

Philosophy of Music Education M9581b

Masters Students

Instructor: Dr. Paul Woodford
Talbot College office 108
Office Phone: extension 85336
E-mail: woodford@uwo.ca

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Wednesdays 5:30 – 7:00pm (TC310)
Thursdays 5:30 – 7:00pm (TC 310)

Rationale:

The purpose of this course is to promote critical examination of music education philosophy and practice while also raising your consciousness with respect to political and other problems affecting music in the schools and society. An attempt is made to put music education philosophy and practice into larger educational, social, cultural, and political contexts. The aim is challenge you to develop and express your own ideas, your own personal philosophy of music teaching, so that you can better contribute to intellectual conversations about the nature, role, and value of music education in democratic society. Emphasis will be placed on clarity of thought as expressed through both the spoken (class presentations and discussions) and written word (personal reflections, written assignments, and a critical paper).

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course you should be able to

- demonstrate knowledge of the music education philosophies of leading scholars in our field.
- explain some of the implications of those philosophies for music teaching and learning in schools and universities (e.g., how teachers would choose and use specific works and to what educational, political or other ends).
- understand why and how those philosophies relate to social justice themes.
- provide and intellectually defend your own rationale for why music should be taught in schools.
- locate music education within wider social, educational, cultural, and political contexts and debates affecting school music (e.g., the national music education standards in the United States, globalization, educational policy as it affects music education, etc.).
- demonstrate informed awareness of many of the political and other problems facing the profession while also proposing potential strategies for addressing them through your teaching and active participation in the profession.
- apply philosophy to professional practice by questioning and critiquing underlying assumptions of traditional music methodologies, pedagogies, and philosophies and by demonstrating basic knowledge and skills of argument analysis.

- demonstrate an ability to teach effectively by presenting and explaining issues and ideas to the class in an engaging manner while using appropriate illustrative materials (e.g., videos, short handouts, diagrams, music recordings, etc.).
- participate intellectually in class discussions about the nature, purposes, and value of education in general and music education in particular in contemporary society.
- relate music education to other subject areas in the schools in terms of any common problems, purposes or potential conflicts (e.g., science and business studies vs. art and music?).

Evaluation:

Philosophy is about ideas, values, and the pursuit of truth, all of which are very complicated and can be personally and collectively challenging because involving the questioning of assumptions, orthodoxies, traditions, biases, and more generally what we think. Although sometimes regarded as an exercise in negativity, because often critical, the Deweyan philosophy that undergirds this course is instead concerned with critiquing taken for granted ideas, habits of thought, methodologies, and traditions etc. that may have long hindered progress toward a more equitable and just society. Music and music education have throughout much of human history certainly contributed to the betterment of our societies, but it would be naïve to think that has always been the case, or that music and education are founded on objective truths and therefore necessarily socially abstract and culturally, or politically neutral. They have always been, and doubtless will continue to be, used and abused by all manner of people for their own interests and ends. In music education we accordingly owe it to ourselves and our students to engage in close scrutiny, dialogue, and debate about the music and music education practices in our lives and in society so more aware of its power in shaping—while also being shaped by—society. Hence the purpose of this course, which is to challenge and encourage you to intellectually grapple with many of difficulties, problems, and complexities of music and music education by reading sometimes difficult literature and engaging in the dialogue, discussion, and debate that are necessary for understanding not only what music and music education are but also what they could be if approached with care and due diligence. You will be evaluated based on the following criteria related to the above stated purpose of this course.

Accordingly, you are expected to complete the required weekly readings presented in the attached schedule of classes and topics/readings and contribute to informed class discussion and participation by:

- 1) Demonstrating knowledge of their contents through **general class discussion (20%)**
- 2) By **seeking out related information or examples of similar issues, ideas, or problems from online or other reliable sources** that can enrich our discussions by sometimes teaching us all something that we did not previously know or realize. How many of you, for example, already knew that some German musicians and music educators during the Nazi regime leading up to and throughout World War Two were happy to do Hitler's bidding in using music and music education as Nazi propaganda? Hitler was by no means unique in employing music to influence children and adults. The course textbook contains many examples of the power of music to persuade or otherwise influence. Some of those examples are wonderful and inspiring, others might be potentially dangerous,

even toxic. The challenge for all of us—and including our students—is to be more attentive to the music we perform and listen to so more aware of the social meanings embedded in, or attached to, the lyrics and/or the music’s structural properties, some of which might be constantly shifting as individuals co-opt or possibly misappropriate the music in question for their own ends. As you will learn more about in the course textbook, politicians or all stripes are notorious for using music in ways that its composers might not have approved. On a more inspiring note, how many of you have heard about the Estonian Singing Revolution of 1989-1990 that helped that country achieve its independence from the Soviet Union? You can easily google it.

The idea is that each week you bring to class something that **you** have found in the course textbook or reliable on-line or other sources that is relevant to those readings and prior discussions and that can help enlarge our understanding of the profession and its problems. If you have difficulty finding something, you could explore some of the optional readings provided on the course schedule of classes and readings for ideas and/or examples of events that help illustrate issues addressed in the class. Many of those optional readings are quite brief and easy to read. Perusal of some of our professional journals, such as the *Canadian Music Educator*, the *Music Educator*, the *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, and the Mayday Group *ACT* journal (for Action, Criticism and Theory in Music Education) can also introduce you to interesting ideas and issues about which you might not have been cognizant before but that can be included in school music curricula.

There are probably countless similar examples to be found that can be revelatory in helping us understand our profession, its subject matter, and our own moral and ethical responsibilities as teachers. I am depending on you all to help shape this course by contributing your own ideas inspired by the various course and other readings to class discussion. (20%)

- 3) **6 bi-weekly reflections:** These are related to the above explanation of the nature of the course as revelatory—that is, attempting to open your eyes and ears to go beyond performance alone to locate music and music education within the wider world of politics and our own places within it, how music education is very much connected to politics because public schools serve the state, just as private ones are more likely to serve the wealthy or private interests (e.g., various churches). The reflections are to be **3 pages** in length (use font Times New Roman 12) and double spaced (but without additional spaces between paragraphs). The reflections should be both responses to what you read, see, or hear in the course textbook and classes but also about how they relate to your own pre-existing beliefs about music education and its many role(s) and challenges in schools. These papers, however, are not simply opportunities to uncritically champion what you think you know or to vent about things you don’t like. They are about making explicit and critically examining your own ideas and beliefs, that is, examining the grounds for your own ideas and beliefs, why you think as you do, why

you think something is or isn't true, how, where, when, and from whom you acquired your own beliefs and ideas, and about how you make your own judgments about ideas presented to you by your parents, peers, teachers, media etc. In short, these papers should demonstrate critical awareness of the people, institutions and events that shaped your personal understandings of music teaching and learning, including personal foibles and impediments to that understanding, but also those that have inspired you to learn and grow as students and citizens. When referring to ideas or 'facts' please be sure to include sources **using APA citation style (available on the Library website)** so I can see where you got the idea. Usually, in APA, you would simply add at the ends of a sentence, or immediately after a quotation, the authors last name, date of publication, and page number (e.g., Smith, 2019, p. 4). (30%)

- 4) In-class weekly presentations by individuals on assigned class materials (see class schedule of topics). These presentations are to be about 20 minutes in length followed by 10-15 minutes of class discussion. (30%)

Required Textbook:

Woodford, P. (2019). *Music education in an age of virtuality and post-truth*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. This book is available digitally through the Music Library.

There are no other required textbooks, but you will find many excellent sources in the *Oxford handbook of music education* (2012), *The Oxford handbook of social justice in music education* (2015), and the *Oxford handbook of philosophy of music education* (2012), all of which feature many chapters that can be very helpful in formulating your own paper topic or provide background information for personal references. Digital copies of these books are available through the Music Library. Many additional sources are of course provided on our class schedule of topics that has been provided to you.

Additional information about the course textbook and all other materials and readings is provided on the schedule of class topics and materials already sent you a few days ago via Owl.

University Policy Statements

Permission to Enroll in Class: 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.

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

Mental Health & Wellness: University Statement on Wellness and Mental Health. As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help students achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing a graduate degree. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone in whom they feel comfortable confiding, such as a faculty supervisor, a program advisor, or the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies). Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Students work with Accessible Education Western (AEW, formerly SSD) 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

Religious Accommodation: Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious 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. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar. <http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

Notes Specifically to Address Covid-19 [the following information needs to be updated]

i) **Contingency Plan:** In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely 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 grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online at the discretion of the course instructor.

ii) **Recording of Online Activities:** All of the remote learning sessions for this course will be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals participating in the course for their private or group study purposes. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings.

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.

iii) **Online Etiquette:** Some components of this course may involve synchronous online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- Use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- “Arrive” to class on time
- Ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- To minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- Unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting
- [for classes larger than 30 students only] In order to give us optimum bandwidth and web quality, please turn off your video camera for the entire class unless you are invited to speak
- [for classes where video for all participants is encouraged] Be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor’s request if the internet connection becomes unstable

The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:

- If you wish to speak, select the blue “raise hand” function and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question.
- Kindly remember to unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking.
- Self-identify when speaking.
- Kindly remember to select the “raise hand” function again to lower your hand, mute your mic and turn off your video camera after speaking (unless directed otherwise).

General considerations of “netiquette”:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of “Zoom-bombing” a class, or of other serious online offenses, may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.