

Music 9542A: Fall 2019
MUSICAL AMERICANISM
Thursdays, 1:30pm – 4:30pm, TC 310

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 1.30-3.30pm

Course Description

This class contemplates American classical composers' efforts to create an American-sounding music, assessing these works against the backdrop of changing attitudes to national identity in the United States between the nineteenth century and the late twentieth century. Americanist classical music serves here as a fairly narrow case study for contemplating music's ability to engage with conceptions of national identity in the United States and across the world, so we will also look outwards to contemplate how such issues are reflected in other styles and other places as well.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

1. Refine abilities to interpret and analyse primary sources, considering both written documents and musical works in this sense, and bolster abilities to engage critically with secondary source literature.
2. Learn strategies for reading compositional choices and aesthetics as reflections of contemporary political attitudes, specifically attitudes to national identity.
3. Improve skills needed to be successful as an academic—specifically writing and presentation skills and peer review.

Readings

All readings are available in pdf form on perusall.com. Please go to the site, create an account by clicking "get started" (twice) and then "enroll in course." You can find our course using the student course code ABRAMS-ANSARI-4PUBC. Each week, Perusall will give you access to the readings for that week and give you the opportunity to annotate the pdfs with comments and questions that are visible to everyone. Please complete your reading, adding comments and annotations, **by 10am on the day of class**, to allow me enough time to look over the comments before class starts. I encourage you to respond to and discuss each others' questions and comments over Perusall as you prepare for class. 5% of your grade will be based on the level of your engagement with the readings and each other through the site. I will also use your comments and questions as the starting point for our class discussions. Please don't be shy to share with all of us the places where you are confused and/or areas of the argument you find compelling and worth discussing: understanding others' experiences of reading academic articles helps all of us to gain a better understanding of how to read, and the field in general. If the readings are from a book, the book will be on 1-day reserve in the library. I have not put CDs or scores on reserve, assuming the demand won't be overwhelming: let me know if you need me to. If there are other books, recordings, or scores you would like me to put on reserve as the semester progresses, please let me know.

Evaluation

Attendance and participation	20%
Book review	10%
In-class presentation	15%
Peer review	5%
Contributions to Perusall discussion	5%
Final presentation	15%
Final paper	30%

Assignments

1. Book review. After presenting a short overview of a book chosen from the Google Docs sign up list in Class 2 (see Class 2 below), write up a review of that book. We will discuss features of a good book review in Class 2. 1000-1500 words, submit by email to Prof. Ansari as a Word document by **5pm, September 30**.

2. 1 in-class presentation, 20 minutes. This will concern one of the musical works on the syllabus (sign up in the Google Docs document). Please avoid including a lengthy bio of the composer (this will be assumed knowledge for the class), although *very* brief biographical context will be ok. Instead I want you to spend most of your time assessing the work in question in the context of this course's theme. Look carefully at what the composer said about how the work was "American" and, if possible, contextualize this with reference to other writings by the composer on the theme of musical Americanism/national identity/ nationalism. Think of this as practice for your final presentation and future conference presentations: try to develop a thesis and approach this as you would a conference paper on this work. An original line of inquiry and a coherent and well-organized presentation will get you the best grade.

3. Peer review. Review two of your colleagues' paper excerpts, which will be sent to you by EAA on **November 13**. We will discuss the features of a useful and constructive peer review in class before this assignment is due. There is no word limit to this assignment – say as much as you feel needs to be said. Bring a hard copy of your review to our class during the week of **November 18** for your colleague and submit an email version to me. Be ready to discuss your colleagues' work with them in class that day and also the process of reviewing it.

4. Contributions to Perusall discussion. Please see "readings" above. This needs to be done every week, and in a thoughtful, engaged, and constructive way, to ensure a good grade.

4. Final project. This paper can be either:

- a) a close analysis of the writings of an American composer or musician (any genre) on national identity and its relationship to music OR
- b) a close analysis of a specific work (or works) that deal(s) with the issue of American national identity.

In both cases, it is expected that you will build your argument around primary sources, particularly the writings and works of the composer or musician in question, and that you will contextualize your findings using other relevant primary sources and secondary source scholarship from the fields of musicology, history, political science etc.

There are several parts to the final project:

- i) Write up a section of your paper that will stand somewhat coherently on its own, while also giving some sense of your broader argument, to submit for peer review by your colleagues.

Submit by email to EAA by **5pm, November 12**. The work you submit here will not itself be graded, as this is just an opportunity to practice giving each other informal, constructive feedback.

ii) Give a 20-minute presentation on your final project in one of our final two classes.

iii) Submit the full, final paper by email (Word document) to Prof. Ansari by **5pm, December 19**. 15-20 pages.

Course policies

- This course is all about discussion and participation. Please come to each class having carefully considered the material listed in the material and with plenty of critical perspectives to share with your colleagues. I encourage lively debate in class, so a wide variety of viewpoints will be very well received. I am always glad to hear opinions that differ from my own.
- Plagiarism: 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. 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 https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.
- The Graduate Program in Music recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by physical or mental illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The Graduate Program in Music further recognizes that physical or mental illness situations are deeply personal, and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. In order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities.
- 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 <https://www.uwo.ca/health/crisis.html>.

SCHEDULE

Class 1, September 5: Nationalism, Americanism, and American Exceptionalism

Michael Kazin and Joseph A. McCartin, "Introduction," in Michael Kazin and Joseph A. McCartin (eds.), *Americanism: New Perspectives on the History of an Ideal* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1-21).

Benedict Anderson, "Introduction" and "Patriotism and Racism" in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 1-8 and 141-154.

Hilde Restad, *American Exceptionalism: An Idea that Made a Nation and Remade the World* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 1-24.

Michael Kammen, *In the Past Lane: Historical Perspectives on American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 169-198.

Class 2, September 12: Surveying the literature on musical Americanism and music and US identity, across genres; discussion of what makes a good book review

Before class: Prepare a 10-minute presentation on a book from the list below, or a book of your choosing on this topic approved by EAA (select on online sign-up sheet; check out book from library – these are not on Perusall.com). How does the author conceptualize and analyze the relationship between national identity and music? What does the author reveal about this relationship through their analysis? (You will later write a review of your book which assesses the efficacy of the study - you need not offer this kind of assessment of strengths and weaknesses in your class presentation, as our class will be more concerned with getting a sense of existing literature on this topic.)

Nadine Hubbs, *The Queer Composition of America's Sound: Gay Modernists, American Music, and National Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

Gillian Mitchell, *The North American Folk Music Revival: Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada, 1945-1980* (Burlington: Ashgate Pub., 2007).

Stephanie Shonekan, *Soul, Country, and the USA: Race and Identity in American Music Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Barbara Tischler, *An American Music: The Search for an American Musical Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Barbara A. Zuck, *A History of Musical Americanism* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980).

Julie Schnepel, "The Critical Pursuit of the Great American Symphony, 1893-1950," PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 1995.

Alan Howard Levy, *Musical Nationalism: American Composers' Search for Identity* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983).

Charles Hiroshi Garrett, *Struggling to Define a Nation: American Music and the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). (ebook through library site)

Jennifer Fleege, *Sounding American: Hollywood, Opera, and Jazz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Class 3, September 19: Musical Americanism in the 19th Century

Presentation: Amy Beach, "Gaelic" Symphony (1896)

Primary sources:

Arthur Farwell, "An Affirmation of American Music," and Henry F. B. Gilbert, "The American Composer," both in Gilbert Chase (ed.), *The American Composer Speaks: A Historical Anthology, 1770-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), 88-93 and 94-104.

Secondary sources:

Douglas Shadle, *Orchestrating the Nation: The Nineteenth Century American Symphonic Enterprise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1-34.

Richard Crawford, "Dvořák and the Historiography of American Music," and Charles Hamm, "Dvořák, Nationalism, Myth, and Racism in the United States" in David R. Beveridge, *Rethinking Dvořák: Views from Five Countries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 257-65 and 275-80.

Richard Crawford, "Edward MacDowell and Musical Nationalism," in Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 372-86.

Class 4, September 26: 1900-1930

Presentation: Scott Joplin, *Treemonisha* (1911)

Primary sources:

Charles Ives, *Memos*, ed. John Kirkpatrick (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 133-36.

Van Wyck Brooks, "On Creating a Usable Past," *The Dial* 64 (January-June 1918): 337-341, available at

<http://www.archive.org/stream/dialjournallitcrit64chicrich#page/337/mode/1up>. **(NB Not on Perusall)**

Secondary sources:

Macdonald Smith Moore, *Yankee Blues: Musical Culture and American Identity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 44-72.

Charles Hiroshi Garrett, "Charles Ives's *Four Ragtime Dances* and 'True American Music,'" in *Struggling to Define a Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

Carol J. Oja, "Gershwin and American Modernists of the 1920s," *The Musical Quarterly* 78/4 (Winter, 1994), 646-668.

Book review due by email before 5pm Monday, September 30.

Class 5, October 3: The 1930s

Presentation: William Grant Still, *Afro-American Symphony* (1930)

Presentation: George Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess* (1934)

Primary sources:

Aaron Copland, *Our New Music: Leading Composers in Europe and America* (New York; London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1941), 162-75.

Lazare Saminsky, "Europe and America in Music Today," *Modern Music* 10, no. 2 (1933): 93-5.

Howard Hanson, "American Procession at Rochester," *Modern Music* 13, no. 3 (1936): 22-8.

Secondary sources:

Wendy Wall, *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 15-33.

Beth Levy, "'The White Hope of American Music'; or, How Roy Harris Became Western," *American Music* 19/2 (Summer 2001), 131-167.

Elizabeth Crist, *Music for the Common Man: Aaron Copland during the Depression and War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 43-70.

Class 6, October 10: Pan-Americanism

Presentation: Carlos Chávez, Suite from *Caballos de Vapor*, Sinfonía de Baile (*Horse-Power Suite*: Ballet Symphony) (1932)

Introduction, Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 of Carol Hess, *Representing the Good Neighbor: Music, Difference, and the Pan American Dream* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Class 7, October 17: World War II

Presentation: Aaron Copland, *Appalachian Spring* (1944)

Primary sources:

Roger Sessions, "On the American Future," in *Roger Sessions on Music: Collected Essays*, ed. Edward T Cone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), originally published in *Modern Music* 17/2 (1940): 71-5.

William Grant Still, "Composer Says 'Lend Lease' in Music Extends to Our Enemies," *Chicago Defender* (October 17, 1942), 21.

Olin Downes, "The Native Essence," *New York Times* (December 31, 1939): 91.

Olin Downes, "Problem of Adjustment," *New York Times* (January 19, 1941): X7.

Secondary sources:

Annegret Fauser, *Sounds of War: Music in the United States During World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 135-50; 224-72.

Class 8, October 24: The Cold War

Class visitor – April Morris (PhD Candidate at Western)

Presentation: Elie Siegmeister, *The Face of War* (1966)

Presentation: William Schuman, *The Mighty Casey* (1953)

Primary sources:

Aaron Copland, "Effect of the Cold War on the Artist in the U.S." (1949), in *Aaron Copland: A Reader: Selected Writings, 1923-72*, edited by Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Routledge, 2004), 128-31.

Secondary sources:

Emily Abrams Ansari, *The Sound of a Superpower: Musical Americanism and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), Introduction and Chapter 5.

Philip M. Gentry, *What Will I be: American Music and Cold War Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), Chapter 5.

October 31 – No class – Prof. Ansari at American Musicological Society conference in Boston.

November 7 – No class – Reading week.

Submit paper excerpts to EAA by 5pm November 12. EAA will distribute the following day by email for peer review, which needs to be completed before the (still TBC) class in the week of November 18.

Class 9, November 14: Retrospective assessments of the “death” of musical Americanism; Musical Americanism Revived at the US Bicentennial (1976); discussion of peer review

Presentation: Leonard Bernstein, *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue* (1976)

Primary sources:

Elie Siegmeister, “A New Day Is Dawning for American Composers,” *New York Times*, January 23, 1977, 15.

Bicentennial Times 3 (July 1976), available at

<https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0067/1563258.pdf> (read pages 10-29 of pdf) (*skim to assess US government’s approach to the Bicentennial celebrations*)
(NB Not on Perusall)

Secondary sources:

Joseph N. Straus, “The Myth of Serial ‘Tyranny’ in the 1950s and 1960s,” *The Musical Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (1999): 301-343.

Anne C. Shreffler, “The Myth of Empirical Historiography: A Response to Joseph N. Straus,” *The Musical Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (2000): 30-39.

Emily Abrams Ansari, “‘Vindication, Cleansing, Catharsis, Hope’: Interracial Reconciliation and the Dilemmas of Multiculturalism in Kay and Dorr’s *Jubilee* (1976),” *American Music* 31/4 (Winter 2013), 379-419.

Class 10, week of November 18, date/time TBC (Prof. Ansari giving colloquium at U of T on November 21): The Americanist Sound in Contemporary Popular Culture: Case Study – Aaron Copland; Peer Review Discussion

Neil Lerner, “Copland’s Music of Wide Open Spaces: Surveying the Pastoral Trope in Hollywood,” *The Musical Quarterly* 85 (2001): 477-515.

Rebecca Cweibel, “Coplandia, or the Ideological American Sound,” MA thesis, University of Washington, 2014.

Emily Abrams Ansari, “The Benign American Exceptionalism of Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man*,” DRAFT – DO NOT SHARE.

Friday November 29: I strongly encourage you to attend the Friday afternoon colloquium with Alejandro Madrid.

Classes 11 (November 28) and 12 (December 5): Presentations