences, drawing on both Longinus and Edmund Burke. The fourth speaker will consider Springsteen’s 2012 SXSW keynote address in which he advises young musicians to maintain a constant paradox or binary tension in their work. Drawing on Hannah Arendt, speaker four will argue that this insistence on antithesis, on contradiction, is essential to creative freedom and productivity in Springsteen’s career.

7. **Springsteen, Pedagogy and Academic Scholarship: (Bey Hall, Room 229)**
   
   Moderator: Denise Green, E-Resources Librarian, Millikin University, Illinois
   
   “*Born To Research: Strengths and Weaknesses of Scholarly Studies on Bruce Springsteen*, Denise Green, E-Resources Librarian, Millikin University, Illinois
Denise D. Green is compiling a comprehensive annotated bibliography of scholarly studies of Springsteen. She will review the cumulative state of Springsteen studies from the earliest publications in 1983 to the latest books, articles and conference proceedings. Which songs and albums have been the most popular with scholars? What are the most widely studied topics of Springsteen’s career? What subjects are well researched and what areas in need of much more study about Springsteen’s performances, song writing, lyrical themes and political activities? Finally, she will highlight the authors and musicians scholars often argue are influences on Springsteen or imitators of his persona. The bibliography "Library of Hope and Dreams: Springsteen Scholarly Studies" is available at https://sites.google.com/site/springsteenbibliography/home

Bruce Springsteen University: A Mission Statement and Curriculum, Ben Railton, Associate Professor of English Studies/Coordinator of American Studies, Fitchburg State University, Massachusetts

I’ve been thinking a lot about public scholarship in the last couple of years, and specifically about how we expand and strengthen Americans' collective memories and sense of our histories, stories, and identities. And I think Bruce's body of work, across every stage of his deeply American career, can be an amazing way into such work.

So in this talk I will develop my proposal for Bruce Springsteen University--a public, evolving, likewise deeply American entity that would explicitly parallel yet (to my mind) directly contrast with an existing such entity, Glenn Beck University. Like Beck University, Bruce U would seek to connect as broad an American audience as possible, to contribute to our evolving narratives and conversations; but Bruce U will be grounded in as inclusive and communal a vision of our identities and histories as possible.

I will highlight some of the many different subjects and courses in Bruce U: historical courses such as The Border, Race in America, and American Cities; philosophical and personal ones, such as Engaging with Our Pasts, Faith and Identity, and Growing Up American; and cultural ones, such as American Soul Music, Seeger and Guthrie's America, and American Protest Art. And I will analyze particular albums and songs we could use to teach those and other aspects of our histories, stories, and identities.

A Springsteen Seminar: Highlights of a College Classroom, Steven Fein, Professor of Psychology, Williams College, Massachusetts

In this talk I will recap some highlights of teaching a course about Bruce Springsteen in a prestigious liberal arts college, as well as discuss some ways in which I use Springsteen’s music or life story to illustrate important points in other college courses. I would also like to use some of
the techniques from my seminar during the talk, to help spark a fun and lively discussion among the attendees.

8. **Springsteen and Sense of Place (Bey Hall, Room 230)**
Moderator: Nancy Weiner, Reference Librarian, William Paterson University of New Jersey

**Foundations of Rock n' Roll in Asbury Park: The Upstage Club**, David Dulo, Monmouth University Graduate, New Jersey

When people think of Asbury Park rock n roll they instantly think of Bruce Springsteen and the Stone Pony. Bruce Springsteen is will forever be the face of Asbury Park music but the conception of the Stone Pony being the place where Asbury Park rock n roll began is false. The Upstage Club on Cookman Avenue was open years before the Stone Pony and was the place where musicians like Bruce Springsteen Southside Johnny Steven Van Zandt David Sancious Bill Chinnock and Sonny Kenn came to experiment and create what would eventually become the sounds of Asbury Park. At the time Asbury Park was full of clubs and bars that offered live music for their patrons. Though the only way bands would get gigs was to play top 40 radio hits. No club in Asbury Park the Jersey Shore or region would hire bands that played original music. Tom Potter’s club would be different than the other Shore bars and clubs. The Upstage Club did not serve alcohol and was a place for teenagers to gather not as bands but as individual musicians where they could practice jamming. Though the Upstage was a place for the musicians to play it was not a place for musicians to make money. Standard pay was about five dollars a night no matter who you were. Musicians that had bands including Bruce Springsteen would do gigs at regular clubs playing cover songs from around 8pm to 12pm. At the stroke of midnight the bands would migrate to The Upstage where artistic freedoms were encouraged allowing the real magic to be created. The more respected musicians at the Upstage would run the jam sessions like Bruce Springsteen Steven Van Zandt and Vini Lopez to name a few. When one guitar player was done another one went on stage to prove he was worthy to play at the Upstage. It was a sort of initiation for new musicians to be accepted as a member. The Upstage would close around 6am or until the sun came up. It was called by some as “the cheapest motel room in town because by the time you got out the sun would be coming up. Loads of people would come down from North Jersey stay there all night and then go nod off on the beach all day.” That was a typical routine for the Upstage regulars. The Upstage was an innovative and imaginative atmosphere which contained the harboring the sounds of Asbury Park. It was a place where teenagers were allowed to express their musical talents breaking through the restraints of Top 40 hits. However the Upstage was not immune to the events taking place across the state and the entire country. With the riots keeping people out of Asbury Park and the drugs kicking people out Tom Potter was forced to close the Upstage in 1971. During the past 40 years the second and third floor club and café laid dormant.

Can we ever return “to the beach where we never grow old?” This mobile panel will investigate the intersections between memory, place and lived practice in Springsteen’s music by taking the form of a celebratory parade from the university grounds to the shoreline. Anyone willing to walk with us will become a “panelist” and as we journey toward the beach accompanied by Bruce’s music, we will share stories about where we were when we first encountered a Springsteen song, and will plant dirt race car totems that contain indigenous wildflower seeds. Springsteen’s poetics often promise listeners magic in the everyday, and access to both real and imagined pasts through physical practices and particular spaces. Together, we will reckon with this promise as we attempt to access both our own memories of listening to Bruce and the physical space of the shoreline through our mobile bodies and our race car memorials.

Crossing State Lines, Nancy Weiner, Reference Librarian, William Paterson University of New Jersey

There is no place else like New Jersey and Bruce Springsteen has managed to express through his music, lyrics and performances the essence of the past, present and future of what life is like in our beloved Garden State. This presentation will focus on how Springsteen has managed to convey what it means to be Jersey born and bred and how this has resonated and been embraced by fans across the country and around the world. The aura of New Jersey as depicted by Springsteen will be discussed by examining the obvious, and not so obvious, examples of how Springsteen depicts a sense of place that is uniquely New Jersey but also how he has succeeded in transcending these boundaries to connect with a much broader audience. Presented by a born and bred Jersey Girl who had the good fortune of seeing her first Springsteen concert at the age of 14 (at the 1980 New Year's Eve Concert at Nassau Coliseum no less!), this proud member of the E Street Nation is still waiting for her up close and personal with Springsteen but is pleased to share her perspectives and engage with fans regarding Springsteen’s sense of place and how it transcends the boundaries of New Jersey state lines.

12:30 – 1:45 pm Lunch, Anacon Hall

1:45 – 3:15 pm Breakout Sessions, Bey Hall

1. Springsteen and Wrecking Ball: (Bey Hall, Room 222)
   Moderator: Stanton Green, Dean of the McMurray School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor of Anthropology, Monmouth University, New Jersey

   Bruce as Fisher King: Wrecking Ball and The Waste Land, Mark Bourdeau, Professor of English, Suffolk County Community College, New York

   It is a little-known fact that the initials of the famous Anglo-American poet T.S. Eliot actually stand for "Totally Springsteen." Eliot’s The Waste Land, arguably the most important poem of the twentieth century, dramatizes the poet’s response to "a world gone wrong" and incorporates
numerous literary, philosophical and cultural sources, culminating in a vision of regeneration that prefigures the basic pattern of Wrecking Ball.

Like Eliot’s magnum opus, Bruce’s latest work of genius uses multiple speakers/narrative voices whose individual identities are maintained at the same time that they contribute to an overarching theme of cultural critique and metamorphosis. Eliot referenced “dead” languages and myths to remind his readers of the need to borrow from history without allowing its mistakes to be repeated; Bruce works in gospel, hip hop and Irish rebel songs to encourage his listeners to broaden and deepen their perspectives and help to rebuild our society. The divisiveness of 2012 America may not be as dramatic as the fragmentation of post-WWI Europe to which Eliot was responding, but we are still badly in need of a Fisher King to help guide us, and Wrecking Ball clears away the debris of too many broken promises, thereby preparing the space for active rebuilding.

“This Depression”: The 2008 Financial Crisis and the Betrayal of America in Bruce Springsteen’s Wrecking Ball, Jonathan Cohen, Student, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec

In an interview with Rolling Stone in 1984, Bruce Springsteen stated that his “view of America is of a real big-hearted country, real compassionate.” Confronting an America markedly distinct from his vision, Springsteen explored the “meanness in this world” and the isolation confronting everyday Americans on Born in the U.S.A. and, especially, Nebraska (1982).

But in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, Springsteen has revisited his mournful desire for “the hearts that run over with mercy” on his 2012 release Wrecking Ball. The musically innovative Wrecking Ball, Springsteen told the audience at the Apollo Theatre, is about “dancing and crying,” and focuses on struggling through hard times and the difficulty in finding those accountable few.

Thus, the 2008 recession serves as a key theme of Wrecking Ball, just as much of The Rising proved a response to 9/11. This paper will analyze Springsteen’s response to the financial crisis and his portrayal of everyday Americans who are left to face the consequences of economic ruin wrought by invisible “banker men.” Springsteen’s condemnation of the “robber barons” “raiding in the dark” elucidates his vision of America and how the 2008 recession indicates how far we’ve come from the “big hearted” ideal. The workers of Wrecking Ball, provide a glimpse of humanity and, to Springsteen, a glimpse of what America should be.

The Collective Power of Springsteen’s Wrecking Ball: Smashing the Communal into the Personal, Michael Bossone, Co-Creator, Law Without Walls, Arizona

Over the past 40 years, Bruce Springsteen has led his listeners on an artistic journey of introspection, discovery, and reflection, forever fueled by the hope that tomorrow will be better than today. At each and every step along that journey, Springsteen added richness and depth to the fabric of his own personal experiences. Combining a relentless intellectual curiosity with the driving ambition to better understand himself and the world around him, he crossed economic,
regional, national, cultural, racial, institutional, psychological, and spiritual boundaries to gather together threads of data that together define and continually redefine himself and his art. The resulting tapestry weaves together an extraordinarily diverse collection of musical styles and traditions, artistic influences, political ideologies, and a coterie of larger-than-life individuals whose own stories have now become a part of his.

This article, along with the accompanying multi-media presentation, reveals Springsteen’s new album Wrecking Ball as a powerful, poignant, and triumphant articulation of that tapestry; a seemingly impossible union of radically diverse textures into a glorious and unified whole. Using a nuanced analysis of the album’s music and lyrics, the author contends that the true genius of the album lies, not only in Springsteen’s collective gathering of his own life’s influences, but even more in the modality chosen to promulgate those influences: the “double narrative” in which at the same time Springsteen is telling a personal story about an individual soul while also telling a collective story about the community of which our souls are all a part.

“I Was Raised Out of Steel Here in the Swamps of Jersey”: The Ironic Monologue in Nebraska and Wrecking Ball”, Frank P. Fury, Lecturer, Monmouth University, New Jersey

Wrecking Ball’s tracks resound most powerfully within the Springsteen canon in Nebraska. Though harmonically Wrecking Ball shares very little with Nebraska, it is in Springsteen’s use of what I would call the “ironic monologue” in the narrative perspective of his lyrics in numerous songs on Wrecking Ball that compels the listener to imagine its connection to those on Nebraska. In this paper, I will explore the way in which Springsteen’s Wrecking Ball narrators create a distancing effect from their presumed audience—that is, the way in which certain tracks’ ‘speaker’ will insinuate a problematic relationship between him/her/it and the listener—which is a musical strategy Springsteen utilized to stunning effect in Nebraska. The first-person narrative—in literature especially—tends to make connection with or draw sympathy from the reader (think Dickens’ Great Expectations, David Copperfield). That is, the reader/listener should identify with the speaker in some way or other. In songs such as “Nebraska,” “State Trooper,” “The Big Payback,” “Easy Money,” “Wrecking Ball,” “Death to My Hometown,” “We Are Alive,” and “American Land,” not only does Springsteen make the sympathetic connection or identification with the listener nearly impossible, but he renders the speaker/listener relationship problematic in various ways (either through complicity, incongruity, fear, or some other means). This paper will thus explore Springsteen’s varying motivations for using the ironic first-person monologue on the Nebraska and Wrecking Ball albums and what he was trying to achieve in doing so on albums separated by thirty years.

2. Springsteen and American Roots Traditions: (Bey Hall, Room 223)
   Moderator: Marina Vujnovic, Assistant Professor, Public Relations/Journalism, Monmouth University, New Jersey
“You Take the Old, You Make It New”: Musical and Lyrical Repurposing in Bruce Springsteen’s Songs, Susan Hamburger, Manuscripts Cataloging Librarian, Penn State University

In his keynote address at the South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference on March 15, 2012, Bruce Springsteen acknowledged that all of his songs’ themes derived from the Animals’ “We Gotta Get Out of This Place” and proceeded to play a few bars of the song. The most striking derivation that Bruce demonstrated is the riff in the Animals’ “Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood” from which he segued into his own “Badlands,” commenting “this is how successful theft is accomplished.” Rather than outright theft, such as what George Harrison did to the Chiffon’s “He’s So Fine” to make “My Sweet Lord,” Bruce Springsteen incorporates themes, images, musical riffs, and styles from doo wop to hip hop as part of the folk process to make the old new.

This paper will explore key instances of Bruce’s musical and lyrical re-purposing of his predecessors’ songs and how this fits into the folk process.

“Two Fine Legs Behind”: Bruce Springsteen and the Irish Tradition, June Skinner Sawyers, Writer, Editor and Teacher, Newberry Library, Illinois

Because of his Dutch surname and partly Italian ancestry, the Celtic side of Bruce Springsteen often gets overlooked. I, therefore, claim that Bruce Springsteen follows firmly in the Irish storytelling and Irish musical traditions. This presentation will focus on the Irish song tradition in his music, both in his original compositions and in his renditions of Irish material, especially on We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions (2006) and Live in Dublin: Bruce Springsteen with the Sessions Band (2007) recordings, in which Springsteen turns to the Irish folk tradition for inspiration. Here, his intentional use of the word “sessions” invokes the improvisational nature of traditional Irish sessions (where musicians in informal gatherings play spontaneous versions of Irish tunes) while embracing and expanding upon the tradition. In particular, the paper will offer close readings of Springsteen’s interpretation of the Irish anti-war song, “Mrs. McGrath,” comparing it to other songs in the Irish and Irish-American anti-war song canon, including “Paddy’s Lamentation” and “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” and as well as his rewriting of Pete Seeger’s “American Land” and the rousing Irish romp, “Death to My Hometown,” which appears on his most recent release, Wrecking Ball. Paul Hewson (AKA Bono), while talking on behalf of his fellow band members in U2, once said about Mr. Springsteen: “People . . . dwell on the Italian side far too much, [but] as far as we’re concerned, he has that older kind of Irish lyricism.” Ladies and gentlemen, meet Bruce Springsteen: New Jersey’s working-class Irish bard.

“Play That Song with the Funky Break”: Bruce Springsteen and Hip Hop, Robert LeBlanc, Lecturer of English, University of Massachusetts Lowell

In early 2012, advance reviews of Bruce Springsteen’s Wrecking Ball noted the presence of a short rap verse on the track “Rocky Ground.” Many fans remembered Bruce Springsteen’s earlier suggestions of a fascination with rap music in the early 1990s, when tracks like “Streets of Philadelphia” and “Missing” experimented with hip-hop beats, and others recalled his 2000s
collaborations with Jurassic 5 and The Roots. At the same time, this move into hip hop seemed like the tentative first steps of an artist who was looking for new musical territories with an established tendency to mix various popular genres and draw on traditions that were not his own ethnically or generationally. The presentation of rapper/vocalist Michelle Moore in the concerts in the early part of the Wrecking Ball tour in 2012 echoed this tentativeness: Springsteen brought Michelle to the front of the stage and asserted that she had been connected with his music since The Rising. Why was such attention given to this guest vocalist? My paper will focus on the relationship between Bruce Springsteen and hip hop. I will investigate the multifaceted cultural and political implications of Springsteen’s foray into a genre that was only in its formative prehistory years when Springsteen first rose to fame in the 70s. I will consider the stylistic mesh of Springsteen’s lyrical showiness and R&B roots with hip hop as a genre, and I will question why so many critics have reacted with surprise (even shock) at his embrace of rap on Wrecking Ball.


Twice in the past five years, Bruce Springsteen has released records which can be considered as political protests. While it is easy to see Magic and Wrecking Ball as logical evolutions given Springsteen’s increasing political awareness and involvement, one must also note that dissent is nothing new in his songwriting. More than three decades ago, with an international recession and domestic unease as backdrops, Springsteen released Darkness on The Edge of Town, a far reaching and diverse collection of stories which followed in the long tradition of American dissent. On the Darkness album Springsteen identified many of the themes which he would revisit in the decades to come. One need look no further than the current tour, where in just the first six weeks nearly three-quarters of the 1978 album had already been performed. (When outtakes such as “The Promise” and “Because the Night” are considered the percentage obviously becomes even higher.) While 1995’s The Ghost of Tom Joad was clearly inspired by The Grapes of Wrath, (itself a classic example of American dissent,) the Steinbeck influence had found its way into Springsteen’s lyrics more than a decade and a half earlier in the title track to the Darkness album.

This paper will consider Darkness on The Edge of Town as Bruce Springsteen’s first and finest work of dissent, and a bevy of source material will be examined in its preparation. Primary sources such as album reviews are an obvious starting point, as are scholarly works such as Jefferson Cowie’s Stayin Alive: The 1970’s and the Last Days of the Working Class. The material is also enhanced by the release of The Promise: The Darkness on the Edge of Town Story which provides insight into the preparation of the album.
Bruce Springsteen’s Novelistic Vision, Michael Kobre, Professor of English/MFA Co-Director, Queens University of Charlotte, North Carolina

In his introduction to “The Rising” during his appearance on Storytellers in 2005, Bruce Springsteen spoke about the challenges of composing not just songs, but albums. “I was trying to follow some internal story that I’d threaded into,” he said. As an artist who came of age when songwriters like Bob Dylan, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and Pete Townshend were redefining the contours and organization of the pop music album, Springsteen has not only inherited the tradition of the concept album but also infused that tradition with a genuinely novelistic sensibility. Drawing not only from the realist tradition of mainstream western fiction but also from the vision of the novel as a dialogue of voices, as a carnivalizing force, that was delineated by the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin, Springsteen, at his most ambitious and complex, creates song cycles in which the voices of the characters within different songs echo against each other in the larger structure of the album.

Yet as an artist working now in an age of downloads, when the physical artifact of the album is increasingly marginalized and its sequence of songs can be rearranged at will, Springsteen must contend with his own version of the reputed “death of the novel” that some critics had predicted in the late ’60s. How does an artist of longer forms express his or her vision in an age of smaller and smaller bytes of information? How has Springsteen’s work been informed by a novelistic vision, and how does it continue to shaped by that sensibility?

Note: This paper is part of a proposed panel on Springsteen as a literary artist that will also feature papers from Irwin H. Streight and Scott McMillan.


Although various scholars have explored Springsteen’s larger connections to various American literary and historical traditions, his connection to Thomas Jefferson’s ideas of nationhood, as developed particularly in his First Inaugural Address, has not received the scholarly attention that it deserves, especially as it relates to Springsteen’s recordings, performances, and political appearances beginning with the Reunion tour in 1999 through the release of his Wrecking Ball album in 2012. In my paper, I want to explore how Jefferson’s ideas of nationhood as analyzed by historian Peter S. Onuf in his work Jefferson’s Empire: The Language of American Nationhood provide a framework for discussing how Springsteen approaches and creates his own conception of nationhood that both celebrates and challenges Jefferson’s ideas of nationhood. To do this, I will examine several of Springsteen’s songs from the 1999-2012 part of his career, such as “Land of Hope and Dreams,” “The Rising,” “Devils & Dust,” “Long Walk Home,” “We Take Care of Our Own,” as well as his 2008 Philadelphia speech in support of Barack Obama’s presidential campaign, in order to show the vitality of this important historical lineage and commonality between Thomas Jefferson’s and Bruce Springsteen’s ideas of American nationhood.

This paper is part of a proposed panel with Irwin Streight and Michael Kobre on the “The Canonization of Bruce Springsteen.”
The Canonization of Bruce Springsteen, Irwin Streight, Associate Professor, Royal Military College of Canada, Ontario

In my paper I will first trace the emergence of Springsteen’s lyrics in anthologies of literature intended for college and university courses, and then consider why particular lyrics have found a place in literary studies. I will argue that the ready acceptance of Springsteen’s lyrics as literature is rooted in the recognition that he is consciously working within established literary traditions in poetry, and often in a particularly American grain—as Robert Coles and others have argued. The editors of W.W. Norton’s successful Seagull Reader: Poetry, for example, include Springsteen’s “The River” because in their view it is “an excellent example of a contemporary ballad,” and compare its features to the exemplary old Scottish Popular Ballad “Sir Patrick Spens” that is found in the monumental two-volume Norton Anthology of English Literature. This and other examples attest that Springsteen’s narrative poetic art has earned its place in the canons of literature for its links with traditional forms, its excellence of craft, and for its deeply human vision.

4. Springsteen and Storytelling: (Bey Hall, Room 226)
Moderator: Patrick Lynch, English Chair, Marymount High School/Loyola Marymount University, California

“We Take Care of Our Own”: Shifting Pronouns and Springsteen’s Move to Folk Troubadour, Eric Garneau, Freelance Writer, Illinois

It’s clear from the first chorus of Wrecking Ball’s lead single, “We Take Care of Our Own,” that Bruce Springsteen’s narrative focus has shifted. Where once the Boss crafted tragic tales of individuals beset by difficult circumstances, now he’s set his sights on a grander scale. The distinct “I” or “he” of earlier Bruce records has been replaced by a more general "we." In addition to singing about people, Springsteen now sings FOR them. Wrecking Ball sees Springsteen finally embracing head-on the role of folk troubadour.

This paper will track the development of Springsteen’s narrative fascination from a more personal "I" (note the “Jersey Boy meets Big City” vibe of his first few albums) to an externalized first person (in which Bruce imagines life in the shoes of another) to the grandiose "we," in which Springsteen speaks for not one person but all people. In a way, it’s a transformation that has seemed inevitable for decades, but few would likely have predicted it to manifest so totally on Wrecking Ball.

Special attention will be paid to earlier appearances of "we," including the iconic "Born to Run" chorus, as well as his songs with an ambiguous, more generic first person, including "Born in the USA," which provide the first signs of this change of focus. Additionally, the paper will analyze Springsteen’s work on The Seeger Sessions and posit that that record, more than any in Bruce’s past, provides a blueprint through which to understand both Wrecking Ball and its resulting tour.
Springsteen, Fitzgerald and the Ghosts of Jersey Shore, Charles Brad Berry, Corporate Customer Service, Grand Valley State University, Michigan

Glory, Glory, How does Glory and how do glory days go? When life presents itself in all it's complicating fullness; its victories, defeats, despairs and triumphs, all of it an inescapable struggle, ultimately the only sufficient response is an engaged, "Yes!" As life's circumstances change; relationships change or end, spouses divorce then remarry, people live in various states of awareness, and then, unavoidably die, too soon! It is then, as Whitman has noted, that the distinction between Death and the knowledge of Death bringing reality into a sharper focus; reveals true life. And our awareness of the transience of this temporal life yields, albeit grudgingly, to the permanent things where those eternal verities of family, faith, friends (even) love and art can then shine through yes, even endure. When the temporal fades and we allow ourselves to see, with new eyes, that we finally are but strangers, in the full panoply of life; witnesses yes, but nevertheless "just passin' through."

Springsteen, Warts and All, John Massaro, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor (Retired), Maine

Discussion of and performance of a few critical scenes from the author's one-act play, "Darkness on Thunder Road." The play grew out of course on Springsteen that the author has taught for several years. Examining the idyllic but troubled life of a rock star, audience members find they are not alone in the human struggle to not submit to fear and to pursue a life of love. This modern morality play presents a critical but richer Cromwellian warts and all portrait of rock legend Bruce Springsteen than has appeared to date.

When the Promise Was Broken: Short Plays Inspired by the Songs of Bruce Springsteen, Steve Feffer, Associate Professor/Coordinator Creative Writing, Western Michigan University

This August in Kalamazoo, Michigan, an evening of short plays inspired by the songs of Bruce Springsteen will be presented. Playwrights from around the country were asked to develop work that engaged in one of Bruce's songs either figuratively or literally in transferring them to the stage. These works included plays based on "Growing Up", "Nebraska" and "Meeting Across the River". In this presentation two of the playwrights will discuss what is revealed in the storytelling techniques of Bruce that lend themselves or at times resist a theatrical engagement, and what such an approach might suggest about Bruce's narrative techniques. The presentation will include a reading from the one person short play "Glad for the Company" (inspired by "Nebraska") with actor and playwright Tucker Rafferty.

5. Springsteen and Gender, Race and Diversity: (Bey Hall, Room 227)
   Moderator: TBD
“Sing It ’Til You’re Done:” The Change of Masculinity in Bruce Springsteen’s Lyrics, Hunter Gibson, Student, Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia

My paper focuses on three specific masculinities that Bruce Springsteen presents in his music starting from Born to Run through Wrecking Ball. Also, I track the changes in these masculinities over Springsteen’s 40 year career and examine how and why the masculinities change over time. My research comes from a wealth of scholarly sources regarding masculinity and Springsteen’s music. I have taken the views of these scholars and expanded on their ideas to create a comprehensive look into the change of masculinity in Springsteen’s music. Below is the thesis from my paper: After uncovering certain masculinities, scholars try to fit each masculine character into a larger masculinity or social category. However, Springsteen’s masculinities also can be examined together, not just individually. As a group, Springsteen presents three major masculine characters in his music—the rebel, the working-class man, and the patriot. Coming from different eras of his career, each character depicts a progression of masculinity in Springsteen’s music.

American Skins: The Problems, and Promise, of Talking About Race Today, Steven Fein, Professor of Psychology, Williams College, Massachusetts

Bruce Springsteen fans may be very aware of the controversy sparked at the debut of Springsteen’s song, American Skin (41 Shots), in 2000, including incendiary words by some members of the New York City police department. I use this story as an example of how difficult it can be to discuss issues of race in America today. I link this to a growing body of research findings in social psychology that shed a great deal of light on the scope and causes of this problem, as well as to some of the reasons for hope concerning progress in the near future. This talk, therefore, will reflect an integration of an analysis of some of Springsteen’s songs concerning race along with research from social psychology that relate very strongly to these songs and the issues they raise. I will explain how I use Springsteen’s music, as well as some other sources from popular culture, to connect with the relevant research about these difficult but important issues.

One Step Up, Two Steps Back: Feminist Scholars Interpreting and Mis-Interpreting Springsteen, Denise Green, E-Resources Librarian, Millikin University, Illinois

Many feminist scholars have studied Springsteen song lyrics and music. Most have been very critical of his songs as oppressing and marginalizing women. Denise Green will review the pro and anti Springsteen feminist studies and show the inherent weaknesses in the "sexist" lyrics arguments. Plus she’ll highlight how fans, scholars and other musicians have concluded that Springsteen is sympathetic to feminist goals and spirit.

Bruce Springsteen “Crossing Over” America’s Rocky Ground: Race, Music, Politics and Culture, Amy Winston, Sustainable Communities Program Specialist, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Maine
Bruce Springsteen synthesizes folk and rhythm-and-blues to communicate a message of economic justice, build a more diverse audience, and stay relevant. Springsteen combines rural and urban sounds in innovative ways, with an integrated band, introducing the music and band friendship to a (mostly) receptive (and to date largely white) core audience (which continues to mature with and carry him into experimental areas musically, socially and politically). This paper examines Springsteen’s current attempt to recapture “pop” music’s democratic status and purpose, connect back to seminal Folk and Motown influences, revive and recombine rock n roll’s diminishing influence and fragmented landscape, and engage old and new fans in a fundamental civic debate about widening economic inequality in the U.S. His progressive pairing of Rock’s folk and R&B roots - the ultimate form of crossover - reflects the exceptionally American co-evolution, and ongoing symbiosis, of Scotch-Irish and African influenced music; genres that are specific and indigenous to the US which (because they) are heavily immigrant-influenced crossed over to commercialize, integrate and assimilate black artists with white mainstream audiences and serve as the soundtrack to the civil rights movement. Springsteen compounds the staying power of his art with musical ministry exalting Motown’s artists as revered teachers (“masters”), Seeger’s contribution to creating a common language and political framework through song, and youth. Interviews with scholars/musicians, a literature review, and analysis of interviews/statements from the stage, and song selections from the Seeger Sessions and Wrecking Ball support my hypothesis that Springsteen advances the unifying economic agenda of civil rights.

6. Springsteen as Narrative Poet: (Bey Hall, Room 228)
Moderator: TBD

Dream as Lie, Dream Deferred, Dream Denied: Bruce Springsteen, Langston Hughes, and the Problems of Representing the American Underclass, Daniel Donaghy, Associate Professor of English, Eastern Connecticut State University

My paper will examine how, over their long careers, Bruce Springsteen and Langston Hughes confronted the challenge of remaining relevant to the subjects central to the core of their creative work. Beginning with The Weary Blues in 1926 and peaking, arguably, with his ambitious book-length poem Montage of a Dream Deferred in 1951, Langston Hughes strove to be a “voice for voiceless people.” Over a forty-one year publishing career, he worked to do so as a poet, (using seemingly every imaginable form), a journalist, a fiction writer, a dramatist, an essayist, and, famously, as a performer. He took on a catalog of voices that ranged across the wide spectrum of the American underclass to bring attention to the vibrancy of their lives and the consequences of exclusive economic, social, and political policies. Similarly, Bruce Springsteen has sought “a meaningful work life” for the past thirty-nine years, never far, it seems, from those humble houses along the Jersey shore, where his father drank late into the night and rose early to crawl under the year’s family used car, coaxing it to work another
In genres ranging from gospel to country, from sprawling narrative and musical epic compositions to pop tunes designed largely to, in his own words, entice women to “pull their pants down,” Springsteen has continually reinvented himself in an effort to speak to the how the America that he was living in at that particular moment measured up against the promised laid out for our country long ago.

**Kingdom of Sun: The Role of the Speaker in Springsteen’s Narrative-Lyric Poetry**, Laura McCullough, Associate Professor, Brookdale Community College, New Jersey

Narrative and lyric poetry are often considered mutually exclusive and when people speak of Springsteen as a poet they largely do so in terms of narrative yet it is possible for a poem or song lyric to combine both elements. This paper will define narrative and lyric poetry and explore the underlying lyric elements of Springsteen’s writing in relation to their narratives in selected poems/songs. Even in the clearest narrative where characters are prominent there is a speaker present and a point of view a rumination even a meditation that conveys the spirit of the lyric which is the under-architecture of the more overt narrative elements. The relation between the two—the story and the speaker’s world view—creates a helix of psycho-emotional truth-i-ness that isn't evident in the more flatly narrative songs. One example is a comparison/contrast between "Devil's Arcade" and "Outlaw Pete" the latter a standard narrative/ballad the former a narrative with clear characters but with a speaker who shapes the affect of the story with elements that are clearly lyric.

“*If My Voice, Now You Don’t Recognize*: A Linguistic Analysis of Bruce Springsteen”, Craig Ismaili, Student, The College of New Jersey

The goal of this paper is to look at Bruce's career from the perspective of a linguist. Just as the album’s settings have changed, so has Springsteen’s use of linguistic concepts. In the early portion of Springsteen's career, because the setting was localized, sound and diction were much more important. As Springsteen moved his characters away from the shore to differing parts of the nation, his linguistic use needed to change as well. On the later albums Nebraska, Devils & Dust, and The Ghost of Tom Joad, a dialectic shift can be seen in his work. Bruce displays characters and their reactions to the world they live in by giving them a unique voice, one that is region-specific to the setting. Springsteen's syntax changes as well throughout his career, he begins to use complex sentences, examples of infinite recursion; then, he begins to take more of a simple prose story form. The article attempts to make these shifts in Springsteen's work evident, especially in how they relate to his characters and their stories.

7.  **Springsteen and Relevance**: (Bey Hall, Room 229)
    Moderator: TBD
Small but Mighty: Bruce Springsteen’s Use of the Glockenspiel, Erica Bernstein, Finance Director, North Carolina Democratic Senate Caucus

This paper examines the evolution of Springsteen’s studio sound through a study of his employment of the glockenspiel on Born to Run and continuing to Wrecking Ball. The glockenspiel is the gateway instrument that allowed Springsteen to borrow from the 1960’s and craft a signature sound that is all his own and first heard on Born to Run. At its release Born to Run clarified Rock and Roll for listeners, evincing an earlier simpler sound that felt further away to people in 1975 than it would appear to us today in retrospect. Phil Spector and his “Wall of Sound” technique are frequently cited influences on Born to Run. Springsteen borrows from Spector’s use of the glockenspiel for his own songs Thunder Road and Born to Run, but on his next album, Darkness on the Edge of Town he uses the glockenspiel without any backwards nod. I contend that the glockenspiel is the bridge between the past Springsteen invokes on Born to Run and his own voice that he wished to convey and continued to develop. The glockenspiel itself is a chimeric instrument: it possesses an almost innocent or childlike quality that is more typical of its use by Spector in 1960’s girl groups such as The Ronnettes and Springsteen’s own Thunder Road, but it also has a larger epic sound that stems from its roots as an instrument developed to bring the sound of bells into an orchestra. Its larger quality is what is heard on Something in the Night.

What is it Exactly that Makes Springsteen a Cut Above the Rest?, Jin Thindal, Educator, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia

Very few artists in popular music remain consistently relevant for four decades. Yes, there are several artists or bands that have been around for decades but very few, if any, have continually produced music that is relevant, critically acclaimed and commercially successful as that of Springsteen. Continually being the key word. Sure, there are artists and bands that fill up arenas and stadiums with adoring fans as U2, Madonna and The Rolling Stones regularly demonstrate but the same cannot be said of their music especially when viewed critically. This discussion led session invites members of the audience to co-collaborate in developing a comprehensive picture to the reasons why and how Springsteen has managed to remain so vital and commercially successful when other artists fail. The aim of the session is to share the experience of audience members and look beyond the obvious in trying to answer the question, "What is it exactly that makes Springsteen a cut above the rest?"

The Lost Classic of 1992, Patrick Ganz, English Teacher, Walden University and Portsmouth High School, New Hampshire

In recent years Springsteen fans have been treated to a well of lost “classics” from the vaults, be they the extraordinary riches from the four disc *Tracks* release of 1998, or the spectrum of gems that comprise 2010’s *The Promise*. While fans debate what songs contain the most merit, or which songs were mistakenly left out, one true classic remains overlooked: The August 6, 1992 *Rolling Stone* interview with James Henke. This spoken masterpiece provides fans with
an eloquent, revelatory, and introspective snapshot of a man who stands at a personal and professional crossroads, and who ultimately discovers both redemption and a path forward.

Newly married and experiencing fatherhood for the first time, Springsteen describes the dark and destructive patterns that contributed to past professional successes. He concedes that many old answers failed to deliver sustenance as he arrived at middle age, acknowledging, “Now I see that the two best days of my life were the day I picked up the guitar and the day I learned to put it down.”

Speaking in his early forties of plans to keep playing loud guitar into his sixties, this remarkable interview acts as an early signpost for Springsteen’s impending rebirth, personal transformation, and perpetual growth. This presentation will offer an analysis of how these themes and topics have manifested themselves in Springsteen’s life and career in the two decades since.

3:15 – 4 pm Break with Refreshments, Bey Hall and Pollak Theatre Lobby

4 pm – 5:30 pm Musical Memories Film Screening, Pollak Theatre

Enjoy a screening of the film Asbury Park Musical Memories which documents the musical history of the city from the 1930’s through the 1970’s in the words of those who lived it. Included in this rare footage are interviews with Asbury Park musical icons Billy Brown, Bobby Thomas, The Orioles, Bobby Bandiera, Nicky Addeo, Vini Lopez and Willie Mitchell. A recent screening of the film at the Asbury Park Film Festival was met with enthusiastic reviews from the packed house.

5:30 pm – 7 pm Dinner, Erlanger Gardens, Monmouth University

7 – 8 pm Travel to The Stone Pony

8 pm Stone Pony Night #1 with The Sensational Soul Cruisers featuring J.T. Bowen, The Nick Clemons Band and Jobonanno and The Godsons of Soul!

Saturday, September 15, 2012

8:30 am – 1:30 pm Conference Registration, Monmouth University, Pollak Theatre Lobby

8:45 – 9:45 am Telling the Bruce Springsteen Story... In a Museum!, Jim Henke, Vice President of Exhibitions and Curatorial, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum, Pollak Theatre

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame curator Jim Henke will tell how he put together the exhibit From Asbury Park to the Promised Land: The Life and Music of Bruce Springsteen. The exhibit was at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum from spring of 2009 to the spring of 2011. It then went to the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia.

9:45 – 11:15 am Breakout Sessions, Bey Hall

1. Springsteen from Various Angles: (Bey Hall, Room 222)
“Shut[ting] Out The Light”: War, Returning to Home, and Springsteen’s New War Song Genre,
Jason Faulkner, Faculty Member, East Carolina University, North Carolina

Throughout Springsteen’s career war has been one of the constants and focal points of the American landscape as well as Springsteen’s songs and lyrics. However, Springsteen’s “War Songs” differ greatly from the glorifying and heroic war songs of the World Wars and the Anti-war songs of Vietnam. In fact, “Devils and Dust” is the only song in which one of Springsteen’s protagonists is either currently fighting or going off to fight. Instead, Springsteen’s war narratives have always focused on life after battle. What are the soldiers fighting for? What type of America are the troops coming home to? How do the ideals of America that the soldiers defend differ from the American Reality back home? These are questions Springsteen, his audience, and, most importantly, his post-war characters have sought answers to since Jimmy the Saint returned home in “Lost in the Flood.”

Along with tracing a history of 20th Century American war songs, this essay will show how war has affected the characters from songs like, “Born in the USA,” “Gypsy Biker,” “Shut Out the Light,” and “Devil’s Arcade” and how the treatment these characters received once they returned home defined their post-war life. This essay will contextualize how Springsteen’s “War Songs” differ from the typical American War Songs from the past; and show how Springsteen has created a new genre of American War Songs, the “Post War Song” genre.

From Born to Run to Born this Way: The Promise of Bruce Springsteen, Justin Cary, Instructor, English and Literature, Queens University of Charlotte and The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, North Carolina

With his third studio album Bruce Springsteen captured the attention of countless music fans and captivated the world with a message everyone can relate to: there is a better place out there, somewhere. This message filled the words of ‘Born to Run’ with songs dealing with outcasts, misfits and tramps. These people were real people; people disillusioned with their lives, ready for release and fed up with a world that did not understand them.

The message of ‘Born to Run’ told these people to get out; to flee and find a place where they could find community, acceptance and connection. This promise of a better place found a home in American culture and society and now, nearly forty years later, that promise has a new voice.

Today, adults and children alike are still struggling for connection, struggling to find a place in a world that rejects them. The results of this lack of connection are devastating and tragic; teen suicide, bullying, hatred and bigotry to various communities all across America. But should we run away from those who would tell us we don’t belong? Lady Gaga says no.

Join us for a discussion of the deep connection between Bruce Springsteen’s ‘Born to Run’ and Lady Gaga’s ‘Born this Way’, a record that takes the message of running, the message of finding
a place where we do fit in, a message that asks people to run from a world that does not accept them and transforms it into a more contemporary message.

'Born this Way' says no to running, 'Born this Way' says the world needs to change for us and we are not going anywhere.

The connections between these two influential artists are myriad and in this panel we will discuss how the message of Bruce Springsteen is being transformed and carried on by the likes of Lady Gaga.

2. Springsteen and Mortality, Absence & Loss: (Bey Hall, Room 223)
Moderator: TBD

Bruce Springsteen and Transformative Grief: The Courage to Carry On, Cathy Cerutti, Pediatric Oncology Social Worker, Morristown Medical Center, New Jersey

The E Street Band parallels a close family system of ties that bind. The loss of band members Danny Federici and Clarence Clemons irrevocably changed the dynamics of the band. Bruce Springsteen’s understands grief as transformative and life changing. He is not afraid to embrace grief as he pays homage to Clarence and Danny during the Wrecking Ball tour. Bruce Springsteen gets grief right. He shares his profound loss with the audience in an intimate moment of positive transformation leading the audience to greater spirituality, understanding, and connectedness with the deceased. The thunderous power of audience joining with Bruce facilitates a journey toward healing. The audience validates the profound loss for Bruce as they loudly exalt Clarence’s name and the spotlight shines on an empty organ. The audience is Bruce’s sanctuary where he feels the safest as he body surfs back to the stage, in the ultimate act of trust. Bruce teaches the audience that despite the pain, something good can come out of it. He empowers the audience to remember through the music and unmistakable sounds of the saxophone and organ. He is the witness to hope with an incredible ability to rise the audience up. Bruce acknowledges what is lost because he allows himself to grieve. He creates new meaning transforming the old E Street Band to a new seventeen piece ensemble. Once again, Bruce leaves his indelible mark on the audience by inspiring them to embrace loss and remember with his guarantee “if you’re here and we’re here, then they’re here.”

Psychological Theories of Grieving, Italian American Culture, and Springsteen’s Work, Lorraine Mangione, Professor, Antioch University New England, New Hampshire

Ideas about grieving and death have been changing for the last 10 or 15 years, primarily away from a “closure” model in which the grieved person leaves the loved one behind, to a model that allows for more connection in which a new relationship is formed with the lost loved one who is integrated into the grieving person’s present life in a transformed way. Italian American culture has long had a tradition in which “Italians tend to keep their dead with them” (Giordano, et al,
staying connected with those who have died. Utilizing these frameworks, one psychological and one cultural, this paper explores Springsteen’s response to recent losses through a brief examination of several songs from Devils and Dust, Magic and Working on a Dream, including “Jesus Was An Only Son”, “Terry’s Song”, “Outlaw Pete”, “The Last Carnival”, “What Love Can Do”, “This Life”, and “Life Itself”, as well as the current tour and Wrecking Ball, in which great homage is paid to Clarence Clemmons. There are intimations of different attitudes toward the dead, including both a sense of finality to the loss and a sense of an enduring presence. One wonders if the legendary Springsteen faith is going to prevail or if it is fate that is cruel and unforgiving and leaves you with nothing? Perhaps “Spirit In The Night” laid the groundwork for how death is ultimately conceptualized and experienced, and for what we are seeing on the current tour, particularly in “We Are Alive”.

3. Springsteen and Wrecking Ball: (Bey Hall, Room 225)
Moderator: Marianne Murawski, Chair, College of Humanities, University of Phoenix Philadelphia Campus, Pennsylvania

Magic and Wrecking Ball: Bruce Springsteen’s “American Jeremiad”, Lincoln Konkle, Professor of English, The College of New Jersey

Although he had written social criticism songs before, Bruce Springsteen has stepped up the intensity of his protest, devoting the majority of songs on two recent albums to criticizing the actions of government and business leaders that have led to the longest military engagement in U.S. history and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Although most of the protest songs on Magic and Wrecking Ball convey Springsteen’s condemnation indirectly through incongruities, metaphor, dramatic monologue, or story, collectively they follow a rhetorical strategy scholar Sacvan Bercovitch has called “The American Jeremiad.” Initially employed by ministers for religious renewal, then by supporters of the American Revolution against England and subsequent political purposes, and even by writers of American literature, this rhetoric of crisis, as explained in Bercovitch’s study The American Jeremiad (1978), is not merely a fire-and-brimstone sermon or newspaper editorial harangue against the evils of the day; it is “a ritual designed to join social criticism to spiritual renewal, public to private identity, the shifting ‘signs of the times’ to certain traditional metaphors, themes, and symbols” (xi). In songs such as “Last to Die” and “Long Walk Home” on Magic, and “We Take Care of Our Own,” “Death to My Hometown,” and the new version of “Land of Hopes and Dreams” on Wrecking Ball, Springsteen laments the current state of the Union, recalls a time when we were truer to our national ideals, and calls for a recommitment to the egalitarian American Dream, thus creating a rock-and-roll American Jeremiad.

Questions of religious faith have been central to Bruce Springsteen’s work from the beginning – at first in a light-hearted, even mocking manner, but with growing seriousness from the time of “Darkness on the Edge of Town” on. Since the 1990s, Springsteen’s engagement with his native Catholic tradition has intensified, as was particularly apparent on “The Rising.” With “Wrecking Ball,” this dimension to his vision is more apparent than ever, with a more specifically Irish Catholic component coming to the fore. This talk will trace these elements and suggest Springsteen’s place in a larger national discussion about the role of religious faith, particularly Christian religious faith, in U.S. culture and politics.

Wrecking Ball: The Winding Path Through The Difficult Journeys of Life, Marianne Murawski, Chair, College of Humanities, University of Phoenix Philadelphia Campus, Pennsylvania

Over the course of Bruce Springsteen’s career, he has released a number of landmark albums. Some of these include Born To Run, his breakthrough album released in 1975 which found Bruce on the covers of Newsweek and Time in October 1975, Born in the U.S.A. with its more than two year run on the charts, and The Rising with its songs dealing with the tragedies and emotions from the attacks on September 11, 2001.

With the release of Wrecking Ball, Bruce seems to have created another landmark album. The album also marks his first since the passing of his beloved Clarence Clemons.

This presentation will explore the songs and messages on Wrecking Ball from frustrations and loss to eventual acceptance of what can and cannot be controlled in life, both on a national and personal level. Some songs express the frustration with the economic downturn and the lack of accountability for those involved in creating it along with a sense of the loss of innocence for many who now doubt their ability to participate in the American Dream.

Later in the album, the songs transition from a nation-wide or even global perspective to a personal one. Always a teacher, Bruce helps people, including himself with the recent loss of Clarence, transition through the loss of a loved one back to the world of the living again. He even presents a vision of the spiritual world surrounding the physical world, a world in which the spirits are free and joyous.

From “Nebraska” to “Land of Hope and Dreams”: The Journey of the Themes of Nebraska and Wrecking Ball, Michael Ewing, English Teacher, Warren Harding High School, Connecticut

Nebraska celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this September. This dark, brooding album introduced or distilled themes that persist in Springsteen’s work. Wrecking Ball revisits many of these themes. “Easy Money” continues the dream of a quick fix articulated in “Atlantic City.” Individual estrangement is portrayed throughout Nebraska and is echoed by Wrecking Ball’s “Shackled and Drawn.” Longing for a “Mansion On The Hill” is shattered by a moneyed ruling class run amok in Wrecking Ball’s “Death To My Hometown.” The life cycle in “Atlantic City,” where “maybe everything that dies some day comes back” is ratified in the repetition of “Hard
times come and hard times go” in “Wrecking Ball.” The thin ray of hope in “Reason to Believe” when after “every hard-earned day people find some reason to believe,” is expanded in “Land of Hope and Dreams” where “dreams will not be thwarted.”

Despite the similarities, the differences between the two are most instructive. Nebraska is a spare low-fi recording, whereas Wrecking Ball sports a chorus of voices and horns. Nebraska epitomizes loneliness; Wrecking Ball celebrates connection. And therein lies the chief difference between the two records: The lonely “meanness in this world” reflected in the distorted vocals, somber instruments and grey lyrics of the solo recording is replaced by Wrecking Ball’s joyous voices, blazing horns and lyrics daring one to remain deflated. Through its choral approach, Wrecking Ball declares both musically and lyrically that with fellowship and communal work “faith will be rewarded” and despair conquered.

4. Springsteen and Work and Class: (Bey Hall 226)
Moderator: TBD

“For What ‘They’ Did”: Blame, Working Class America, and the Evolution of Bruce Springsteen’s Early Political Vision, Jonathan Cohen, Student, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec

The same year Bruce Springsteen released his debut album Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J. (1972) labor-leader Gus Tyler wrote: “fury comes easily to the white worker. He is ready for battle. But he does not quite know against whom to declare war.” On his breakthrough Born to Run (1975) and throughout Darkness on the Edge of Town (1978) and The River (1980) Springsteen portrays a similar working-class anger against unknown and unseen forces. On these albums, Springsteen’s narrators refer to these forces by the third-person-plural pronoun “they” who take vague actions to trick, entrap, and create illusory false dreams for Springsteen’s characters.

Yet, following Ronald Reagan’s election (1981), as Springsteen’s lyrics grew more explicitly political, “they” did not disappear. Instead, “their” actions become more easily recognizable and more overt. On Nebraska (1982) and Born in the U.S.A (1984) Springsteen’s narrators attribute specific deeds to an increasingly powerful and remote “they” whose actions prove harmful to the spiritual state and financial security of working-class Americans.

This essay will explore the evolving nature of “their” deeds and expound on the different roles “they” play in Springsteen’s albums released between 1975 and 1984. This development traces the evolution of Springsteen’s political vision and his identification with the struggles of blue-collar Americans. An analysis of “their” deeds provides a lens through which to examine the forces controlling the lives of Springsteen’s working characters as their silent war against “the system” evolves into struggle against the crushing “meanness in this world.”
Bruce Springsteen is a masterful frontman. He leads, he sings and plays, he motivates, and he speaks out on musical and political issues. The typical frontman is the lead vocalist. But the E Street Band, larger than most big name rock bands, is clearly a well-tooled organization led by a chief executive – the Boss himself, Bruce Frederick Joseph Springsteen.

Springsteen has been called the Boss from the earliest days of the E Street Band. As the story goes, some of the band members used the Boss sobriquet because he was the one who paid the bills and signed their checks. Ironically, Springsteen never liked being called the Boss, but he has had to learn to get used to it.

This session will consist of a PowerPoint presentation exploring elements of Springsteen’s career that individuals can apply to their own work situations. Using his lyrics as a foundation along with anecdotes and evidence from music, academia and business, we will show how Springsteen is an effective leadership role model. We will demonstrate how workers, entrepreneurs and corporations can use his vision, principles, and operating style as leadership building blocks.

Among the points we will discuss are these: Don’t be afraid to think big; protect your brand fiercely; learn when and how to take risks; get back up after a fall; and find the best ways to build team loyalty, cooperation and support.

Nancy and June will illustrate how Springsteen has transformed himself -- from a scruffy guitar player with the far-fetched dream of becoming a rock star -- into the leader of a substantial corporate enterprise.

“The Boss” Contemplates the Real Boss: Alienation of Labor in the Songs of Bruce Springsteen,
David Papke, Professor, Marquette University Law School, Wisconsin

Bruce Springsteen is among the fortunate. He told Mikal Gilmore in the 1987 Rolling Stone interview that he approached his song-writing and performing as “a job” and that he “wanted to deliver his best to pull out the best in you, whatever that might be.” But while Springsteen has found his calling and is happy with what he does, he empathizes with members of the working class, immigrants, and outsiders whose lives do not include meaningful, rewarding work.

Especially in his songs of the 1980s and 1990s, Springsteen sings of workers who take little pride in the product of their labor, do not enjoy the act of producing, and distrust those with whom they work. According to the worker down at the carwash in “Downbound Train” (1984), “all it ever does is rain.” Surely, thinks the county worker waving a flag at traffic on I-95 in “Working on the Highway” (1984), there must be “a better life than this.” Upon leaving work, a burnt-out, seething man employed at the rendering plant in “Straight Time” (1995) bemoans the way he can never “get the smell from his hands.”
As a result of their hollow, frustrating labor, workers or would-be workers in Springsteen’s songs become alienated. They lose touch with what it means to be human, with what Marx called “Gattungswesen.” Springsteen’s sensitivities in this area are particularly relevant in our era of recession and widespread unemployment, and as he himself observes, the alienation of labor can lead to destructive criminal conduct, estrangement from loved ones, and a haunting, painful self-hate. “The Boss” invites us to contemplate the type of working experience the real Boss – advanced capitalism – has given many of us

This Turnpike Sure is Spooky at Night When You’re All Alone: Springsteen, Fear, and the American Dream, Jason Stonerook, Graduate Student, University of Maryland

In his 1975 Rolling Stone review of “Born to Run,” Greil Marcus described the spirit of that album’s stories by writing, "Springsteen's heroes and heroines face terror and survive it, face delight and die by its hand, and then watch as the process is reversed, understanding finally that they are paying the price of romanticizing their own fear." If Springsteen's music captures the exhilaration individuals feel as they pursue the American Dream, it also exposes the dread they carry with them as they make their way through a competitive world characterized by risk and terrifying loneliness. This paper explores the theme of fear in Springsteen's music, a topic of great relevance in these anxious times.

5. Springsteen and Psychology: (Bey Hall, Room 227)
   Moderator: TBD

Crying and Dancing: An Exploration into the Ongoing Dialectic Between Melancholy and Euphoria in the Musical Narrative of Bruce Springsteen, John Corbisiero, Consulting Psychologist, Fordham University, New Jersey

In this paper I will follow up and attempt to integrate and synthesize the recurrent themes of melancholy and euphoria in the songs of Bruce Springsteen. Springsteen's ongoing musical narrative reflects an ongoing tension and struggle between these themes, as portrayed by the characters in his songs as well as the greater political and interpersonal context in which the songs were written. There will be a particular emphasis in exploring these themes in Mr. Springsteen's current album, Wrecking Ball, while also reflecting on the impact that the death of Clarence Clemons has had on Springsteen’s personal as well as musical narrative. I will also draw on past albums, such as Darkness on the Edge of Town, to illustrate the continuity as well as developmental arc of this narrative which I believe to be central to the work of Bruce Springsteen. Dr. Dan Mahoney will also present on related themes (we have been co-presenters on panels at the previous symposiums--his abstract to follow).
A View Beneath the Mask: Springsteen’s Personal Stories as a Glimpse of His Subjectivity, Daniel Mahoney, Associate Professor, Counseling Program, Felician College, New Jersey

In this paper I will examine several concert narratives that give us some candid views of the subjective experience of Bruce Springsteen. While never authenticated, Springsteen’s concert sagas offer us a view into his early formative life, interactions with family and other authority figures, and his peers. In the limited time available I want to highlight two stories that discuss Springsteen’s view of counselling and psychotherapy. The first from sometime in the mid-1970’s discusses his referral to counselling and his adolescent rejection of the experience. The second from the mid-1980’s offers a story of Springsteen seeking out therapy to resolve his repetitious behaviour of frequently revisiting his childhood home. However, at this point he is more reflective and open to a therapeutic experience. As part of the presentation I would like to illicit from those in attendance their own recollections of the Springsteen narratives they can recall and have personal meaning. Dr. John Corbisiero will also present on related themes (we have been co-presenters on panels at the previous symposiums--his abstract to follow).

Drivin’ Out of Shame With Springsteen: The Roadmap, Charlene Portnoy, Psychotherapist, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Life is hard, and shame makes it a whole lot harder. Shame can be triggered in an instant, and it will make us believe horrible and deadly lies about our very self. We become paralyzed, instinctively wanting to disappear, doubting we could ever feel human again...

And yet, Springsteen music has all the necessary tools for the healing to begin! Trust me, repairing this is no small feat, given the nature of shame -- it acts like a magnet, firmly attaching itself to other feelings within us. Emotionally, it has a force as strong as gravity. It has density like a black hole, and it’s very, very, slippery.

The only thing with the power to match the intensity of shame is a relationship. It’s rare to know someone who is always available, who we trust, and who consistently knows what we need to hear. Springsteen's music does that job, and does it again and again and again. When our body listens to him, we leave that paralyzed state and begin to return to present time. We start to match his rhythm and energy returns to our body. We want to move again, with him and in our own life. We feel as though we belong to the human race once more.

This presentation and Manual (paper), will use the text of Springsteen’s South By Southwest Address, March 2012, to illustrate his focus on fixing shame. Aspects of Affect Theory, Relationship Theory, Trauma Processes, Neuroscience, and Physiology will be integrated and condensed into user-friendly handouts. All attendees will be given a draft copy of The Springsteen Repair Manual of Shame!

Bruce Springsteen As Therapy, The Healing Power of Metaphor, Anthony Henley, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Washington, DC
Many of those attending a Bruce Springsteen concert have left feeling that their lives have been transformed for the better in a powerful and enduring way. Therapy is the art and science of transformational change, and this session will argue that the work of Bruce Springsteen draws on many of the same healing powers that inform effective psychotherapy. Pain and suffering are inescapable aspects of human existence, and the process of psychic healing is a complex one that involves awareness of suffering as a prerequisite for healing and then employs constructive interpersonal experiences to move beyond suffering and enable intrapersonal growth and resilience. The presenter will explicate the connections between therapy and both the artistic work of Bruce Springsteen and the experience of a Bruce Springsteen concert. These connections include the power of personal connection, the benefits of effective emotional expression, and the abiding power of faith. Particular emphasis will be placed on the role of metaphor as a therapeutic and artistic tool. Metaphor serves to allow an individual to experience and interpret profound emotional experiences at a distance from the more traumatic aspects of personal pain. The album The Rising will be used to exemplify the role of music in healing a community and world torn apart by the attacks of September 11, 2001.

6. **Springsteen and Pedagogy: (Bey Hall, Room 228)**
   Moderator: TBD

   **Springsteen and Crime, Criminals, Convicts, and the Curriculum**, Roger Shutack, Associate Professor of History and Education, Raritan Valley Community College, New Jersey

   Using selected examples such as "Straight Time", "Highway 29", "Johnny 99", "Highway Patrolman", "Nebraska", "41 Shots", "Galveston Bay", my presentation would focus on themes of "law and order" and the desperation, alienation, and sense of conflict felt by both criminals and law enforcement officials as portrayed in Bruce's music. I would then present ideas as to how educators might be able to use these themes and songs in the classroom. Having written and taught a course on "Crime and Justice", as part of the curriculum, I would take several of my students annually (14 years) to the "Scared Straight" program at East Jersey St. Prison. During one of those visits, I was able to obtain an interesting perspective on the lyrics from "Straight Time" from the "Lifers" in the Program. My presentation would share some of those personal experiences and discussions as well as insights from students, convicts (not related!), and law officials, and how they offered unique perspectives on these themes from Bruce's music.

   **Springsteen's Characters as Case Studies: Teaching Psycho-Social Theory**, James Kelly, Professor of Social Work, Carlow University, Pennsylvania

   This paper describes a case study approach to teaching the application of theories in a course taught in a bachelor's social work program in an American university. This approach incorporates case material based on the music and career of Bruce Springsteen, whose career
and body of work provide extensive data for the application and exploration of psycho-social theories such as the epigenetic theory of psychosocial development of Erik Erikson and family systems theory of Murray Bowen. The characters in songs of Bruce Springsteen are treated as examples of people at various stages of psychosocial development. The lyrics and music provide students with access to deep emotional content that standard case studies may only superficially supply. Whereas typical "real" cases usually present factual material and report affective states in clinical terms, songs mimic the lived experience of people as they actually engage their emotions, and thus require sensitive interpretation and elicit intuitive responses on the part of students. Moreover, the career and public life of Bruce Springsteen evinces the progress of an exemplary individuals journey to establish identity, achieve relational intimacy and stability, and to contribute to the well-being of future generations. This case study approach may be used in a variety of courses and disciplines, and may focus on any artists whose work and life provide substantial material for analysis.

What Makes Springsteen a Great Teaching Tool?, Jin Thindal, Educator, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia

The role popular music plays in the classroom has largely been ignored by most educators, education policy makers and education administrators. Yet the fact that most young students would rather listen to their music than most of their teachers is something that virtually requires very little research to prove. So, why is it that most teachers do not use popular music in their everyday teaching? This presentation explores this very question and presents some suggestions that may assist teachers to use popular music as a valid teaching aid. Using Springsteen as an artist and an exponent of popular music, this presentation explores the pedagogy of song and other teaching methods such as Controversy as a Teaching Tool to demonstrate how teachers can use the music of Springsteen to extraordinary effect. The presenter draws on many years of experience of using music of Springsteen and other popular artists in the classroom and how to develop strategies to win over education administrators and policy makers.

The Promise of Revision: How the Boss Makes My Job Easier, Cliffton Price, Adjunct Instructor of Writing, Fairfield University, Connecticut

With the releases of Wings for Wheels: The Making of Born to Run in 2005 and The Promise: The Darkness on the Edge of Town Story in 2010, Bruce Springsteen has given writing teachers like myself new, powerful tools to use in the writing classroom. For though Springsteen makes rock songs and albums while my college freshmen are usually just making essays (and, unlike Bruce, often not very good ones at that), both are involved in the arduous task of composition. And one of the most difficult aspects of the composition process—to both do and teach to do well—is that of rewriting and revision, something Springsteen talks about in detail in both Wings for Wheels and The Promise: The Making of The Darkness on the Edge of Town. In fact, by packaging The Darkness on the Edge of Town Story in the way that he has done—in a replica of one of the notebooks used in the writing of his music, complete with written and revised lyrics to songs, possible track listings, and notes about musical arrangements—Springsteen further puts the
spotlight on the importance of revising and rewriting and rethinking one’s own work. And nothing brings home the point that good writers often have to toss aside earlier ideas and drafts in order to improve their compositions then does the fact that only a few of the many songs Springsteen wrote while working on The Darkness on the Edge of Town actually made it on the album.

7. **Springsteen and Religion/Spirituality: (Bey Hall, Room 229)**
   Moderator: TBD

   *Prophets and Apocalypse: The Theology of Wrecking Ball,* Michael Riley, Columnist/Editorial Writer, Asbury Park Press, New Jersey

   The themes of Springsteen’s new songs are the hope for God’s mercy and the sureness of God’s righteous judgment. The immediate context, of course, is the near collapse of the American dream, the fiscal disaster that has devastated our country, with so many homes lost, families uprooted and rent asunder.

   This collection of sad, angry and longing-for-hope songs is saturated with biblical imagery and stands firmly in what can only be called the prophetic tradition — a prophetic tradition that stretches back to the Old Testament prophets and reaches across millennia and the world and has been taken up again and again in America. There is, in the Bible, in the midst of the Gospel messages, a touch of the apocalyptic. And the apocalyptic visions in Revelation are not so much a look at world’s end, but a way of telling the down-and-out that God will see them through to when they come out on the glory side of things.

   *Psychology, Empathy, and Spiritual Community,* Gerry Hudson-Martin, Director, Corporate Learning Strategies, Business Architects, Maryland

   “A Good Man is Hard to Find” captures several themes of Springsteen’s music: dreams of newlyweds, the waste of war, the meanness experienced by innocents and warriors alike, and hope that tries not to yield to quiet desperation, all told from the perspective of the bride of a marine. With words and music he gets inside the heart of a woman.

   This paper explores something remarkable about Springsteen’s songs, and why he may be so beloved. Exploring self, family, village, or country, you never feel pity or sympathy or cynicism when listening - even in “The Wrestler”! With success, “The Promise” states “Inside I felt like I was carrying the broken spirits of all the other ones who lost”.

   “Is there anyone alive out there?” to “Can you hear me?” link his characters to his audience. His work evolved with individuals now connecting to community through a shared fate of mortality. Springsteen is increasingly “passing over” to the experience of death, and his songs eulogize with a version of a Catholic concept of a communion of saints:

   “A million stars shining above us like every soul living and dead
Has been gathered together by God to sing a hymn”
Finally, “We are Alive”, a dance of ghosts, is now explicitly connecting us to all the souls who have gone before.
“So we ask the spirits to come back and speak to the living. To inform us about life, to provide us strength and faith.” ... New Orleans Jazz Fest

There’s a New World Coming: Eschatology of Wrecking Ball, Spencer Allen, Adjunct Lecturer, John Brown University, Arkansas

From the lonely acrobat headed to Mexico with Mary on Greetings to Outlaw Pete’s epic journey on Working On a Dream, the stereotypical trajectory of the characters in Bruce Springsteen songs reflects the escapist desire of “pulling out of here to win” in search for “The Promised Land.” Some run from the problems that they created, and some look to build a community, but they all share the same goal of getting someplace else. The realities facing most of the characters on Wrecking Ball are so dire, however, that the best escape that many of them can envision cannot be found in this world. On occasion, looking forward to death is the simplest form of escape. Thus sings the blue-collar worker in “Shackled And Drawn.” More often, the characters longingly anticipate nothing less than the end of history itself, a new world order in which society and the natural world are divinely transformed. Largely avoiding apocalyptic language, this new world that Springsteen sings about on “Jack Of All Trades” and “Rocky Ground” closely resembles the eschatological wish famously described in the Lord’s Prayer. Indeed, “Jack’s” phraseology, “we’ll start caring for each other,” echoes Jesus’ own hopes for humanity in this new world, including his vision of seeing God’s “kingdom come” and “will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). This paper explores the present-day fears and the future-oriented optimisms underlying these eschatological responses, as well as the instances where even these eschatological responses fail the characters.

Bruce Springsteen and the Disciples of the American Dream, Thomas Wilkie, Honors Student, Daemen College, New York

In the songs of Bruce Springsteen we are given stories of people pursuing the American Dream. There are those just beginning their quest, others in the midst, and those who are trying to pick the pieces up after everything has fallen apart. The characters in Springsteen’s rock epics demonstrate hope and faith in the American Dream, they believe in all of its promises and they believe there is a way to achieve it. Springsteen commented that his “work has always been about judging the distance between American reality and the American Dream.” It is through these observations that Bruce Springsteen discovers the religious dimensions of the American Dream. The American Dream is not simply an idea in Springsteen’s songs, rather, it is something to believe in, have faith in, to hope for, and to work towards. In the world Springsteen paints, the factories become the churches, the congregation becomes the working man, and all search for salvation in chase of the American Dream. Springsteen is not the leader of the Church of the American Dream; he is another disciple who has become the messenger of the congregations’ journey and their common spirit, common struggles, and common desire for a better life. This
paper examines the progression of the American Dream from Born to Run, into Darkness and The River, and most recently Wrecking Ball, to see how it has evolved and changed in Springsteen's music.

8. **Springsteen, Radio, Film & Video: (Bey Hall, Room 230)**
   Moderator: Susan Hamburger, Manuscripts Cataloging Librarian, Penn State University

   *Radio Somewhere: The Radio Prophets Who Played Springsteen Before Everyone Else*, David Bernstein, Senior Study Director, Westat, Maryland, and Linda Abel Randall, Instructor/Mentor, Empire State College, New York

   In the early 1970s, disc jockeys at several East Coast and Midwest FM radio stations began playing a then unknown artist named Bruce Springsteen. Stations such as WMMR (Philadelphia), WHFS (Bethesda, Maryland/Washington, DC), WNEW (New York), and WMMS (Cleveland) were playing a format called progressive rock that was oriented around long play (LP) records and often gave on air personnel the flexibility to play newly discovered music as well as various alternative rock forms. Once Springsteen was signed by John Hammond for Columbia Records, he received limited support in getting his music known, and much of the early promotion of Springsteen was through personal contacts, personal favors, and the dedicated commitment of those who had seen Springsteen live in bars along the New Jersey shore and a limited number of other East Coast outlets. This paper will incorporate several research methods to discover why the early adopters/Springsteen prophets began playing his music. We will describe their experiences as fans and unpaid promoters before the rest of the USA discovered Springsteen during the Born to Run era. Research methods will include a literature review, review of taped radio shows and interviews with Springsteen from 1973 to 1975, and personal communications or interviews with the DJs focusing on their early experiences of Springsteen's music, his live shows, his musical influences, and how they played a role in building Springsteen's regional fan base and popularity.

   **Bruce & Commercial Radio: A Love Affair**, Aaron Furgason, Associate Professor of Communication, Monmouth University, New Jersey

   From the live debut of his third album, Born to Run, on New York's progressive rock station, WNEW-FM to today Bruce Springsteen has always cultivated a close relationship with commercial radio. This presentation examines that relationship between Springsteen and commercial radio, with a specific focus on Springsteen songs that became hits on the radio. Of particular interest is the influence of commercial radio on the production of Springsteen's recordings, including areas of song structure, lyrical content and length. In addition, a discussion of changes to the commercial radio industry, the introduction of satellite radio and the influences those changes have had on the recent production of Springsteen's songs.
E Street Radio: The Digital Map That Leads Us Home, Brad Yates, Professor of Mass Communications, University of West Georgia

Fan sites like Backstreets, Greasy Lake, Blogness on the Edge of Town, and the official Bruce Springsteen web site offer opportunities for fans to connect with one another and stay up-to-date with Springsteen and the E Street Band. However, the common thread that brings everyone together on these sites is the Boss’s music. Discussions abound on messages boards across the world about topics like his latest release, the greatest live show he has ever played, or what new musical gems might be coming next. While the sites can provide audio and video clips that highlight the music, they are not designed to play his albums, stream live concerts, or have call-in shows to discuss the past, present, and future of Springsteen and the band. The digital platform that can do this is SiriusXM’s E Street Radio. It is truly the digital map that leads fans of all ages and all generations home to the music. Thus, it is fitting that E Street Radio aired Springsteen’s March 9, 2012, exclusive live performance at the Apollo Theater to celebrate 10 years of satellite radio and kick off the Wrecking Ball tour in support of his 17th studio album. This paper will examine the impact of SiriusXM’s E Street Radio channel on Springsteen fans with attention given to its celebration of Springsteen nostalgia, its focus on the community of supporters, and its role as a digital bridge that is reaching a new generation of fans and connecting them with longtime Boss followers.

Populist Noir: Dreams, Lies and the “Wonderful Life”, Michael Kaufmann, Associate Professor, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Michele DeVinney, Lecturer, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, Indiana

In Born to Run and Darkness on the Edge of Town, Springsteen relies on film noir imagery to relay the cinematic yet stark lives of his protagonists. By The River he takes a more populist turn, but unlike director Frank Capra, he explores the dark side of populism that subsumes the desire of individuals to the larger will of the group. With each holiday season comes the viewing of the classic Capra film “It’s a Wonderful Life,” and the sentimental message that every person’s life has value. But hidden more deeply is another message, a somewhat darker one, that in order to fulfill the destinies of others we must suppress our own dreams. In Bruce Springsteen’s song “The River,” the narrator speaks of his own dashed hopes as he, like Jimmy Stewart’s George Bailey, is brought up “to do, like your daddy done.” When marriage and children are brought into both stories, the protagonists of both “It’s a Wonderful Life” and “The River” have sealed their fates. When Springsteen asks “Is a dream a lie that don’t come true, or is it something worse?” he asks the question for all who have found themselves lost in the dreams of others, being forced to abandon their own visions of success. In portraying his characters trapped in the realities of family expectations and economic realities, Springsteen undermines Capra’s own idealized vision of success and questions how each of us measures our own value to society.

9. Springsteen and Transcendance/Performance: (Bey Hall, Room 231)
In his March 2012 address at South by Southwest in Austin, Springsteen recently explored his influences while offering advice to new rockers. Throughout the speech, he constantly referenced the liminality of his art and its influences. This liminality fills all of his work, but has become an emphasis in recent works including Wrecking Ball and Working on a Dream. On both, Springsteen features several moments of musical transcendence with his elegy for Danny, his otherworldly “We Are Alive,” and his paen for the profane lover of a supermarket queen. These are not his only moments of crawling from earthbound pleasure or pain to sublime liminal space. Throughout his work, Springsteen brings his listeners away from profane and mundane life toward something greater, something that often defies description and the limits of language. These moments are not limited to his albums and CDs. Viewed as a whole, his musical performances also offer the listeners/participants an opportunity to creep away from the “engines of old parked cars” and fly toward the “month-long vacations in the stratosphere.” One example includes the March performance at the Apollo theatre where liminality filled songs like “Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out” and “My City of Ruins,” all evoking the spirit of the E Street Band’s lost comrade, Clarence Clemons. This presentation will explore the breadth and depth of these journeys available in the Springsteen repertoire.

Set Us Loose From Everything: Boots as the Healing Flo...
Rocking Out and Reaching Out: Why Darkness, The Rising, and Wrecking Ball are Anchoring the 2012 Tour, Mark Bourdeau, Professor of English, Suffolk County Community College, New York

A Bruce tour is about more than just entertainment. Whether there is an implied political message or a more overt social critique, Bruce is up there on that stage for a reason, and he trusts his audience to think about that reason. Indeed, anyone with the guts to perform “American Skin” in New York City is not backing away from the need to give people credit for thinking for themselves. Given that Wrecking Ball is the culmination of numerous themes on which the artist has focused for decades, it is not surprising that the album’s songs are being featured so prominently in the 2012 tour. What has also come to the fore in the first leg of the tour is the interrelationship among Darkness on the Edge of Town, The Rising, and the new album. The order of songs continues to evolve, and individual works come and go; however, there is a consistency so far that deserves study. Despite the disillusionment that seems to have motivated each album, Bruce maintains his hope, as he maintains his vigilance, and his vision continues to broaden: Darkness was mostly about his search for hope in his own dark life; The Rising mirrored Americans’ need to hold together at a time of great uncertainty; and Wrecking Ball asks, “Where’s the promise, from sea to shining sea?” Can we afford to ignore such questions?

From The Agora to The Apollo: 38 Years in Two Hours, Mark Bourdeau, Professor of English, Suffolk County Community College, New York

William Wordsworth’s famous “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood” (1815), despite the silly Neoplatonic elements for which the poet himself felt the need to apologize in a famous note dictated in 1843, stands as an important document characterizing the belief that memory combined with external stimuli can allow individuals a kind of immortality in the form of transcendence. Through the course of the poem, Wordsworth comes to connect his past with his present and his future, thereby overcoming the myopia of his post-innocent adulthood. For many of us long-time fans, Bruce Springsteen’s music, both recorded and live, represents the same kind of Thanatos-defying process. My epiphany came back in March, as I sat at home listening to the Apollo show on the radio—as Sirius XM Radio celebrated its 10th anniversary in such a wonderful way, I was transported back to my teen years, sitting at home listening to the famous WMMS 10th anniversary show from the Cleveland Agora. The Bruce of 2012 and the songs of 2012 are different, but not really; the 50+-year-old English professor is and is not the same person as the suburban kid with his ears glued to the radio. Just as Wordsworth structured some of his major works around those famous “spots of time,” so too do Bruce’s songs and albums reflect his own, and my, growth in consciousness. Indeed, “From small things, mama / Big things one day come.”

11:15 – 11:30 am Break

11:30 am – 12:45 pm Before He Was The Boss, Ed Gallucci and Peter Knobler, Pollak Theatre
Peter Knobler and Ed Gallucci were present the moment before Bruce Springsteen became a legend, when the life he was writing about was his own, when he was so in touch with his own muse that they heard it talking to him. *Before He Was the Boss* is a portrait of Bruce when he was a kid with a gift he didn’t even want to think about. Ed Gallucci shot Bruce in December 1972, before Springsteen’s first album came out, during rehearsals in an unheated garage in Long Branch, NJ and at Bruce’s home in Bradley Beach. He has pictures of Bruce’s girlfriend, the real Rosalita. Peter Knobler, *Crawdaddy* magazine's editor-in-chief, wrote Bruce’s first interview and profile. Except for the few that accompanied Knobler’s original 1973 article, none of Gallucci’s treasure trove of photographs have ever been seen. Gallucci has the first photos of the E Street Band together – before the band had a name! – plus individual portraits of each musician. No one – not the world of Springsteen zealots, not fans, no one – even knows these seminal photographs exist. Knobler has the stories that go with them. He was also there the day the Boss got his nickname, and in the studio during the making of Born to Run, and on the Asbury Park boardwalk the day Bruce liberated a pinball machine forever.

12:45 – 1:45 pm *Lunch Featuring The Living Carousel presentation with Mike Richison, Marina Vujnovic, Ed Johnston, Monmouth University, and John Viggiano, Montclair University, Anacon Hall*

The Living Carousel involves a large, inflatable, custom video screen (about 20’ x 6’). Inside, six projectors play short video loops of carousel horses alongside 2 audio tracks – one track plays vintage carousel music and the other contains recorded interviews of current and former Asbury Park residents. In order to properly experience the installation, audience members stand at one of two stations. By moving a hand in front of a motion sensor, audience members control the speed and direction of both the audio and video track. They can also toggle between the music and the interview track.

1:45 – 2:45 pm *Life Right Now: The Joy of Springsteen Across Generations, David Masciotra with Ellie Deegan, Pollak Theatre*

Before he begins his conversation with Ms. Ellie Deegan - his lecture agent and life friend – David Masciotra, the author of *Working On a Dream: The Progressive Political Vision of Bruce Springsteen*, will discuss the subversive joy at the heart of Bruce Springsteen’s music - a topic he found of particular importance as a high school student in the early 2000s. The subversive joy of Springsteen’s music was helpful to Masciotra when he went on dates and when he experienced his political awakening. The former was more important.

2:45 – 3:45 pm *Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band: A Rock ‘N’ Roll Manifesto, Mike Appel, Former Manager and Producer of Bruce Springsteen, Pollak Theatre*

In this highly anticipated presentation, Mike Appel will speak about the ingredients that go into becoming a superstar, demonstrating how Bruce and the Band personify these ingredients. However, after years of presenting one’s art to the public a kind of manifesto, code or philosophy emerges. In Bruce’s case, he knows he lives in a world of commerce but that doesn’t mean that he denigrates his art by associating himself with a sponsor as do the Rolling Stones and so many others. He keeps his ticket prices reasonable. He constantly tours the world and interacts with his world-wide audience all the time. No one on the globe has ever put more energy into presenting like Bruce and the Band do. Bruce and the Band conduct themselves with a dignity found in few artists these days where almost all 'artists' marry themselves as soon as they can to products.
3:45 – 4:15 pm Break/Transition to Pollak Theatre for Songwriters Event

4:15 – 6:15 pm Glory Days Symposium is Proud to Host “Songwriters by the Sea” Featuring Joe D’Urso, Joe Rapolla, Joe Grushecky, Willie Nile and James Maddock, Pollak Theatre

The Songwriters By The Sea series is an outlet for performing songwriters to introduce new material as well as existing material in an intimate and interactive environment. What started out, and still exists, as a coffee shop show for area songwriters to casually perform with other writers by the beach in Asbury Park has quickly evolved into a bona fide theater series around the shore area; attracting top performing songwriters from around the country such as Willie Nile, Marah, Steve Forbert, and Jefferey Gains, and of course today’s performers. By having 2 to 3 performers join D’Urso and Rapolla each show, there’s plenty of opportunity to cross pollinate fan bases. Music fans get to hear performers they might not normally come across, and performers get to play to a different audience. The format is songwriters taking turns playing acoustic versions of their songs. There may be a story involved, other performers may accompany, and there is usually a lot on interaction with the audience. This is an honest show that is being very well received by a growing base of performers and audience.

6:15 – 8 – Dinner on Own and Travel to The Stone Pony

8 pm – 2 am Stone Pony Night #2 featuring Joe Grushecky and The Houserockers, Willie Nile and more!

Joe Grushecky and The Houserockers along with Willie Nile are sure to please! Come out and enjoy!

Sunday, September 16, 2012

8:30 – noon Conference Registration, Monmouth University, Pollak Theatre Lobby

8:45 – 10:15 am Breakout Sessions

1. Springsteen and Wrecking Ball: (Bey Hall, Room 222)
   Moderator: John Massaro, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor (Retired), Maine

   “Freedom son’s a dirty shirt”: Bruce Springsteen and the Nobility of Work on Wrecking Ball, Scott McMillan, Associate Professor of English, History, and Political Science, Volunteer State Community College, Tennessee

   On his 2012 album Wrecking Ball, one of the more interesting themes that Bruce Springsteen explores is the nature of work in the contemporary economic context of millions of unemployed and displaced workers. In an interview with the European press before the release of the album, Springsteen said, “Work creates an enormous sense of self,” and “that the lack of work creates a loss of self.” This particular theme is especially evident in the songs “Jack of All Trades” and “Shackled and Drawn,” in which characters extol the nobility of work, even if it just doing those seemingly menial but necessary jobs, like mowing lawns, that still help to create a “sense of self.” Springsteen’s approach to the nature of work on Wrecking Ball echoes Martin Luther King’s 1968 speech to the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) in
Memphis in which he told these workers “that whenever you are engaged in work that serves humanity and is for the building of humanity, it has dignity, and it has worth.” However, Springsteen’s theme on Wrecking Ball of the nobility of work itself stands in stark contrast to how he has presented the nature of work on earlier albums, especially in songs like “Factory” on Darkness on the Edge of the Town in which the repetition and mechanization of factory work can lead to a life defined by alienation. In my paper, I will analyze this important thematic shift in Springsteen’s approach to the nobility of work on Wrecking Ball in contrast with his earlier themes of the inherent alienation of the working life.

Hard Times, Loss and Renewal: The Lifetime Conversation, Melanie Henwood, Melanie Henwood Associates, United Kingdom

Bruce Springsteen’s music, and particularly his live performances, have always been about a lot more than just the songs. There is a narrative that locates each album very clearly in time and place. As Bruce has said, he constantly keeps in mind that “I’m in the midst of a lifetime conversation with my audience, and I’m trying to keep track of that conversation.” The dialogue is multi-layered and complex. On the face of it the primary narrative is about what is happening in the world, but there are multiple substrata of both personal and political threads which interact and inform each other, and never more clearly than on ‘Wrecking Ball.’

The central theme of here is the state of the economy and the anger at the fallout and social fragmentation that has resulted. But the consequences of lost jobs, broken spirits and fractured communities speak not only of the victims of today’s global recession, but also of the long history of struggle endured over centuries. Such themes of continuity are underlined by the deliberate use of strong elements of Celtic folk tradition, gospel-style mantras and chorus chants.

It is the connections with the past that also give hope for the future. There is a cycle and balance to everything and the faith that ‘we stood the drought, now we’ll stand the flood’ gives a reason to carry on. The belief in survival is complex and the rebirth is both physical and spiritual. The ‘sweet souls departed’ from all our lives, including those from the E-Street Band, are still here - standing ‘shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart’. The voices of the dead proclaim they are alive; here is the hope for resurrection, or at least of moral rebirth and renewed solidarity. We may be facing hard and challenging times, but together we have a duty to ‘carry the fire and light the spark.’

Wrecking Ball: Bruce’s Best Album of 1995, Wilfred Major, Assistant Professor of Classics, Louisiana State University
This paper argues that the Wrecking Ball album represents a culmination of substance and technique that Bruce Springsteen has been struggling to achieve for nearly twenty years. First, I suggest that Bruce was much more shaken by the response to his 1992 albums, Human Touch and Lucky Town, and the subsequent tour, than is usually acknowledged. For years he lacked the confidence to put out a fully-fledged album using the music with which he experimented. He played with tape loops and beats. He used gospel and traditional soul vocalists on his tour. He flirted with hard-edged roots music. He called the E Street Band together to record briefly. But when his muse led him to write intensely lyrical and political songs, he abandoned all these musical pathways and released The Ghost of Tom Joad, an album mostly so unmusical that it made him immune to criticism when it was not a commercial success. After more years of lurching from one project album to another, with Wrecking Ball, Bruce once again writes lyrically and politically, but now on an album that incorporates the fruit of all of the musical experiments he was conducting in the early ‘90’s. In this sense, the album is Bruce’s grand success of 1995 and perhaps clears the slate for him to begin a new phase of his artistic development.

Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor: Springsteen’s Ode to the Disenfranchised and the Lie of the American Promise, Susan Woge, Adjunct English Faculty, Penn State University, Shenango Campus

The foundation and structure of America’s prosperity has been built on the backs of working class citizens, lured by the promise of the American Dream, then excluded from reaping its benefits. A tantalizing glimpse into the “Mansion on the Hill” is all they are afforded; their only compensation for years of backbreaking, heartbreaking toil. This paper will explore Springsteen’s role in narrating the tales of the disenfranchised, tales Springsteen has been chronicling since Greetings From Asbury Park. His current album, Wrecking Ball, scrutinizes the lie of the American promise, and the role the wealthy have played in creating that lie.

2. Springsteen and International Perspectives: (Bey Hall, Room 223)
Moderator: TBD

Lost In The European Translation? : The Artist, The Entertainer, and The E Street Rhythm and Blues, Klaus Heissenberger, University Lecturer, Saarland University, Austria

Immensely popular with his fans in Europe, Bruce Springsteen also continues to divide music devotees in Germany and Austria into those who regard him as (merely) a popular entertainer and those who will grant him the status of a serious artist. Having explored, both as a longtime Springsteen fan and teacher of American popular culture, reasons for this rift in many conversations I have had with fans, friends, students and musicians, I will claim that a key characteristic that defines rock and roll as a protoypically American music has been lost on many Europeans in the transatlantic journey of Springsteen’s music: its historical blending and fusing of ‘white’ and ‘black’ elements. Most clearly present in Springsteen’s own musical roots (early
rock and roll styles) and his performances (modeled largely on ‘black’ performance aesthetics),
this racial blending is a key factor that makes rock and roll in general and Springsteen’s version
and vision of it in particular work as both popular entertainment and art in the U.S., but not
necessarily in Germany and Austria. To argue this point, I will explore notions of authenticity, the
gendered and racial dynamics of canon formation in rock and roll, and European perceptions of
Springsteen’s ‘Americanness’ in order to shed light on the particular dynamics of enthusiasm and
skepticism, entertainment and art that continue to characterize Springsteen’s reception in
Germany and Austria.

Moving to the Promised Land, Donna Luff, Associate Fellowship Director, Children’s Hospital
Boston/Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts

I can’t blame Bruce Springsteen entirely. Even before I heard the opening bars to “Hungry Heart”
in the backseat of my father’s car driving to school one morning in 1981 –I had an obsession
with America. I grew up in the West Midlands of England religiously watching Elvis movies and
American TV shows. But Bruce changed everything; and he made it all worse.

I live in the States now. The reason I live here is my husband’s career not my teenage obsessions.
But maybe the reason I agreed to the move –despite the anguish of leaving my homeland, family
and friends –has something to do with my on-going fascination with the States, and specifically
with Springsteen. In this paper, I outline how Bruce Springsteen’s music and performances
shaped my image and understanding of America. I discuss how Springsteen presents
international fans with a particular vision of America, a complex vision that is distinct from most
American self-projections through the global media. I explore how this vision changed my
perceptions of his country and complicated my identification with my own.

Lastly, my reflections will explain why, as I stood for the first time on the boardwalk in Asbury
Park on the morning of my 40th birthday, I felt a peculiar sense of familiarity but also betrayal.

The Line: Bruce on Mexican-American Border, Victor Garcia Zapata, Mexico

Bruce has always sung stories developed at different borders. The characters in these stories are
located on both sides and describe relationships of power between the denominators and
dominated placed, each, in their own side. From the border stories Bruce has created a way of
addressing the conflict understanding the characters in their own social context, including violent
gang fights and love relationships that defy the logic of political conflicts, social and religious,
among others. As a Mexican follower I am particularly interested in analyzing the way in which
Bruce approaches the border disputes focusing the analysis on Mexico relations - United States.

3. Springsteen and the Legacy of Woody Guthrie: (Bey Hall, Room 225)
   Moderator: Jerry Zolten, Associate Professor of Communications Arts & Sciences and American
   Studies, Penn State Altoona
This Machine Wrecks Greedy Capitalists: Bruce Springsteen Steps Confidently into Woody Guthrie’s Light, Donna Dolphin, Associate Professor, Monmouth University, New Jersey

Bruce Springsteen has revealed the influence of Woody Guthrie on his music in subtle ways. This influence has been recognized by cultural scholars and critics in works such as “The Rising” (2002), "Devils & Dust" (2005), and "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions -American Land" (2006). In "The Ghost of Tom Joad" (1995), Springsteen stated the reference more directly, and scholars and critics noticed. In his keynote address at the South By Southwest (SXSW) festival in 2012, Springsteen gave a clear, though brief, explanation of how Guthrie came to play a role in his music. Springsteen, like Guthrie, has been recognized by scholars and critics as more than a musician alone: he is a culture worker. "Wrecking Ball" (2012) is Springsteen’s most forthright alliance with Guthrie to date. From lyrics to music to CD jacket design to font and photographs, nearly everything about "Wrecking Ball" suggests that Springsteen is inviting the comparison to Woody Guthrie. The question which remains to be answered is whether "Wrecking Ball" is homage or imitation.

The Rhetoric of Hope: America, Authenticity, and the Lyricist’s Path Out of the Darkness on the Edge of Town, Robert McParland, Associate Professor of English, Felician College, New Jersey

Bruce Springsteen’s lyrics, from The Darkness on the Edge of Town through Nebraska and The River to The Ghost of Tom Joad reveal a rhetoric that is grounded in human persistence, integrity, and compassion and in music’s transformative capacity. In this presentation, a direct line is traced from Woody Guthrie’s authentic American voice and Bob Dylan’s lyrical art to Bruce Springsteen’s storytelling and the rhetoric of hope that runs through his songs. The Joads of John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath are viewed as an archetypal American family in quest of “the Promised Land” and are compared with Guthrie’s images, Dylan’s work, and characters and voices in Springsteen’s songs.

Wobblies, Woody, Wrecking Balls: Joe Hill, Woody Guthrie, and Bruce Springsteen as Visionary Realists of Anarchism, Communism, and Democracy, Doug Morris, Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, Eastern New Mexico University

In the wake of “Wrecking Ball’s” emphasis on historical continuities and spirits of the past alive in the present, this presentation will draw connections between the music and commitments of Joe Hill, Woody Guthrie, and Bruce Springsteen and contextualize the connections through an exploration of the angered, hopeful, solidaristic, and transformative threads that run from and through the anarcho-syndicalist visions of the “Industrial Workers of the World” as expressed through the songs of Joe Hill, the communist/Christian socialist-inspired call for substantive democracy through worker’s solidarity and the Wobbly struggle for the One Big Union present in the songs/writings of Woody Guthrie, and the visions of popular democracy, spiritual awakenings, and civic courage captured in Springsteen’s latest “Wrecking Ball,” where he intones, “we are alive...to fight shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart.”
As visionary realists, Hill, Guthrie, and Springsteen, assume the responsibility to honestly reveal harsh and brutal present realities always accompanied by hopeful visions that point to possible and needed human and structural transformations. Brecht-like, these realist visionary citizen-musicians hold mirrors to reflect dehumanizing conditions redolent of capital’s drive to exploit and oppress, open windows onto clearer understandings of root causes of grim realities, and, as social transformers/critical educators, rise above the tragic through hammer-like acts of revelation that direct and inspire us toward constructing better-futures.

For realist visionaries “a land of hope and dreams” is not “pie-in-the-sky,” but is, in Guthrie’s vision, a world of “shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart” solidarity in which “everyone loves one another and is organized in one big union.” In short, these artists offer a soundtrack for the OCCUPY movements.

4. Springsteen and Religion/Spirituality: (Bey Hall, Room 226)
   Moderator: Spencer Allen, Adjunct Lecturer, John Brown University, Arkansas

   Responding to His Baptismal Call: Springsteen as Prophet of Social Justice, Gerri Noble-Martocci, Adjunct Professor, Marymount University, Virginia

   Springsteen’s lyrics reflect a particularly Catholic way of looking at the world. This idea will be explored in two ways. First, I will explore how his lyrics reflects Springsteen’s taking on the mantle of a prophet, i.e., one who calls us back to a covenantal understanding of relationships with God and neighbor. Second, I will explore how Springsteen’s lyrics reflect the main themes of Catholic Social Teaching. The themes of human dignity, call to community, the dignity of work and the rights of workers and solidarity will receive particular recognition and emphasis.

5. Bruce Brunch: Live Radio Broadcast with Tom Cunningham: (Young Auditorium)
   Tom Cunningham will broadcast his regular Sunday radio show live from The Glory Days Symposium. This is an opportunity for you to be part of a live audience for his show, which will include interviews with selected guests. Please note Tom’s show runs from 9 – 11 am. If you are interested in this session, arrive early as seating is limited.

6. Springsteen and the Role of the Artist: (Bey Hall, Room 227)
   Moderator: TBD

   Comedy, Purpose, and Springsteen’s Career as a Songwriter, Alex Pitofsky, Professor of English, Appalachian State University, North Carolina

   Bruce Springsteen has often expressed his admiration for comic performers (Jackie Gleason, Jon Stewart, and others) and for some of the funniest acts of the rock era, from Bo Diddley to the Dictators. In I’ll Sleep When I’m Dead, an oral history of Warren Zevon’s life and career, for example, Springsteen says that he envied Zevon’s ability to lace his songs with humor: “He did one of the hardest things there is to do in music, which was he injected a true sense of humor in all his work. There have only been a few guys who have pulled that off well.” Despite
Springsteen’s interest in comedy, however, humor seldom plays an important role in his songwriting. If someone asked which adjectives come to mind when we hear the name Bruce Springsteen, we would surely hear words like “intense” and “thoughtful.” Would anyone mention the word “funny”? With few exceptions, the songs that have made Springsteen’s reputation as a lyricist are not even slightly amusing. Consider this roll call: “Born to Run,” “Backstreets,” “Darkness on the Edge of Town,” “Badlands,” “Born in the USA,” “Streets of Philadelphia,” “The Ghost of Tom Joad,” “The Rising.” These songs provoke us to think, feel, and reflect, but they do not provoke laughter. This paper will explore the ways in which Springsteen, one of the most serious voices in rock history, has occasionally deployed humor in his songwriting career, from the verbal clowning of “Blinded by the Light” to the raunchy comedy of unreleased songs like “In Freehold” and “Pilgrim in the Temple of Love.”

In Defense of Influence: Springsteen’s 2012 SXSW Keynote and the Literary Tradition of Poetic Creativity, Bill Wolff, Assistant Professor of Writing Arts, Rowan University, Delaware

In his 2012 SXSW keynote, Springsteen announces his purpose: “to talk about the one thing that’s been consistent over the years: the genesis and power of creativity, the power of the songwriter, or let’s say composer, or just creator.” That creativity is grounded in “your teachers, your influences, your personal history.” Springsteen also touches on the role of “reproducible technologies” on what it means to be a creator today. Springsteen’s acknowledgment of the importance of historical influence on the power of creativity—a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence—as T.S. Eliot words it—immediately locates his talk within a lineage of essays on poetry, creativity, and culture. These essays, dating back to Sir Philip Sidney’s “In Defense of Poesy” (circa 1583) include works by Percy Shelley, William Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold, T.S. Eliot, Adrienne Rich, and others. Springsteen has been discussed as a writer whose songs exist within the tradition of Hank Williams, Pete Seeger, the Beat poets, Bob Dylan (Carman, 2000; Harde and Streight, 2010; Smith, 2002), and soul music (Dinerstein, 2007). But what the SXSW keynote does is show Springsteen’s thoughts on the creation of art—and not just the art itself—to be within a tradition of the most important poets who have written in the English language. In this presentation, then, I will locate Springsteen’s keynote within that literary tradition and suggest how it updates the tradition for writers in an age of reproducible and ubiquitous recording technologies.

All Aboard: Passengers on the Train of Hope and Dreams, Ernie Sandonato, English Teacher, Delaware Valley High School, Pennsylvania

This paper will survey the saints, sinners, losers, winners, and lost souls whose captivating and visionary personalities inhabit The Boss’s lyrics and narratives. The diverse characters in The Boss’s songs are, of course, imaginary; yet, they are symbolic of genuine American souls who are searching, escaping, philosophizing, regretting, and establishing identities. Using the train as the ascendant metaphor for their collective journey to the romantic land of hope and dreams, this paper will take a sometimes light-hearted glimpse as to why these characters are on the train, with whom they would associate on the train, and their possible roles on the journey. As the “big
wheels roll through fields where sunlight streams,” one can only wonder how these personalities will pass the time, who will be in what train car, and what they might say to each other on this part of the ride. What advice might Bill Horton offer to Spanish Johnny? What would Crazy Janey discuss with Sherry? Which new twosome would wander off together to the sleeper car? Who would hold court in the bar car? This theoretical survey will address those questions, and more.

7. Springsteen and Politics/Activism (Bey Hall, Room 228)
Moderator: Rosemary Gallick, Northern Virginia Community College

Springsteen: Our Black Cowboy, Patricia Hillen, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs, Penn State Brandywine, Pennsylvania

Devils and Dust a collection of geographically scattered songs from the Matamoros Banks of the Rio Grande to Reno to the Carolinas to Iraq (perhaps) to Jerusalem to Maria’s Bed to All the Way Home was released in April 2005 a record that took more than a decade in the making. Before the album’s release Springsteen’s 13th studio album Bush was voted in for a second term and we were still at war. Soon after the release Springsteen’s solo Devils and Dust tour began and five Grammy nominations followed. A Grammy performance of the title track gave way to his salty and throaty ‘bring ‘em home’ salute -- stage left. This paper presentation seeks to reconcile the complex relationship between the compilations of the original album Devils and Dust all songs written by Springsteen and its metaphysical push (both lyrical and instrumental) to the now and ever present day. It is possible that Devils and Dust was premonitory in its conception identifying the many American paradoxical moments as it located so perceptively the social and political pulse we now know today to be the 44th presidential election campaign the 44th president of the United States and our current administration. “Long Time Comin’ – let your sins be your own –it’s been a long time comin’ but now it’s here.” And Leah. Why Leah? Looking through a different lens one can now see like the blind man the word HEAL. “I wanna build me a house .. . I want to shoulder my load .. I got somethin' in my heart I been waitin' to give I got a life I wanna start one I been waitin' to live No more waitin' tonight I feel the light I say the prayer I open the door I climb the stairs...

Bruce Springsteen and the Politics of Meaning in America, Michael Bader, Special Advisor, Institute4Change, California

Bruce Springsteen political outrage and empathy speaks to the discrepancy between the American Dream and current social reality. Whether in his depictions of the strains of working class life, or the multiple forms of suffering of the dispossessed, he inveighs against economic injustice and shows us opportunities for its transcendence. In interviews, Springsteen speaks as if he’s a traditional liberal, worried and angry about the breakdown of the social contract and safety net. A traditional liberal.

Fortunately, he’s not.
And it’s a good thing. Progressive political organizations and movements today will grow only if they speak to the widest range of what people really need; not simply a steady job and secure retirement, but lasting experiences of connection, meaning, and agency.

Bruce Springsteen’s music does just that, linking economic suffering to needs for love, friendship, and a connection to something bigger than the self. Similarly, his concerts invite isolated people into an ecstatic community.

Springsteen recently said, “If there’s not a sense of continuity, a sense of some sort of communal obligation and responsibility, a sense of a future involved in what you’re doing, you end up being one shallow greedy motherfucker…”

Faced with this current tsunami from the Right, progressives need to build organizations that nurture people’s hearts and souls, not just pay their rent. They need to offer people not just a critique of the rapacious greed of the rich, but a message, strategy, and program that speak to loneliness, powerlessness, cynicism, and the universal but disavowed need people have for empathy and recognition.

Springsteen: The Voice of America, Matt Gilchrist, Social Studies Teacher, Chantilly High School, Virginia

Bruce Springsteen is said to have served as “the voice of America”. Throughout his career, he has spoken not just to the mainstream audience of pop radio, but he has also empathized with the poor and downtrodden, and called out our government in the name of those being left behind. Springsteen has served his fans by calling to our attention those afflicted with AIDS, suffering through stressful economic times, or ravaged by war. He has set aside his millionaire status to don the work clothes of the blue collar, honoring them through his music. This paper will examine how Springsteen has evolved from a pure rock ‘n roll musician to a critic of American society. As he has grown older, he has expanded his credibility, to the point where he can openly express his own political opinions and misgivings, regardless of how some of his fans might think. He has openly endorsed presidential candidates, and criticized our leaders for their perceived shortcomings. As a result, the last quarter-century of American society has been reflected upon and questioned through his work, in a fashion that has only been done by a select few, such as Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan.

Bruce as Political Activist and Musical Commentator, Rosemary Gallick, Northern Virginia Community College

Bob Dylan’s “Blowin in the Wind” melody began my interest in political protest as artistic expression. Privileged to have studied at the State University of New York at Stony Brook in the late 60s, I experienced the protest movement and the rock and roll concerts that embraced the causes for freedom that still exist today. These early roots formed a solid foundation for pursuing themes found in my academic studies and paintings today. My interest in Bruce, however, began in 1978 and has been a passion ever since.
Being born the same year as Bruce, 1949, my presentation will be visually based, discussing the turmoil of the civil rights movement, escape from a home base, Viet Nam, and their profound effect in both the political and musical arena. While providing background information and setting the stage, I will discuss Bruce Springsteen’s search for “the promised land.” As I trace Bruce’s socio-economic and political awareness from the early stages of his career, I will use my own paintings of Bruce and other portraits of his iconic influences and those he inspired as a visual backdrop. The presentation will be divided chronologically and will explore his evolving response to politics and the economic situation through music. Springsteen’s own personal understanding and representation of the working class individual is paramount. Examining his “Born to Run” to “Born in the USA” eras, I will discuss the course of Bruce Springsteen’s transformation. His fearless musical development as a romantic songwriter and talented musician, driving down the highway (without crushed velvet seats and out of the Jersey swamps) to find love and hope in a field of dreams will be acknowledged. In addition, I will also visit his significant role as a political and social commentator in musical form.

As the illusion of permanent economic prosperity in the USA and “trickle down” economics slowly dwindle, the reign of George W. Bush was firmly established. Reacting empathetically to the tragedy of 9/11/2011, New York City has now become Bruce Springsteen’s “City of Ruins.” As hopes and dreams evaporate, Bruce once again takes a stand through “The Rising.” Bruce has seen the outcomes that he cannot spiritually ignore even though he is criticized for the “Vote for Change” tour.

As catastrophic meltdowns in American society occur, the age of Obama begins with hope! The mortgage and financial crisis now does trickle down to the middle and lower class Americans. No one else has tackled the crisis so astutely than Bruce does in his latest “Wrecking Ball” message.

The presentation will conclude by having the viewer share some of the joy, magic and nostalgia of the past decades while, at the same time, moving into the future. Exploring Bruce Springsteen’s constant battle to understand the physical, spiritual and basic needs of the individual, his constant heart felt concern for the “American Dream” is evident. By looking at the images of Bruce and reflecting on the times that created such a grand stage, Bruce has the lead role as a voice trying desperately to save America as he knows, understands and loves it.

8. Springsteen from Various Angles (Bey Hall, Room 229)
Moderator: TBD

The Personal is Political: Springsteen, Anger and Grief, Martha Nell Smith, Professor, and Lenny Cassuto, Professor, University of Maryland

Lenny Cassuto and Martha Nell Smith critique Springsteen’s performances during the present Wrecking Ball tour. On this album and in his current concert performances, Springsteen examines themes that have always been evident in his music--the injustices
of poverty and all social discrimination. After more than four decades of live performance (from the seedy bars on the Jersey shore to the huge arenas all across the U.S. and in Europe) and album production, his "Death to my Hometown," "Jack of All Trades," and "Wrecking Ball," though characterized as some as "borderline jingoistic" (Jesse Cataldo, Slant magazine), are, in our opinion, not simply a profoundly pining, wailing culmination of Springsteen's preoccupations, but, as David Fricke observed in Rolling Stone, "the most despairing, confrontational and musically turbulent album Bruce Springsteen has ever made." Our paper will plumb possible meanings of Springsteen's call to action, as it were, which is a call to make art, make music. What does that mean in 2012 when dirty money appears to smother any real political intervention and Springsteen himself has once again turned away from supporting any major political parties?

“Don’t Trust Men Who Walk with Canes”: Springsteen & the Cultural Production of Disability, Chris Rosa, University Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, City University of New York

Scholars have documented Bruce Springsteen’s role as a social commentator and American poet whose work thickly describes and richly explores dimensions of American life that include work, class, urban life, youth culture, race, gender, U.S. immigration policy, and political economy. Indeed, through these roles, Springsteen has proven to be an influential agent of American culture construction. Although not as widely discussed by scholars, the disability experience is also among the aspects of the American life that Springsteen culturally constructs through his work. Indeed, he actively participates in the cultural construction of disability embodiment through his very act of singing, in the phenomenological production of the disability experience through the structure of his live performances, and most importantly, to mainstream American culture’s popular understanding of disability through the evocative nature of his lyrics. Springsteen tacitly appreciates his power as an agent of culture production through his well-known reluctance to produce music videos for his songs that feature much more than Springsteen & the E Street Band’s literal performance of the songs themselves, for fear that anything more dramatic would frame the meaning of his songs for his audience. To demonstrate the process of disability culture production to which Springsteen contributes, the presentation will feature the application of the same Springsteen music, rife with disability images, to different video images, resulting in qualitatively different constructions of disability.

10:15 – 10:30 am Break

10:30 – 11:30 am Springsteen and The Work of Hope, Richard C. Harwood, President and Founder, The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, Pollak Theatre

Richard C. Harwood, president and founder of The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, will discuss his recent study revealed in his newest book, The Work of Hope. Rich will connect his findings within The Work of Hope to how Springsteen has incorporated the life of regular Americans into his songs, and transformed concerts into “communions.” He will discuss the potential for people to strengthen their role in communities in order to kick-start a new trajectory for the country, allowing for a new sense of hope and possibility.
11:30 am – 12:30 pm *Goin’ Down the Road Feelin’ Bad (Bruce Springsteen and the Legacy of Woody Guthrie)*, Robert Santelli, Executive Director, Grammy Museum, Pollak Theatre

Since 1980, when Bruce Springsteen first discovered the music and life of Woody Guthrie, few artists have so dramatically impacted the themes of Springsteen’s songs of social and political protest as has Guthrie. In this centennial year of Guthrie’s birth, Robert Santelli, author of the recently published book, “This Land Is Your Land: Woody Guthrie and the Journey of an American Folk Song” and co-producer of the Guthrie centennial concerts across the country, examines the influence of Guthrie on Springsteen and the Guthrie legacy that Springsteen continues with his own music.


Steel Mill is generally regarded in Jersey Shore music circles as one of the best and most creative of all area rock bands prior to the creation of the E Street Band in the early ‘70s. Steel Mill blended blues with rock and colored the musical results with Asbury Park soul music. Along the way, the band developed a sound and stage show that highlighted future members of the E Street Band and gave Springsteen necessary experience as a band leader and songwriter that would reap great rewards after the signing of his recording contract with Columbia Records. Author and music historian Robert Santelli saw Steel Mill perform a number of times in the late ‘60s and has interviewed all its members. In his presentation he creates a compelling history of the band and contextualizes its importance in the overall Bruce Springsteen story.

1:45 – 3 pm General Session *Riding the Wrecking Ball*, Peter Ames Carlin, author of *Bruce*, Pollak Theatre

In this presentation, Peter Ames Carlin, author of the forthcoming Simon and Schuster release, *Bruce*, will examine Bruce Springsteen’s creative process in the studio, the bumpy road through 2011 (including, of course, the death of Clarence Clemons), the preparations for the current tour, Bruce’s speech and performance at SXSW and the opening night of the tour. Along the way he’ll touch on Clarence’s perspective on his relationship with Bruce (based on his two-day interview with him in March, 2011); and Bruce’s own insights into his life and work as he ventured into an E Street Band that didn’t include the Big Man. In what will be the first public airing of material from the book, Peter will be reading from the book, sharing some stories that didn’t make it into the narrative, and taking whatever questions from the audience.

3 – 5 pm *Who Do You Think I Am? Screening and Q&A with Nick Mead*, Pollak Theatre

Experience the extended version of the Clarence Clemons documentary *Who Do I Think I Am?: A Portrait of a Journey*. The film follows Clarence on his travels to China from 2005 through 2010. Following the film, director and Clemons friend Nick Mead will share perspectives on making the film and entertain questions.

5 pm – 5:15 pm Closing Comments

5:15 pm Adjourn
Monday, September 17, 2012

12 – 5 pm **Tour of Asbury Park/Freehold/Belmar, led by Stan Goldstein and Jean Mikle** - Tour begins and leaves from Monmouth University, location TBD.

This walking tour will feature many historical stops in Springsteen lore from his boyhood home to many of the musical clubs in Asbury Park where Bruce and others helped to generate the Asbury Park sound.