

9735b: Fall 2020
Special Topics in Musicology:
MUSIC AND TRAUMA
Thursdays, 1:30pm – 3:30pm, TC 310

Instructor: Emily Abrams Ansari
Zoom office hours: Tuesdays, 2-4pm

emily.ansari@uwo.ca
Course delivery format: Zoom

Course Description

When it comes to events that the human mind struggles to process or verbalize—those with the potential to induce trauma—music has frequently proven a powerful mechanism for documentation, examination, memorialization, and even healing. This course examines theories of trauma, post-traumatic stress, resilience, and post-traumatic growth in light of their potential for aiding interpretation of musical works that deal with potentially traumatic experiences, both individual and collective. We then undertake an overview of some of the existing literature on music and trauma, considering music from a wide range of styles and genres. Students will apply theories of trauma to consider both musical reactions to our present moment and musical works from history.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

1. Gain an understanding of how theoretical models from other fields, including those from beyond the humanities, can be applied in the analysis and interpretation of musical works.
2. Develop a more holistic approach to the study of music, transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries both within and beyond music scholarship, while learning how to draw relevant research materials and analytical models from across an array of disciplines.
3. Improve scholarly research and writing skills, including methods for researching the current moment.
4. Improve presentation skills for a range of contexts.
5. Learn how to work collaboratively and to explore challenging issues of our own times.
6. Improve ability to read critically and synthesize scholarly writing for others

Owl Site

All information about the course, including access to our Zoom classes, will be available on our course Owl site (<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>). For Zoom meetings, you will need to use your uwo email account to access the meetings.

Readings

Readings will be available in electronic form through the “course readings” section of the library website (linked through our Owl page.)

Evaluation

Attendance and participation	15%
Team weekly discussion questions	10%

Team project	25%
Individual project video presentation	20%
Individual project paper	30%

Classes and Preparation

Our class will meet on Zoom from 1.30-3.30 only each week, except on select weeks, where we'll meet 1.30-4.30. (To find the link, go to our course Owl site.) The remaining hour of class time will be used for the team project, described below, a meeting for which will occur sometime earlier in the week. You are expected to be present online during both of these meetings, every week.

To help you prepare for class, I will upload to our Owl site a short video highlighting areas for your focus and consideration in the readings. This will be uploaded by the end of the Friday before each class.

Assignments/Tasks

1. Participation

Part of your participation grade (5%) will be based on self-assessment of your participation in your team project and team discussion. The remaining 10% will be calculated by me and will be based on your participation in the 2-hour class discussion.

2. Team Project

You will work in an assigned team with 1-2 other students in the class. (Teams will be assigned during week 1.) Each team will together arrange a recurring 1-hour weekly Zoom meeting at a mutually convenient time (ideally early in the week) to undertake the tasks below. Please send me a link to this recurring team Zoom meeting so I can listen in from time to time. Each week, you will work on the following two tasks during this meeting:

a) Discuss the provided class preparation questions (these will become available in a video on Owl each Friday) and submit a short list of questions and ideas for class discussion raised by the readings by email to EAA by noon on Wednesday.

b) Together, research and create a blog, podcast, video, or short co-authored essay on some aspect of one of the following topics:

- Music, Trauma, and the Pandemic
- Music, Trauma, and Black Lives Matter

This should be a short (podcasts/videos c. 20 minutes; essays/blog 8-10 pages), accessible piece, based on research in contemporary traditional and social media sources that applies theories of trauma in ways an ordinary listener/reader could understand to consider one or more musical responses to these two contemporary developments. The project will be peer reviewed by the rest of the class (peer reviews will not be graded and do not count toward the project creators' grade) and graded by Prof. Ansari. Submit through our Owl site by midnight, November 13.

A video and/or other materials describing suitable research methods for this project will be made available to the class early in the semester.

3. Individual Project

This project, which you will work on alone throughout the semester, will involve a scholarly consideration of a musical work or works (any genre; any time period) using theories of trauma.

- a) Submit a brief project proposal by email to Prof. Ansari by November 8. This should include a brief (1-2 paragraph) overview of your planned project, and a provisional bibliography.
- b) Create a simply 20-minute video presentation (using eg. Zoom) and share with the class by submitting it through the course Owl site by midnight, December 1.
- c) Write an 10-15 page paper and submit by email as an MS Word document to Prof. Ansari by midnight, December 10.

Class Environment

When tackling this kind of material in a course, it is essential that our virtual classroom provides a safe and respectful environment where everyone can feel comfortable both asking questions and voicing their ideas. This being said, I also think that discomfort is often necessary as part of the learning process. There will be moments when we discuss difficult issues that you may not have addressed in previous courses. However, I expect each of you to come to class with empathy, an open mind, and the recognition that you have an ethical responsibility to those with whom you share our classroom space. If for any reason, you feel that your classroom is not providing you with the environment you need, please e-mail me or come see me immediately.

As you will quickly come to realize in this course if you haven't realized already, we are all living through a collective trauma during this pandemic. We will all respond to the pandemic's challenges in different ways. You may find this course challenging because it will confront some of these challenges directly. On top of that, this course directly addresses other common individual and societal traumas, including war, colonialism, sexual trauma and rape, and racism. If you have been personally affected by any of these experiences, you may find this material difficult. I am happy to talk about your reaction to course materials at any time. If you need to turn off your camera or leave the class at any time because of your reaction to course materials, please send me a private message to say you needed to leave after you have departed, so I know you haven't just lost connection. Take whatever time you need and talk to others, or me, if you think it will be helpful. Mental health resources are also available if needed (see below).

Course policies

- If at all possible, please leave your **camera** on during our Zoom meetings. This is really helpful for building a sense of class community and engagement. Backgrounds are permitted if you wish to maintain privacy. If the materials are challenging to you personally, however, you are always welcome to switch off the video at any time.
- This course is all about discussion and **participation**. If you miss classes without notifying me 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 carefully considered the material listed in the syllabus 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.

- 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. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the office of the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), not to the course instructor.
- 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 http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html
- Students with **special learning needs** or other circumstances are asked to inform the instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be considered.
- **Online etiquette:** Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course and the potential that members of our class may have had personal experience of trauma. 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. Be professional and scholarly in all online postings and messages. Use proper grammar and spelling. Cite the ideas of other appropriately.
- 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

Class schedule

September 10: Theories of Trauma

- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2016 (2nd. ed.), 1-10.
- Wirtz, Ursula. *Trauma and Beyond: The Mystery of Transformation*. New Orleans: Spring Journal, Inc, 2014, 57-64.
- Herman, Judith. "Introduction" and "A Forgotten History," in *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 1-32.
- Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma," and Neil J. Smelser, "Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, Piotr Sztompka, 1-59. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

September 17: Theories of Resilience and Post-Traumatic Growth

- Wirtz, Ursula. *Trauma and Beyond: The Mystery of Transformation*. New Orleans: Spring Journal, Inc, 2014, 75-102.
- Luckhurst, Roger. *The Trauma Question*. New York: Routledge, 2008, 209-14.
- Harms, Louise. *Understanding Trauma and Resilience*. London: Macmillan, 2015, 4-27.
- Hernández-Wolfe, Pilar. *A Borderlands View on Latinos, Latin Americans and Decolonization: Rethinking Mental Health*. Jason Aronson, Plymouth, UK: 2013, 59-79.

September 24: Talking about Trauma Sensitive in Music Studies

- Byron, Katie. "From Infantilizing to World Making: Safe Spaces and Trigger Warnings on Campus." *Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies* 66 (February 2017): 116-125.
- Halberstam, Jack. "You are Triggering Me! The Neo-Liberal Rhetoric of Harm, Danger And Trauma," Bully Bloggers (5 July 2014): <https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2014/07/05/you-are-triggering-me-the-neo-liberalrhetoric-of-harm-danger-and-trauma>.
- Rogers, Jill. "On the Emotional and Social Significance of Teaching Music History in Relation to Trauma Studies." Unpublished paper, AMS National Meeting, 9 November 2017.
- Paulus, Shannon. "The Latest Study on Trigger Warnings Finally Convinced Me They're Not Worth It," *Slate* (12 July 2019).
- Wong, Deborah. "An Ethnomusicology of Hope in a Time of Trauma," in *Musical Islands: Exploring Connections Between Music, Place, and Research*. Edited by Elizabeth Mackinlay, Brydie-Leigh Bartleet, and Katelyn Barney. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009, 3-19.

October 1: Cultural Trauma and Music

- Cizmic, Maria. *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 2012. 3-66.

Vayo, Isaac. "On a Maddening Loop: Post-9/11 Rubble Music." In *The Politics of Post-9/11 Music: Sound, Trauma, and the Music Industry in the Time of Terror*, ed. Joseph P. Fisher and Brian Flota, 69-78. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.

Schwartz, Jessica A. "Vocal Ability and Musical Performances of Nuclear Damages in the Marshall Islands." In *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, ed. Blake Howe, Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, Neil Lerner, and Joseph Straus. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

October 8: Resilience and Music

James, Robin. *Resilience and Melancholy: Pop Music, Feminism, Neoliberalism*. Winchester: Zero Books, 2015, 125-64.

Martin, Alison. "Black Music Matters: Affirmation and Resilience in African American Musical Spaces in Washington, DC." In *Black Lives Matter and Music: Protest, Intervention, Reflection*, ed. Fernando Orejuela and Stephanie Shonekan, 70-85. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018.

Ansari, Emily Abrams. "Music helps us remember who we are and how we belong during difficult and traumatic times." *The Conversation*, May 7, 2020.

<https://theconversation.com/music-helps-us-remember-who-we-are-and-how-we-belong-during-difficult-and-traumatic-times-136324>

October 15: Traumas of Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism

Craps, Stef. "The Trauma of Empire." In *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 9-19.

Sheffield, Carrie Louise. "Native American Hip-Hop and Historical Trauma: Surviving and Healing Trauma on the 'Rez,'" *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 23, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 94-110.

Barney, Katelyn and Elizabeth Mackinlay. "'Singing Trauma Trails': Songs of the Stolen Generations in Indigenous Australia," *Music & Politics* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2010).

October 22: Gender- and Sexuality-Related Trauma

Brisson, Susan J. "Everyday Atrocities and Ordinary Miracles, or Why I (Still) Bear Witness to Sexual Violence (But Not Too Often)," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 36/1-2 (Spring/Summer 2008), 188-98.

Heel, Kiri L. "Trauma and Recovery in Germaine Tailleferre's *Six Chansons Francaises*." *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 15 (2001): 38-69.

Greene, Kathanne. "Women Singer-Songwriters as Exemplary Actors: The Music of Rape and Domestic Violence." *Music and Politics* 11/2 (Summer 2017):

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0011.205>.

Greitzer, Mary Lee. "Queer Responses to Sexual Trauma: The Voices of Tori Amo's 'Me and a Gun' and Lydia Lunch's *Daddy Dearest*." *Women and Music: A Journal of*

Gender and Culture 17/1 (2013): 1-26.

November 2-8: Fall Study Break – No Required Team Meetings and No Class

November 8 – Submit individual project proposal to Prof. Ansari by email.

November 12: The Politics of Traumatic Memory

Sprigge, Martha. "Dresden's Musical Ruins," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 144, no. 114 (2019): 83-121.

Keyes, Beth. "'The Absurd Disordering of Notes': Dysfunctional Memory in the Post-Traumatic Music of Ivor Gurney." In *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, ed. Blake Howe, Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, Neil Lerner, and Joseph Straus. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Baumgartner, Michael and Orlene Denice McMahon. "Fugue States: Music, Memory, and Trauma in Alain Resnais's Early 1960's Films," 159-83. In *Music, Collective Memory, Trauma, and Nostalgia in European Cinema After the Second World War*. Edited by Michael Baumgartner and Ewelina Boczkowska. New York: Routledge, 2019.

Midnight, November 13 – Team Projects to be Uploaded to Owl and then peer reviewed by the rest of the class before start of class, Nov 19.

November 19 (3 HOUR MEETING): Music and memorialization; Secondary Musical Witnessing; the Politics of Representation; Discussion of Submitted Group Projects

Blim, Dan. "'Meaningful Adjacencies': Disunity and the Commemoration of 9/11 in John Adams' 'On the Transmigration of Souls.'" *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 11/2013 (7/4): 382-420.

Wlodarski, Amy Lynn. *Music Witness and Holocaust Representation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University 2015, 1-10; 126-175.

Waterhouse-Watson, Deb and Adam Brown. "Playing for Their Lives: Music, Musicians and Trauma in Holocaust Film." *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, 29:1, 1-16.

Listen to John Adams, *On the Transmigration of Souls* and watch "The Pianist" and "Wunderkinder".

November 26 (2 HOUR MEETING): Auditory Trauma and Torture

Daughtry, Martin. *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 76-102.

Hirsch, Lily. *Music in American Crime Prevention and Punishment*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012, 110-38.

Joseph P. Fisher and Brian Flota, "Introduction - Greet Death: Post-9/11 Music and the Sound of Decay." In *The Politics of Post-9/11 Music: Sound, Trauma, and the Music Industry in the Time of Terror*, ed. P. Fisher and Brian Flota, 1-12. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011.

Video presentation of individual project to be uploaded on Owl by midnight, December 1.

December 3 (3 HOUR MEETING): Applied Ethnomusicology and Healing; Discussion of Final Projects

Harrison, Klisala. "The Second Wave of Applied Ethnomusicology." *MUSICultures* 41/2 (2014): 15-33.

Titon, Jeff Todd and Svanibor Pettan. "An Introduction to Applied Ethnomusicology." Haskell, Erica. "The Role of Applied Ethnomusicology in Post-Conflict and Post-Catastrophe Communities." Pilzer, Joshua D. "The Study of Survivors' Music." All in *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*, ed. Svanibor Pettan and Jeff Todd Titon. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Castelo-Branco, Salwa El-Shawan. "Epilogue: Ethnomusicologists as Advocates," In *Music and Conflict*, ed. John O'Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, 243-52. Urbana: University of Illinois, Press, 2010.

Midnight, December 10 – individual project paper due. Submit by email as an MS Word document to Prof. Ansari.