Philosophy of Music Education  
M4811b

Winter 2023  
Talbot College Room 100

Delivery format: Face to Face

Reading Week February 18 - 26

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Class times

Tuesday 10:30 - 12:30  
Thursday 11:30 - 12:

First Class, Tuesday January 10

Rationale:

This is a continuation of M1800 Introduction to Music Education. As such there is a continued emphasis on critical examination of music education philosophy and practice but also on political and other factors affecting music in the schools. An attempt is made to put music education philosophy and practice into larger educational, social, cultural, and political contexts. The aim is challenge you to develop and express your own ideas, your own personal philosophy of music teaching, so that you can better contribute to intellectual conversations about the nature, role, and value of music education in democratic society. Considerable emphasis is thus also placed on clarity of thought as expressed through both the spoken (class presentations and discussions) and written word (personal reflections).

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course you should be able to

- demonstrate knowledge of the music education philosophies of leading scholars in our field.
- explain some of the implications of those philosophies for music teaching and learning in schools and universities (e.g., how teachers might choose and use specific works and to what educational, political, or other ends).
- understand why and how those philosophies relate to social justice themes.
- provide and intellectually defend your own rationale for why music should be taught in schools.
- locate music education within wider social, educational, cultural, and political contexts and debates affecting school music (e.g., the national music education standards in the United States, globalization, educational policy as it affects music education, etc.).
demonstrate informed awareness of many of the political and other problems facing the profession while also proposing potential strategies for addressing them through your teaching and active participation in the profession.

-apply philosophy to professional practice by questioning and critiquing underlying assumptions of traditional music methodologies, pedagogies, and philosophies and by demonstrating basic knowledge and skills of argument analysis.

-demonstrate an ability to teach effectively by presenting and explaining issues and ideas to the class in an engaging manner while using appropriate illustrative materials (e.g., internet resources, videos, short handouts, diagrams, music recordings, etc.).

-participate intelligently in class discussions about the nature, purposes, and value of education in general and music education in contemporary society.

-relate music education to other subject areas in the schools in terms of any common problems, purposes or potential conflicts (e.g., science vs. art and music?).

Evaluation:

Philosophy is about ideas, values, and the pursuit of truth, all of which are very complicated and can be personally and collectively challenging because involving the questioning of assumptions, orthodoxies, traditions, biases, and more generally what we think. Although sometimes regarded as an exercise in negativity, because often critical, the Deweyan philosophy that undergirds this course is instead concerned with critiquing taken for granted ideas, habits of thought, methodologies, and traditions etc. that may have long hindered progress toward a more equitable and just society. Music and music education have throughout much of human history certainly contributed to the betterment of our societies, but it would be naïve to think that has always been the case, or that music and education are founded on objective truths and therefore necessarily socially abstract and culturally, or politically neutral. They have always been, and doubtless will continue to be, used and abused by all manner of people for their own interests and ends. In music education we accordingly owe it to ourselves and our students to engage in scrutiny, dialogue, and debate about the music and music education practices in our lives and in society so more aware of its power in shaping—while also being shaped by—society. Hence the purpose of this course, which is to challenge and encourage you to intellectually grapple with many of difficulties, problems, and complexities of music and music education by reading sometimes difficult literature and engaging in the dialogue, discussion, and debate that are necessary for understanding not only what music and music education are but also what they could be if approached with care and due diligence. You will be evaluated based on the following criteria related to the above stated purpose of this course.

Accordingly, you are expected to demonstrate reliable and timely attendance in class, complete the required weekly readings [see highlighted in Green in Class Schedule of Topics] presented in the attached schedule of classes and topics/readings, and contribute to informed class discussion and participation by:

1) Demonstrating knowledge of their contents through class attendance, participation and general class discussion (20%)
2) By seeking out related information or examples of similar issues, ideas, or problems from on-line or other reliable sources that can enrich our discussions by sometimes teaching us all something that we did not previously know or realize. How many of you, for example, already knew that some German musicians and music educators during the Nazi regime leading up to and throughout World War Two were happy to do Hitler’s bidding in using music and music education as Nazi propaganda? Hitler was by no means unique in employing music to influence children and adults. The course textbook contains many examples of the power of music to persuade or otherwise influence. Some of those examples are wonderful and inspiring, others might be potentially dangerous, even toxic. The challenge for all of us—and including our students—is to be more attentive to the music we perform and listen to so more aware of the social meanings embedded in, or attached to, the lyrics and/or the music’s structural properties, some of which might be constantly shifting as individuals co-opt or possibly misappropriate the music in question for their own ends. As you will learn more about in the course textbook, politicians or all stripes are notorious for using music in ways that its composers might not have approved. On a more inspiring note, how many of you have heard about the Estonian Singing Revolution of 1989-1990 that helped that country achieve its independence from the Soviet Union? You can easily google it.

The idea is that each week you bring to class something that you have found in the course textbook or reliable on-line or other sources that is relevant to those readings and prior discussions and that can help enlarge our understanding of the profession and its problems. If you have difficulty finding something, you could explore some of the optional readings provided on the course schedule of classes and readings for ideas and/or examples of events that help illustrate issues addressed in the class. Many of those optional readings are quite brief and easy to read. Perusal of some of our professional journals, such as the Canadian Music Educator, the Music Educator, the Philosophy of Music Education Review, and the Mayday Group ACT journal (for Action, Criticism and Theory in Music Education) can also introduce you to interesting ideas and issues about which you might not have been cognizant before but that can be included in school music curricula.

There are probably countless similar examples to be found that can be revelatory in helping us understand our profession, its subject matter, and our own moral and ethical responsibilities as teachers. I am depending on you all to help shape this course by contributing your own ideas inspired by the various course and other readings to class discussion. (10%)

3) Each of you will over the course of the class be assigned several shared presentations with other classmates from the required readings in the class schedule that are to be briefly summarized using short power points (with a maximum of 5-8 bullet points) and audio-visual technologies to help bring the ideas to life for the class, and possibly provoke questions or concerns that might be worth exploring. The dates for these audio-visual presentations are all listed in the class schedule, along with your respective names. Your names are also highlighted in Green. (30%)
4) **Short reflections (for a total of 4, with one reflection per month):** These are related to the above explanation of the nature of the course as revelatory—that is, attempting to open your eyes and ears to go beyond performance alone to locate music and music education within the wider world of politics and our own places within it, how music education is very much connected to politics because public schools serve the state, just as private ones are more likely to serve the wealthy or private interests (e.g., various churches). The reflections are only 3 pages in length (use font Times New Roman 12) and double spaced (but without additional spaces between paragraphs). The reflections should be responses to what you read, see, or hear in classes but also about how they relate to your own pre-existing beliefs about music education and its many role(s) and challenges in western schools. Reflections, however, are not simply opportunities to uncritically champion what you think you know or to vent about things you don’t like. They are about making explicit and critically examining your own ideas and beliefs, that is, examining the grounds for your own ideas and beliefs, why you think as you do, why you think something is or isn’t true, how, where, when, and from whom you acquired your own beliefs and ideas, and about how you make your own judgments about ideas presented to you by your parents, peers, teachers, media etc. In short, reflections should demonstrate awareness of the people, institutions and events that shaped your personal understandings of music teaching and learning, including personal foibles and impediments to that understanding, but also those that have inspired you to learn and grown as students and citizens. When referring to ideas or ‘facts’ please be sure to include sources using APA citation style (available on the Library website) so I can see where you got the idea. Usually, in APA, you would simply add the page reference at the end of a sentence, or immediately after a quotation, the authors last name, date of publication, and page number (e.g., Smith, 2019, p. 4). (40%)


There are no other required textbooks, but you will find many excellent sources for ideas below and in the *Oxford handbook of music education* (2012), *The Oxford handbook of social justice in music education* (2015), and the *Oxford handbook of philosophy of music education* (2012). These books are available in the reference section of the Music Library, most are available digitally. Many additional sources are of course provided on our class schedule of topics that has been provided to you.

Additional information about the course textbook and other materials is provided on the schedule of class topics and materials which will be sent to you a few days before classes begin via Owl.
University Policy Statements

Permission to Enroll in Class: 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.

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 & Missing Work (≥10%): Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, 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 their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210), together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. Students are directed to read the Senate policy on accommodation for medical illness at the following website for further details regarding requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation:
https://www.uwo.ca/unicsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

iv) Academic Consideration for Missing Work (<10%): In cases where students miss work that is worth less than 10% of the total course grade (i.e. two or fewer assignments) due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if documentation is voluntarily submitted to the Associate Dean’s office and the Associate Dean grants an accommodation, then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(zes) will be discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course. If documentation is not voluntarily submitted then the missed assignment(s) will receive a grade of zero. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the Associate Dean’s office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

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
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.

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)

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)

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.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence: Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca or call 519 661-3568.

Examinations & Attendance: Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.