Music 3762A  
Music and Politics

Fall 2018  
Tuesdays 1.30pm-3.30pm and Fridays 2.30pm-3.30pm in TC203

Instructor: Dr. Emily Ansari  
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Office: Talbot College 229  
Office hours: Wednesdays, 2-4pm
Course description
Using historical, political, and musical sources, this class will examine interactions between music and politics by considering music’s role in defining a nation, its usages in war, and its function for protest movements. We consider twentieth- and twenty-first-century music from an array of genres, countries, and political contexts as a means to understand both political ideology and grassroots acts of resistance, and music’s role in advancing them. Through a close examination of both musical works and recent scholarship on music and politics, we reach an assessment of music’s abilities as a tool of persuasion, whether employed by a community’s most powerful or its most marginalized.

Objectives
1. Gain an understanding of some of the many ways in which music encapsulates and promotes political attitudes and positions.
2. Become more familiar with twentieth-century works of music from across an array of genres and cultures that were written to be, or have become, politically significant.
3. Understand some of the key debates in contemporary musicology concerning twentieth- and twenty-first century music and its political message or context.
4. Develop critical thinking skills and the ability to assess music in intellectual and socio-cultural contexts.
5. Improve abilities to share scholarly research with a wide audience.

Readings, Scores and Recordings
A coursepack is available for purchase from the campus bookstore, containing most of our readings. Two readings are not in the coursepack: one (Goehr) can be found by clicking on “course readings” and selecting Music 3762A on the library homepage; the other needs to be collected from the reserve desk in the Music Library.
When readings are taken from a book, this book is available on 1-day reserve in the library for you to consult if you wish. If you need additional books that turn out to be in high demand to be placed on reserve, please let me know.
Please listen to the works that are to be presented on before class and any additional listening assignments listed here. All scores and recordings of these works are on 2-hour reserve.

Evaluation
Attendance and Participation  15%
Film analysis  20%
In-class Presentation  20%
Review of a colleague’s podcast script  5%
Podcast analysis  10%
Final project  30%

Assignment summary
1. Film analysis (1200-1400 words, excluding footnotes, submit via class website by 5pm on October 14). Write a response to the film Shostakovich Against Stalin: The War Symphonies. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irYM2VcBv4A or DVD51 on reserve in the library). How does the filmmaker use primary and secondary source material about Shostakovich to
construct this film? Is he taking a particular viewpoint on the Shostakovich debate? Assess the film’s content within the context of Shostakovich scholarship.

2. Presentation with a colleague: a 20-minute presentation to the class on an assigned topic. Both the preparation and presentation should be shared equally amongst the presenters. If your presentation concerns a musical work, or works, your time should be spent considering the piece(s) within the context of issues discussed in this course, including the political message (if relevant), the work’s politicized employment, and a sense of the political context of its/their creation. If your presentation is on a broader topic, narrow its focus by choosing an area on which to focus, in consultation with Prof. Ansari. Avoid talking about the assigned readings for the week—I will be looking for evidence you have undertaken broad research and found other scholarly material relating to your topic, as well as incorporating your own assessment and ideas. An ‘A’ grade presentation will put forward a clear argument, incorporate supporting materials such as powerpoint, handouts, and musical examples, be carefully structured and clear, offer a nuanced incorporation of existing scholarship, and present some original ideas.

3. Final project. Your final project will be a podcast of 8 minutes length. In an accessible but educational style, examine a specific musical work (other than those discussed in class) that was intended as a political statement or has been used in a political context. This project should be built on solid academic research (the final submission should include a bibliography in a separate Word document: this should include academic sources such as scholarly journal articles and books). This research should be utilized to create a podcast that a general listener and non-expert could understand. You are encouraged to incorporate various media to enliven your piece in addition to your spoken voice, such as music clips, interviews, and sound effects. We will discuss the research, writing, and production processes of podcast creation in class and a detailed rubric will be created by the class for both the instructor and your fellow students to use to assess your project: this will give you a more detailed sense of what will make a strong submission.

This assignment is broken down into several stages:

- Podcast analysis: A 2-page (double-spaced) analysis of an existing podcast that focuses on music and/or politics. Describe the structure of the podcast and features that made it effective or ineffective. (Due in class October 23)
- Proposal: A 1-page proposal for your podcast that describes the topic and argument and lists the sources you will use. (Due in class November 9)
- Submit your project for peer review: a draft script of your podcast (in MS Word) should be submitted for peer review by a group of your classmates through the course website. (Due 5pm November 20)
- Peer review: review the podcast scripts assigned to you. For each project, provide half a page of discussion of the content and structure (single spaced) and suggest 1 thing its creator could do to make it even stronger. (Submit through the course website: due 5pm November 27)
- Your final podcast (MP3 format) plus the script and a list of consulted sources (in a separate Word document) should be submitted via the course website (due 5pm December 7).

Course policies

- Documentation will be required in the case of medical-related absences and delayed submissions of work worth more than 10% of the final grade and should be submitted to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate. University policy on accommodation for medical and
mental illness can be found under “Rights and Responsibilities” at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html

- Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

- This course is all about discussion and participation: attendance and participation represent 15% of your grade. If you miss classes or are silent in class, this grade will be affected. If you cannot attend class for a degree-related or medical reason, please let me know in advance. Please come to each class having done the reading and listening assignments and having considered the issues and questions listed on this syllabus for the class. Your participation grade will be even higher if you also bring questions and issues of your own to raise in class. Remember that this is a topic with very few right or wrong answers, so don’t be afraid to speak up. The more you have to say, the more stimulating class will be, the more you will learn, and the better you will do.

- How you present your thoughts in presentations and papers represents the major part of your grade. Please take time to craft these assignments so that they have a thesis and a clear, cogent argument. And don’t forget to proof-read. An ‘A’ paper or presentation will contain a clear and thoughtful presentation of your ideas that brings new ideas to existing conversations.

- Please turn off your cell phone and don’t surf the web during class.

- Unless you have either the requisites 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.

- Plagiarism: 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. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). 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. All papers submitted 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 (http://www.turnitin.com).

- Trigger warning and consideration for others: Much of the material discussed in class is difficult, controversial, or potentially polarizing. I include it because it is important for your education for you to learn to explore and discuss difficult issues. I ask that you endeavour consistently to respect the views of your colleagues and to offer your own views respectfully and sensitively. Some of the material that we will look at may be considered offensive and/or graphic. The history and philosophy of music is intrinsically linked to controversial issues like nationalism, racism, sexism, and political and religious intolerance. This course will not shy away from such content or from discussing controversial issues, as doing so would
undermine our ability to grapple with the challenges those issues posed then and continue to pose now. 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.

Class Schedule

Fri Sept 7: Introduction – In what ways can Music and Politics interact?

Tues Sept 11: Music History and the Idea of Autonomy
Readings:

I: DEFINING NATIONS MUSICALLY

Fri Sept 14, Canadian Music and Government-promoted nationalism
Research Canadian Content (“Cancon”) legislation online.
Readings:

Tues Sept 18: Nazi Germany
Reading:

Fri Sept 21: Musical Americanism

Tues Sept 25: Soviet Socialist Realism; discussion about researching and writing your podcast
Presentation topic: Shostakovich Symphony #5 (M1001.S46 op.47 .S4, MCD3373)
Readings:

**Fri Sept 28: The Chinese Cultural Revolution**
Reading:

**Tues Oct 2: US Election Politics**
Presentation topic: Reagan, Springsteen, and the “Born in the USA” controversy
Reading:

**II: MUSIC IN WARTIME**

**Fri October 5: Music for the Fight**
Presentation topic: Country music responses to the War on Terror (please confirm the songs you will discuss in advance with Prof. Ansari)
Reading:

**October 8-12: NO CLASSES – READING WEEK**

-> **Film analysis due 5pm October 14**

**Tues October 16: Music and Terror**
Readings:

**Fri Oct 19: Cultural Diplomacy**
Presentation topic: Jazz and Cold War Diplomacy
Reading:
Tues Oct 23: Analysis of sample podcasts and troubleshooting final project

Podcast analysis due in class

Fri Oct 26: Resistance I
Presentation: Nueva Canción and Violeta Parra
Watch the film Norberto Amaya: Songwriter (instructor will circulate a link).

Tues Oct 30: Resistance II
Presentation: Karl Amadeus Hartmann, Sinfonia Tragica (M1001.H376S5 1989, recording available electronically through library website)
Reading:

Fri Nov 2: Wartime News Coverage

III: MUSIC AND PROTEST

Tues Nov 6: Social Protest
Presentation topic: Anti-Apartheid Music in South Africa
Reading:

Fri Nov 9: Pacifism
Project proposal due in class
Presentation topic: Benjamin Britten, War Requiem (M2010.B75 op.66 1962, MCD15517)
Reading:

Tues Nov 13: Race
Presentation topic: Music of the Black Lives Matter movement
Reading:

Fri Nov 16: Student Protest
Readings:

Tues Nov 20: Women
Presentation topic: The Music of Joan Baez
Reading:
http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0011.205.

Podcast script due 5pm

Fri Nov 23: Indigenous Rights
Possible class visitor – details/readings TBD

Tues Nov 27: Environmentalism/2 minute mini-presentations for those absent on Friday Nov 30
Presentation topic: John Luther Adams, Become Ocean (no score in library – available online on ScoresOnDemand; recording available through library website)
Reading:

Peer reviews due 5pm

Fri Nov 30: 2 minute mini-presentations on your project

Tues Dec 4: White Power
Presentation topic: Nazi Punk
Reading:

Fri Dec 7: Closing Thoughts

Final project due 5pm Dec 7