

DRAFT

Professor Anita Chari
Department of Political Science
anitac@uoregon.edu
Summer 2017
Office: PLC 928
Online office hours: TR 3-4pm

DRAFT SYLLABUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

PS 399 Music and Politics [Online course]

Overview

In this class we will be asking questions about what is political about music of various musical styles and from diverse historical periods. We will not focus solely on music produced as an intervention into particular political movements, though we will look at examples of this kind (music from the American civil rights movement, for example). More centrally, we are interested in how music of any and every kind is involved in the production of subjectivity, how changing formats of sound production and technology affect our sensory capacities as social and political subjects, how music structures collectivity, and how the relationship between form and content in music can be analyzed to critical ends. Our interests here are in the “micropolitics” of music. Above all, we will be learning tools for listening to music more deeply, so that we can have a deeper understanding of the ways that music impacts us and moves us, whether that be to action, inaction, political struggle, complacency, or emotion.

Learning objectives:

This quarter you will:

- Learn how to recognize theoretical debates in texts and to take a position on them.
- Learn how to write an argument.
- Learn how to listen to music critically.
- Learn how to engage your body and intuition in the process of thinking.
- Learn how to apply theoretical arguments to real-world problems

II. Course Requirements:

- 1) Weekly reading quizzes: 30%
- 2) Live music essay and analysis 10%
- 3) 4 short essay listening/reading assignments 15% each (60% total--begins Week 2)

Detailed instructions for the assignments will be provided. Some are more traditional essays, and others will be more creatively focused, or focused upon writing up and reviewing a musical event.

Your listening/reading assignments score will be based on your ability to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with assigned readings.
- Develop and express your own opinions about the texts.
- Relate the texts to other readings you have done during the course.
- Critically assess the texts and recordings assigned and raise questions about them.

The weekly quizzes will be on Canvas, and will ask you to answer a series of questions about the readings. It will test that you've done the reading and grasped its basic concepts.

Deadlines and timing of assignments

While you will have some flexibility in the timing of your completion of assignments, please be aware that assignments will be due on a two-week cycle. Assignments will be due on Sunday evening at 7 pm. More specific due dates to follow as the start-date of the class approaches. All assignments must be completed during the duration of the 10 week course.

COURSE MATERIALS

This online course requires that students have access to a computer with a reliable internet connection. You will be able to do most readings and even some assignments on other devices if necessary (tablet), but for some things you will need a connected computer.

Most of the readings will be posted on the Canvas site. There is one book for purchase, and you will be required to rent or purchase three films.

The audio material for this class will mostly be shared on Spotify. You will be given instructions to follow my playlists for the class.

You're required to purchase or rent the following materials:

Books:

Brian Ward, *Just My Soul Responding*. (Berkeley: University of California Press) 1998.

Film:

Twenty Feet from Stardom, dir. Morgan Neville, (2013).

Scratch (2001)

Hip hop: the furious force of rhymes (2010)

Reading/Listening Schedule:

[Note: All readings will be available at the course Canvas site. Audio is on Spotify—you must follow my playlists to receive the weekly audio assignments.]

Week 1: How is music political?

Part 1: Introduction

Part 2: Music and Society

Plato, *The Republic*, Book III (398-403)

Homer, *The Odyssey* (Book 12, excerpt on the Sirens)

Dane Rhudyar, “When Does Sound Become Music?”

Week 2:

Part 1: Principles and Tools for Listening

Read the handouts prepared on how to do music analysis and listen to the required tracks on Spotify.

Part 2: Pop I

Simon Frith, “Pop Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock* (pp. 93-108)

Listening selections on Canvas

Week 3:

Part 1: Pop II

Adorno, “The Fetish Character of Music and the Regression in Listening”

Raymond Williams, “Deconstructing the Popular”

Part 2: R & B, Race, Black consciousness I

Assigned Film: *Twenty Feet from Stardom* (2013)

Just My Soul Responding, Brian Ward, Ch. 1

Week 4:

Part 1: R & B, Race, Black consciousness II

Just My Soul Responding, Brian Ward, Ch. 3

Listening selections on Canvas

Part 2: Music and Civil Rights

Just My Soul Responding, Brian Ward, Ch. 4, 5

Listening selections on Canvas

“Black is a Country” BBC 4 podcast on the music of the Black Power Movement (to be listened to as homework)

Week 5:

Part 1:

Music of the 1960’s (and beyond)

Eyerman and Jamison, *Music and Social Movements*, Ch. 5

Joan Didion, “Slouching Toward Bethlehem”

Part 2: Music of the 1960’s (and beyond)

Peter Doggett, *There’s a Riot Going On: Revolutionaries, Rock Stars and the Rise and the Fall of the 1960’s*, Ch. 3

Week 6:

Part 1: Voices

Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice”

Adriana Cavarero, “Multiple Voices”

Listening selections on Spotify

Part 2: Hip Hop: “The Most Dangerous Art Form”

Michael Eric Dyson, “Know What I Mean?: Reflections on Hip Hop” (excerpts)

Jeff Chang, *Can’t Stop, Won’t Stop* (excerpts)

View Documentary at home: *Scratch* (2001)

Assignment 1 Due

Week 7:

Part 1: Hip Hop Continued

Watch: *Hip hop: the furious force of rhymes* (2010)

Part 2: Sorrow

W.E.B. Dubois, "The Sorrow Songs," from *The Souls of Black Folk*
Martín Prechtel, *The Smell of Rain on Dust: Grief and Praise* (excerpt)
Listening selections on Canvas

Week 8:**Part 1:****Improvisation**

Derek Bailey, *Improvisation* (excerpt)
George Lewis, *A Power Stronger than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (excerpt)
Listening selections on Canvas

Part 2: Format

Shuhei Hosokawa, "The Walkman Effect"
Michael Bull, "The Audio-Visual Ipod"
Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past*, Ch. 2
Listening selections on Canvas

Week 9**Part 1: Sound, Music, Control**

Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare*, Ch. 29, "1971: The Earworm"
William Burroughs, "Electronic Warfare."
Film to be viewed at home: *Decoder*, Klaus Maeck (1984)
Podcast to be listened to as homework: Burroughs 101, Episode of *This American Life*
<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/546/burroughs-101>

Part 2: Music of the Trump Era

readings TBD

Week 10:**Part 1: Political Economy of Sound: The Ringtone**

Sumanth Gopinath, *The Ringtone Dialectic*

Part 2: Silence

Quashie, *The Sovereignty of Quiet*, Ch. 1
John Cage, "The Future of Music Credo"
John Cage, *4'33"* (in class listening)
Listening selections on Canvas

IV. Class Policies

Academic Misconduct

The presentation of someone else's words or ideas as your own is plagiarism and is a serious offense. The University of Oregon takes a very hard line in questions of academic misconduct. It is never tolerable to present someone else's work as your own. Sources: The failure to provide proper acknowledgment of your use of outside sources constitutes plagiarism. You must name all sources you are paraphrasing or quoting. Please consult with me if you are confused about how to make a proper citation. You can also consult Charles Lipson, *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), or the Dartmouth College's "Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgement" (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/>). Both manuals offer a full explanation of what constitutes plagiarism and how to cite sources, including documenting sources taken from the web. **In this class we will very seldom use secondary sources. Nevertheless, if you ever consult a secondary source you must cite to it.**

Student Resources

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Academic Support: The University Teaching and Learning Center provides numerous resources to help University of Oregon students succeed. For the services offered by the center see <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/index.html>

Student Life: If you need help and are not sure where to go, check out the Office of Student Life, located at Oregon Hall 164; email: stl@uoregon.edu. The Office of Student Life staff is available on a drop-in basis Monday-Friday, 8am-noon and 1pm-5pm. In emergencies after hours, contact the Department of Public Safety at (541) 346-5444 and have an on-duty staff member paged.

University of Oregon Crisis Center: A student-funded organization that provides students with confidential telephone crisis intervention 24/7 at (541) 346-4488.