



## The Patriot-News

### He 'Ain't Talking' but profs, bios have plenty to say

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Of The Patriot-News

For much of his career Bob Dylan has made a point of being elusive, mysterious and painstakingly private.

He doesn't talk much and when he does it's often hard to tell if he's telling the truth. So, others have taken it upon themselves to essentially speak for him by drawing their own conclusions about his work.

Through books, movies, symposiums and every imaginable type of college course, the Dylan mystique is being dissected:

- For example, this past school year Philadelphia's La Salle University offered the American Studies course "When the Ship Comes In" focusing on Dylan's albums and historical events from 1960 to 1975; Dr. Daniel J. Dwyer used Dylan's work as part of his philosophy classes at Xavier University in Cincinnati; biographies, cultural histories and more than a dozen Dylan albums were the class materials for "Bob Dylan's America" at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee and a "Dylanology" course was held last semester at Villa Julie College in Baltimore.

Elayne Rapping, a professor at the University of Buffalo, is a nationally known media critic and the author of several books on television, media and pop culture.

She admits to including Dylan material in nearly every course she teaches.

"Dylan has been the soundtrack of my life for a very long time, and I've traveled far and wide to see him," she said. "I believe Dylan is one of the artistic geniuses of the 20th century. There's nobody like him. He's influenced everything that came afterward."

- This summer the Memphis Theological Seminary will hold a two-week class exploring the biblical references in Dylan's lyrics and his views of sin and virtue. The recently released book, "Bob Dylan: Intimate Insights from Friends and Fellow Musicians" by Kathleen Mackay asks musicians like Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Bobby Vee, Maria Muldaur, Johnny Rivers, Kris Kristofferson, Ronnie Hawkins, Rosanne Cash, Tom Petty, Bruce Springsteen and Bono about Dylan's art and personality. The Todd Haynes film "I'm Not There" is expected to be released this fall with a variety of characters -- played by Christian Bale, Cate Blanchett, Richard Gere and Heath Ledger -- each embodying a different aspect of Dylan's life. Earlier this year the University of Minnesota held the "Highway 61 Revisited: Dylan's Road from Minnesota to the World" symposium that included 60 speakers over three days and drew 300 attendees from as far away as Japan, France, England and Italy.

"There was a real infectious energy because it was held in Minnesota and where Dylan went to college, briefly," said Colleen Sheehy, director of education at the Weisman Art Museum that hosted the event.

Dylan attended the university in 1959 and 1960 and made the switch from rock to folk at performances in the Dinkytown section of Minneapolis on the edge of campus.

"There's been a movement to take stock of and rethink Dylan in light of the 'Chronicles' book, the (Martin) Scorsese film 'No Direction Home,' the 'Modern Times' album and his (XM) radio show," Sheehy said.

The University of Minnesota Press will publish a book next year with selected presentations from the symposium.

- It's not new, but just down the turnpike at the LaSalle University Library there is a Dylan section of its special collections archive.

It's been used to write a Nobel Prize nomination for Dylan and for the research of nearly a dozen doctoral dissertations on Dylan.

The collection includes all of Dylan's albums, several dozen bootlegs, sheet music, ticket stubs, T-shirts, biographies, interviews, concert reviews and magazines.

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