MUSIC 3762B
Music and Politics
Winter 2022
Tuesdays 1:30-3:30pm and Fridays 1:30-2:30pm in Talbot College room 202

Instructor: Dr. April Morris
Email: amorri95@uwo.ca
Office: Talbot College room 230
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:30am-12:30pm

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

Course Materials:
All readings are available through the course OWL site. If you need books that turn out to be in high demand to be placed on reserve, please let me know.
Evaluation:
Attendance and Participation 15%
Media Review 15%
Take-Home Midterm Exam 20%
In-Class Presentation 20%
Final Paper 30%

Assignment Summary:
1. Media Review: (750-1000 words, submit via the course website by 5pm on Friday, February 18th) 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 Ru/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. Take-Home Midterm Exam: questions will be distributed February 28th, submit answers via OWL by 5pm on Friday, March 11th
3. In-Class Presentation: a 15-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.
4. Final Paper: (2500-3000 words, submit via OWL by 5pm on Friday, April 8th) 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 March 8th.

Course Policies:

i) Course Prerequisites: MUSIC 2750 or the former MUSIC 2710 and MUSIC 2711. 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.

ii) Grading scale: A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.
iii) **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](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](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, even when the MLHU has not advised students to self-isolate, students are advised to follow the most recent directions from the university and the MLHU concerning when to self-isolate and for how long. Specifically, if a student believes they have Covid-19 then the student is directed to report this to the Academic Counselling office as soon as possible for further direction on receiving accommodation consideration.
iv) **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.

v) **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](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

vi) **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/](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.**

vii) **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](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf)

viii) **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](http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo)

ix) **Contingency Plan:** Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 restrictions may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered 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 assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.
x) **Electronic Devices in Classrooms:** The in-class use of electronic devices (other than for instructor-approved in-class uses) is expressly prohibited. Students found guilty of disrupting the class with electronic devices will be asked to leave the class and may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

xi) **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/).

xii) **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.

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

xiv) This course is all about **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 may be affected if you miss
classes or are silent in class. Please come to class having done the reading and listening assignments and be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the class. Students who are not comfortable speaking in class are welcome to speak with me regarding alternate methods of participation.

\textbf{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.

\textbf{Class Schedule}

\textbf{Tuesday, January 11\textsuperscript{th} – Introduction}

\textbf{Friday, January 14\textsuperscript{th} – Understanding the relationship between music and politics}

\textbf{Reading:}


\textbf{I: POLITICAL MUSIC}

\textbf{Tuesday, January 18\textsuperscript{th} – Political Music: Implicit and Explicit Messages}

\textbf{Reading:}


Friday, January 21st – War Support

Reading:


Tuesday, January 25th – War Protest

Reading:


Presentation:


Friday, January 28th – Proletarian Music and the Composer’s Collective

Reading:


Listen to Elie Siegmeister, “A Strange Funeral in Braddock” (1933)

Tuesday, February 1st – Music and Racial Identity

Reading:


Listen to Billie Holiday, “Strange Fruit”

Presentations:


Friday, February 4th – Gender and Women’s Voices

Reading:


Listen to Barbara Pentland, *Disasters of the Sun* (1973)

Presentation:


II. THE POLITICS OF PERFORMANCE

Tuesday, February 8th – Political Interpretations

Reading:


Presentation:

Friday, February 11th – Musical Diplomacy

Reading:


Presentation:


Tuesday, February 15th – Representation and the Politics of Identity

Reading:


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

Presentation:


Friday, February 18th – Political Performances **Media Review due at 5pm**

Reading:


—Reading Week—
III. THE POLITICS OF COMPOSING

Tuesday, March 1st – Musical Nationalism

Reading:


Presentations:


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Friday, March 4th – Music and National Identity in Canada

Reading:


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Tuesday, March 8th – Writing workshop and discussion of final paper topics

Come prepared to discuss your topic for the final paper

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Friday, March 11th – Composing in Nazi Germany **Take-Home Midterm Exam due 5pm**

Reading:

Tuesday, March 15th – Shostakovich and Socialist Realism

Reading:


Friday, March 18th – Composers in Positions of Power

Reading:


Tuesday, March 22nd – U.S. Composers and the Red Scare

Reading:


IV. THE USE OF MUSIC IN POLITICAL CONTEXTS

Friday, March 25th – Sonic Violence and Torture

Reading:


Presentation:

Tuesday, March 29th – Government, Broadcasting, and Propaganda

Reading:


Presentations:


Friday, April 1st – Inspiring the Troops

Reading:


Presentation:


Tuesday, April 5th – Music in Political Campaigns

Reading:


Friday, April 8th – Conclusions: Music and Politics/Music as Politics

Reading:


**Final Paper due Friday, April 8th at 5pm**