

MUSIC 3762B

Music and Politics

Instructor: Dr. April Morris

Email: amorri95@uwo.ca

Course Description:

This class will investigate the complex relationship between music and politics using twentieth- and twenty-first-century examples that span an array of genres and countries. Over the course of four thematic units, we will explore some of the ways in which music and politics interact, considering not only musical works that were intended to express political messages, but also the ways in which performance itself can be considered a political act, how socio-political considerations have impacted the lives and work of composers, and how music has been used to advance political agendas. Our discussions will be informed by analysis of musical works and performances as well as close examination of scholarship on music and politics. Ultimately, we will reach a richer understanding of music's ability to respond to and influence its socio-political environment, whether it is used as an instrument of propaganda or one of resistance.

Objectives:

1. Gain an understanding of some of the ways in which music can encapsulate and express political attitudes and positions, and of how music is shaped by and contributes to its socio-political environment.
2. Become familiar with a variety of politically significant musical works, composers, and performers from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.
3. Develop critical thinking skills and the ability to assess music in intellectual and socio-cultural contexts.
4. Identify key debates in contemporary musicology concerning music and politics.
5. Evaluate discussions of music and politics in mainstream media sources.
6. Develop skills in scholarly research and academic writing.

Course Materials:

All readings are available through the course OWL site. If you need books that turn out to be in high demand to be placed on reserve, please let me know.

Evaluation:

Attendance and Participation	15%
Media Review	20%
In-Class Presentation	20%
Final Paper Meeting	5%
Final Paper Outline	10%
Final Paper	30%

Assignment Summary:

1. **Media Review:** (750-1000 words, submit via OWL by **Thursday, February 15th**) Write an analysis of how an opera and its performances have been viewed in the media. How is the relationship between music and politics addressed in the media? What sorts of arguments are employed? What role do the voices of the composers/librettists/performers/producers of this opera play in this discussion?
Choose one of the following operas:
 - *An American Soldier* (Huang Ruo/David Henry Huang)
 - *Blue* (Jeanine Tesori/Tazewell Thompson)
 - *The Central Park Five* (Anthony Davis/Richard Wesley)
 - *Death of Klinghoffer* (John Adams/Alice Goodman)
 - *Louis Riel* (Harry Somers/Mavor Moore)
 - *Waiting for the Barbarians* (Philip Glass/Christopher Hampton)
2. **In-Class Presentation:** a 15-minute presentation with a colleague on a text related to the topic of the week. Both partners should be equally involved in preparing and presenting your work. Explain the argument of your assigned text to the class and demonstrate how it relates to the themes we will be discussing in class that week. These presentations will be scheduled throughout the term. Presentation readings are included in the course schedule and will be assigned in the first week.
3. **Final Paper:** (2500-3000 words, submit via OWL by **Friday, April 5th**) Write a research paper on an example of music and politics that was not discussed in class. Your focus could be a musical work, a composer, a performer, or a performance, so long as it is connected to politics in some way. Your paper should advance a clear argument and be built on solid academic research. In preparation for your final paper, students will submit a **Final Paper Outline** (submit via OWL by **Thursday, March 7th**) and attend a 20-minute **Final Paper Meeting** (by **Friday, March 22nd** at the latest).

Course Policies:

i) **Course Prerequisites:** Music 2750F/G or the former Music 2710F/G and the former Music 2711F/G. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

ii) **Grading scale:** A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

iii) **Academic Consideration for Student Absence & Missing Work (≥10%):** Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. Academic Consideration provides students with consistent, fair, and pedagogically appropriate consideration, without compromising the academic integrity of the course or program, when they have been unable to complete some component of a course due to short-term extenuating circumstances. Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions (physical or mental) that may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities are directed to seek Academic Accommodation through Accessible Education ([Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)).

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the end of the period of absence covered, to the Academic Counselling unit or Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210), of the student's Home Faculty together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the academic consideration being requested. Students are directed to read the Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness at the following website for further details regarding various requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf

Whenever possible, students who require academic consideration should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

iv) **Academic Consideration for Missing Work (<10%):** In cases where students miss work that is worth less than 10% of the total course grade due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, they may request accommodation from the course instructor. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the Associate Dean's office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

v) **Academic Offences:** Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

vi) **Mental Health & Wellness:** Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in Thames Hall room 2170. **Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in Thames Hall 2170 or to click on the big green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.**

vii) **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students work with Accessible Education which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

viii) **Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays (other than statutory holidays), and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. The Diversity Calendar from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion provides information on multifaith, multicultural and diversity related holidays and observances and links to resources for more information.
<https://www.edi.uwo.ca/resources/2816-2023-Diversity-Calendar-PDF.pdf>

ix) **Contingency Plan:** Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, should any university-declared emergency require some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience), the course will adapt accordingly. The grading scheme will **not** change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

x) **Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:** Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at
https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca or call 519 661-3568.

xi) **Electronic Devices in Classrooms:** The in-class use of electronic devices (other than for instructor-approved in-class uses) is expressly prohibited. Students found guilty of disrupting the class with electronic devices will be asked to leave the class and may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

xii) **Plagiarism Detection Software Usage:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism, which includes AI writing detection tools. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

xiii) This course is all about **discussion and participation:** attendance and participation represent 15% of your grade. If you cannot attend class for a degree-related or medical reason, please let me know in advance. Otherwise, your participation grade may be affected if you miss classes or are silent in class. Please come to class having done the reading and listening assignments and be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the class. Students who are not comfortable speaking in class are welcome to speak with me regarding alternate methods of participation.

xiv) **Controversial or disturbing content and consideration for others:** In this course we will discuss material that is controversial, disturbing, and potentially polarizing. The topic of music and politics is intrinsically connected to controversial issues like nationalism, racism, sexism, violence, and intolerance. This course will not shy away from discussing controversial issues. However, I ask that we all show respect for each other's views and offer our own views in a sensitive and respectful manner. I do not take it lightly that course content and discussions have the potential to offend or upset some students, and I expect us to address this head on by working together. I encourage any student experiencing discomfort with course material to contact me directly.

xv) **Policy on flexible deadlines for written work:** This course follows a flexible deadline policy for submissions of written work (this does not apply to scheduled in-class presentations). The recommended deadlines included in this course outline are intended to distribute your work evenly throughout the term; however, students are welcome to contact me to arrange alternate deadlines for any written assignment. The hard deadline for submitting late Media Reviews or Final Paper Outlines is Friday, March 22nd. The hard deadline for submitting Final Papers is Monday, April 8th. Late assignments will not be accepted after these hard deadlines except in cases covered by the policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absence & Missing Work ($\geq 10\%$) (see policy iii).

Class Schedule

Tuesday, January 9th – Introduction

Thursday, January 11th – Understanding the relationship between music and politics

Reading:

Lydia Goehr, "Political Music and the Politics of Music," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52/1 (Winter 1994), 99-112.

Theodor W. Adorno, "Attitude toward Society," in *Philosophy of New Music* trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 99-102.

I: POLITICAL MUSIC

Tuesday, January 16th – Political Music: Implicit and Explicit Messages

Reading:

Paul Attinello, “Deaths and Silences: Coding and Defiance in Music About AIDS,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship*, ed. Patricia Hall (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Listen to John Corigliano, “Of Rage and Remembrance” and Symphony No. 1 (1988-1989), iii. Chaconne “Giulio’s Song”

Thursday, January 18th – War Support

Reading:

Barbara L. Kelly, “Reflecting the Public Appetite in Text and Music: Debussy’s Act of Wartime Propaganda,” in *Over Here, Over There: Transatlantic Conversations on the Music of World War I* ed. William Brooks, Christina Bashford, and Gayle Magee (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2019), 54-66.

Tuesday, January 23rd – War Protest

Reading:

Ben Arnold, “War Music and the American Composer during the Vietnam Era,” *The Musical Quarterly* 75, No. 3 (Autumn 1991): 316-335.

Presentations:

Andrekos Varnava, “Yusuf Islam (aka Cat Stevens) and his Anti-War and Pro-Peace Songs: From Hippy Peace to Islamic Peace,” *Contemporary British History* 33, No. 4 (2019): 548-572.

Martin Scherzinger and Stephen Smith, “From Blatant to Latent Protest (And Back Again): On the Politics of Theatrical Spectacle in Madonna’s ‘American Life,’” *Popular Music* 26, No. 2 (May 2007): 211-229.

Thursday, January 25th – Proletarian Music and the Composer’s Collective

Reading:

Maria Cristina Fava, “The Composers’ Collective of New York, 1932-1936: Bourgeois Modernism for the Proletariat,” *American Music* 34, No. 3 (Fall 2016): 301-343.

Listen to Elie Siegmeister, “A Strange Funeral in Braddock” (1933)

Tuesday, January 30th – Music and Racial Identity

Reading:

Janell Hobson, "Everybody's Protest Song: Music as Social Protest in the Performances of Marian Anderson and Billie Holliday," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33 No. 2 (2008): 443-448.

Devona Mallory, "The Fruit is on the Ground: The Impact of 'Strange Fruit' on Black Lives Matter," in *Billie Holiday: Essays on the Artistry and Legacy*, ed. Michael V. Perez and Jessica McKee (McFarland & Company: Jefferson, 2019): 151-162.

Listen to Billie Holiday, "Strange Fruit"

Presentations:

Emily Abrams Ansari, "'Vindication, Cleansing, Catharsis, Hope': Interracial Reconciliation and the Dilemmas of Multiculturalism in Kay and Dorr's *Jubilee* (1976)," *American Music* 31, No. 4 (Winter 2013): 379-419.

Deborah Wong, "Just Being There: Making Asian American Space in the Recording Industry," in *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 233-256.

Thursday, February 1st – Gender and Women's Voices

Reading:

Janette Tilley, "Representations of Gender in Barbara Pentland's *Disasters of the Sun*," *Canadian University Music Review/Revue de musique des universités canadiennes* 22, No. 2 (2002): 77-92.

Listen to Barbara Pentland, *Disasters of the Sun* (1973)

Presentation:

Monica A. Hershberger, "Feminist Revisions: Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein's Mid-century Homage to Susan B. Anthony," *Journal of Musicology* 37, No. 3 (July 2020): 383-414.

II. THE POLITICS OF PERFORMANCE

Tuesday, February 6th – Political Interpretations

Reading:

Johanna Yunker, "Marxism and feminism in Ruth Berghaus's staging of *Don Giovanni*," in *Classical music in the German Democratic Republic: Production and Reception* (Rochester: Camden House, 2015), 119-134.

Presentation:

Richard Dellamora, "Mozart and the Politics of Intimacy: The Marriage of Figaro in Toronto, Paris, and New York," in *The Work of Opera: Genre, Nationhood, and Sexual*

Difference, ed. Richard Dellamora and Daniel Fischlin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 255-275.

Thursday, February 8th – Musical Diplomacy

Reading:

Jessica Gienow-Hecht, “*The World is Ready to Listen: Symphony Orchestras and the Global Performance of America*,” *Diplomatic History* 36, No. 1 (January 2012): 17-28.

Presentation:

Danielle Fosler-Lussier, “Cultural Diplomacy as Cultural Globalization: The University of Michigan Jazz Band in Latin America,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 4, No. 1 (2010): 59-93.

Tuesday, February 13th – Representation and the Politics of Identity

Reading:

Matthew W. Jones, “‘Enough of Being Basely Tearful’: ‘Glitter and Be Gay’ and the Camp Politics of Queer Resistance,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 10, No. 4 (2016): 422-445.

Listen to Michael Callen’s recording of “Glitter and be Gay”

Presentation:

Dianne Brooks, “‘They Dig Her Message’: Opera, Television, and the Black Diva,” in *Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture*, ed. Henry Jenkins, Tara McPherson, and Jane Shattuc (London: Duke University Press, 2002), 300-315.

Thursday, February 15th – Sonic Disobedience ****Media Review due at 5pm****

Reading:

Excerpts from *HONK! A Street Band Renaissance of Music and Activism*, ed. Reebee Garofalo, Erin T. Allen, and Andrew Snyder (Routledge, 2020).

—Reading Week—

Tuesday, February 27th – Political Performances

Reading:

T.V. Reed, “‘We Are [Not] the World’: Famine, Apartheid, and the Politics of Rock Music,” in *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Present* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 173-196.

Presentations:

Carol A. Hess, “Miguel Ángel Estrella: (Classical) Music for the People, Dictatorship, and Memory,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Mohammad Delwar Hossain and James Aucoin, “George Harrison and the Concert for Bangladesh: When Rock Music Forever Fused with Politics on a World Stage,” in *Music as a Platform for Political Communication*, ed. Uche Onyebadi (Hershey PA: Information Science Reference, 2017), 149-166.

III. THE POLITICS OF COMPOSING

Thursday, February 29th – Composing in Nazi Germany

Reading:

Michael H. Kater, “Carl Orff: Man of Legend,” in *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 111-143.

Tuesday, March 5th – Musical Nationalism

Reading:

Emily Abrams Ansari, *The Sound of a Superpower: Musical Americanism and the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1-27.

Presentations:

Francisco J. Giménez-Rodríguez, “What Spanishness? Avant-garde vs. Nationalism, Neopopularism and *Espanolade* in *El Amor Brujo* de Manuel de Falla (1915-1923),” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 49, No. 1 (June 2018): 95-114.

Elizabeth Titrington Craft, “Headfirst into an Abyss: The Politics and Political Reception of *Hamilton*,” *American Music* 36, No. 4, Hamilton (Winter 2018): 429-447.

Thursday, March 7th – Music and National Identity in Canada

Reading:

R. Murray Schafer, “Canadian Culture: Colonial Culture,” in *Canadian Music: Issues of Hegemony and Identity*, ed. Robert Witmer and Beverley Diamond (Canadian Scholars’ Press, 1994): 221-237.

Sherril Grace and Stefan Haag, “From Landscape to Soundscape: The Northern Arts of Canada,” *Mosaic* 31, No. 2 (June 1998): 101-122.

Tuesday, March 12th – Shostakovich and Socialist Realism

Reading:

Jennifer Gerstel, "Irony, Deception, and Political Culture in the Works of Dmitri Shostakovich," *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 32, No. 4 (December 1999): 35-51.

Richard Taruskin, "Casting a Great Composer as a Fictional Hero," in *On Russian Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 322-328.

Thursday, March 14th – Composers in Positions of Power

Reading:

Emily Abrams Ansari, "Shaping the Policies of Cold War Musical Diplomacy: An Epistemic Community of American Composers," *Diplomatic History* 36, No. 1 (2012): 41-52.

Tuesday, March 19th – U.S. Composers and the Red Scare

Reading:

Rachel Hutchins-Viroux, "Witch-hunts, Theocracies and Hypocrisy: McCarthyism in Arthur Miller/Robert Ward's opera *The Crucible* and Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*," *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal* 6, no. 2 (2008): 140-148.

Jennifer DeLapp-Birkett, "Aaron Copland and the Politics of Twelve-Tone Composition in the Early Cold War United States," *Journal of Musicological Research* 27 (2008): 31-62.

IV. THE USE OF MUSIC IN POLITICAL CONTEXTS

Thursday, March 21st – Sonic Violence and Torture

Reading:

Juliane Brauer, "How Can Music be Torturous?: Music in Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps," *Music and Politics* 10, No. 1 (Winter 2016), 1-34.

Presentation:

Rebecca Lentjes, "The Sonic Politics of the US Abortion Wars," *American Music* 39, No. 3 (Fall 2021): 301-324.

Tuesday, March 26th – Government, Broadcasting, and Propaganda

Reading:

Annegret Fauser, *Sounds of War: Music in the United States During World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 77-93.

Presentations:

Norma Coates, "It's What's Happening, Baby!: Television Music and the Politics of the War on Poverty," in *Music in Television: Channels of Listening*, ed. James Deaville (New York: Routledge, 2011), 165-181.

Peter J. Schmelz, "Alfred Schnittke's *Nagasaki*: Soviet Nuclear Culture, Radio Moscow, and the Global Cold War," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 62, No. 2 (2009): 413-474.

Thursday, March 28th – Inspiring the Troops

Reading:

Annegret Fauser, *Sounds of War: Music in the United States During World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 106-126.

Presentation:

Samuel Dwinell, "Rock, Enroll: Music and Militarization since 9/11," in *The Politics of Post-9/11 Music: Sound, Trauma, and the Music Industry in the Time of Terror* ed. Brian Flota (Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 13-29.

Tuesday, April 2nd – Music in Political Campaigns

Reading:

Dana Gorzelany-Mostak, "Keepin' It Real (Respectable) in 2008): Barack Obama's Music Strategy and the Formation of Presidential Identity," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 10, No. 2 (2016): 133-148.

Thursday, April 4th – Conclusions: Music and Politics/Music as Politics

Reading:

Ellen Waterman, "Improvisation and the Audibility of Difference: Safa, Canadian Multiculturalism, and the Politics of Recognition," in *Negotiated Moments: Improvisation, Sound, and Subjectivity*, Gillian Siddall and Ellen Waterman eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 283-306.

****Final Paper due Friday, April 5th at 5pm****