MUSIC 3762B: Music and Politics
Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University
Winter 2021
Tuesdays 1:30-3:30pm (synchronous) and Fridays 2:30-3:30pm (asynchronous)

Instructor: April Morris
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Zoom office hours: Thursdays 1:30-3:30
Office: Talbot College, room 422
Course delivery method: Zoom (see course OWL site for links)

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 how music has been used to advance political agendas, how socio-political considerations have impacted the lives and work of composers, and the ways in which performance itself can be considered a political act. 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.

Prerequisites: MUSIC 2750 or the former MUSIC 2710 and the former MUSIC 2711. 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.

Course Materials:
All virtual lectures and course readings, including the presentation readings, will be available through the course OWL site (owl.uwo.ca/portal).
Evaluation:
Attendance and Participation 15%
Media Project (due February 12th) 20%
In-Class Reading Presentation (scheduled throughout the term) 20%
Final Paper Outline (due March 5th) 10%
Final Paper (due April 12th) 35%

Assignment Summary:
1. Media Project: (750-1000 words, submit via the course website by 5pm on Friday, February 12th) 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 Rao/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 10-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 5pm on Monday, April 12th) 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. We will discuss your plans for paper topics in class on February 23rd. An Outline of your Final Paper which should include a preliminary thesis, a breakdown of the main arguments of your paper, and a working bibliography is due on OWL by 5pm on March 5th.

Preparation and Class Meetings:
This course is delivered remotely. We will meet synchronously online on Tuesdays from 1:30-3:30pm. Video lectures will be posted on the OWL site each week to be viewed asynchronously during the Friday class time or at another time that fits your schedule.
Because of this format, the Friday asynchronous classes are considered part of the same ‘week’ as the following Tuesday (e.g. the lecture video for Week 2 should be watched on Friday January 15th, or at some other time before Tuesday, January 19th). Please come to class on Tuesdays having completed all class preparation for the week (lecture video and reading/listening assignments) and be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the class. Students are not expected to read the presentation texts on which they are not presenting.
Course Policies

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 will be affected if you miss classes or are silent in class.

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.

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 UCC room 76. Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in UC11 or to click on the green “I Need Help Now” button on the Health and Wellness page above.

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.

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

Academic Consideration for Student Absence: Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student’s final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:
• for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
• absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
• assessments worth more than 30% of the student’s final grade,
• if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year
If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are not met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their
Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office. For the Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Special Note for Covid-19-related Situations:

As a guideline, if a student has been contacted by the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) to self-quarantine due to a Covid-19-related situation, then the Self-Reported Absence system is not to be used to report this absence or to request an academic accommodation. The student should contact the Academic Counselling office as soon as they are notified.

In general, students are advised to not self-determine when to self-isolate. Unless directed by the MLHU students should go about their business as usual. But if a student chooses to self-isolate due to a suspected Covid-19-related situation while waiting to receive direction from the MLHU then the student is directed to contact the Academic Counselling office as soon as possible for further direction on receiving accommodation consideration.

Academic Consideration for Missing Work: In cases where students are unable to submit work due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if an online self-reported absence is submitted, or if appropriate supporting documentation is submitted to the Associate Dean’s office, and the accommodation is granted, then the missed assessments may be rescheduled or discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. If neither a self-reported absence nor an appropriate supporting document is submitted to the appropriate office, then the missed assignments will receive a grade of zero.

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

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. 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/).
**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.

**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.

**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
- 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.
Class Schedule

January 12th  Understanding the relationship between music and politics


I: POLITICAL MUSIC

January 15th/January 19th  Political Music: Explicit and Implicit Messages


**Listen:** John Corigliano, Symphony No. 1 (1988-1989), i. Apologue: Of Rage and Remembrance

**Watch:** Lecture Video: Political Music

January 22nd/January 26th  Music and Racial Identity


**Listen:** Billie Holiday, “Strange Fruit”

**Watch:** Lecture Video: Music and Racial Identity

**Presentation Readings:**


January 29th/February 2nd

**Gender and Women’s Voices**


**Listen:** Barbara Pentland, *Disasters of the Sun* (1976)

**Watch:** Lecture Video: Gender and Women’s Voices

**Presentation Readings:**


February 5th/February 9th

**Music and War: Support and Protest**


**Watch:** Lecture Video: War Support and Protest

**Presentation Readings:**


**Media Project due Friday, February 12th at 5pm**

---Reading Week: February 15th-19th---
II. THE USE OF MUSIC IN POLITICAL CONTEXTS

February 12th/February 23rd  
Music in War: Inspiring the Troops and Music as Torture


**Watch:** Lecture Video: Music in War

Come prepared to discuss Final Paper topics on February 23rd

February 26th/March 2nd  
Propaganda, Broadcasting, and Campaigning


**Watch:** Lecture Video: Propaganda, Broadcasting, and Campaigning

**Presentation Readings:**


III. THE POLITICS OF COMPOSING

March 5th/March 9th  
Composing National Identity

**Final Paper Outline due Friday, March 5th at 5pm**


**Watch:** Lecture Video: National Identity

**Presentation Readings:**


March 12th/March 16th Reactions to Government Pressure and Censorship


**Watch:** Lecture Video: Reactions to Government Pressure and Censorship

**Listen:** Carlisle Floyd, *Susannah* (1955), Act 2 scene ii

**Presentation Readings:**


IV. THE POLITICS OF PERFORMANCE

March 19th/March 23rd Political Concerts


**Watch:** Lecture Video: Political Concerts

**Presentation Readings:**


### March 26\(^{th}\)/March 30\(^{th}\)  
**Political Interpretations**

**Read:**  

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

**Watch:** Lecture Video: Political Interpretations

**Presentation Readings:**


### April 6\(^{th}\)  
**Music and Politics/Music as Politics**


**Final Paper due Monday, April 12\(^{th}\) at 5pm**