

Disability Studies in Music Education - MUSIC 9781

Fall 2026

Don Wright Faculty of Music Course Syllabus

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Office Hours: by appointment

Class Times: Information available on OWL

Class Location: Information available on OWL

Course Description

In this course we will examine the complex construct of disability as both an identity and experience in the context of music education. Engaging with readings and other resources such as videos and podcasts that draw on key concepts and ideas from the interdisciplinary field of disability studies, we will survey and discuss how disability is framed and experienced in diverse music teaching and learning contexts, both past and present. Furthermore, this course will provide opportunities to examine how disability intersects with other marginalized lived experiences (e.g., race, gender, sexuality), and both the promise and problems that music poses for inclusion.

Modeled on the concept of a “continuing conference,” this course will seek to make connections between topics discussed from week to week. Given that “music and disability studies” is intentionally broad in scope, students are encouraged to “roam” and engage with topics related to disability and music education that are of particular interest to them. Therefore, this course will provide opportunities for students to engage in inquiries focusing on topics of their choice under the vast umbrella of music education and disability studies. Students will be expected to present on their chosen topics and facilitate discussions. In addition, this course will include guest speakers who will present on specialized topics related to the course.

Graduate Course Learning Objectives

During this course, students will:

- examine, evaluate, and discuss relevant literature and other media related to music education and disability studies
- discuss their understandings of theory related to music education and disability studies
- conduct a literature review on a topic of interest related to music education and disability studies
- present on a topic of interest related to music education and disability studies
- integrate accessibility considerations into all assignments

Enrolment Restrictions

Enrolment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Music, as well as any student who has obtained special permission from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Course Materials

All course materials will be provided by the instructor. There are no anticipated costs for students. Required readings will be provided on OWL.

Course Timeline and Format

Please note that the sequence of topics may need to be adjusted to accommodate guest speakers.

Week 1 (September 9) – Accessibility; doing research; bibliographies
Week 2 (September 16) – Normalcy and Coloniality – Assignment 1
Week 3 (September 23) – Disability Models – Assignment 2
*National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – September 30 – No Class
Week 4 (October 7) – Feminism - Assignment 2
*Reading Week – October 14 – No Class
Week 5 (October 21) – Black Disability Politics – Assignment 3
Week 6 (October 28) – Intersectionality
Week 7 (November 4) – Queer Studies
Week 8 (November 11) – Public Scholarship – Assignment 4
Week 9 (November 18) – Mad Studies
Week 10 (November 25) – Assignment 5 & 6
Week 11 (December 2) – Assignment 5 & 6

This schedule is intended to be flexible to accommodate for (a) guest speakers, and (b) focusing on topics as determined by the class

Weekly readings will be assigned and made available on OWL. Students can expect approximately 3 readings (articles or books chapters) per week. Reading times vary between individuals, but based on previous experiences, students report taking anywhere between 20-60 minutes to read one article or chapter. Therefore, students should plan to dedicate 1-3 hours per week of reading time to this course based on their own respective reading paces. The instructor will aim to ensure the readings are compatible with screen readers.

Methods of Evaluation

There will be six assessed elements of the course:

Assignment	Detail	Weighting	Due date
Assignment 1	Presentation Pitch	10%	Week 2
Assignment 2	Discussion	20%	TBD
Assignment 3	Synthesis Exercise	10%	Week 6
Assignment 4	Annotated Bibliography	25%	Week 8
Assignment 5	Presentation – script (10%), slides (10%), oral presentation (5%)	25%	Weeks 10&11
Assignment 6	Peer Review	10%	Weeks 10&11

In keeping with the spirit of a “continuing conference,” all assignments will be presented in class to promote peer-led learning, peer discussions, and peer reviews. Students are welcome to use a modality of their choosing to “present” their assignments. For example, a presentation could be oral, but it could also be a video, a text-based script, or

another medium. *How* assignments are assessed (e.g., criteria of assessment, weighting of criteria, method of assessment) will be discussed and decided upon as a class.

Assignment 1 – Presentation Pitch – 10%

The presentation pitch is intended to be a relatively informal presentation of approximately 5 minutes, followed by an instructor-facilitated discussion of approximately 5 minutes. It is an opportunity for students to share their ideas on potential topics for Assignment 3 (presentation). Students are required to have identified at least 1 related reading/media source to their topic(s) of interest and share the main point(s) of the source(s). In addition, students should discuss (1) what or who is the focus of their proposed presentation, (2) why this topic is of interest to them, (3) how they anticipate preparing the presentation going forward. Following the presentation, we will have an open discussion in class about the topic, which can include asking questions and offering suggestions.

Assignment 2 – Discussion Facilitation (2 total, 10% each) – 20%

Building on Assignment 1, students are tasked with leading discussions amongst their peers. As a source for discussion, students are asked to engage with non-academic media produced by disabled persons. One example is Alice Wong's podcast, Disability Visibility: <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/podcast-2/>. Specifically, students are asked to consider how the media they chose to engage with informs their thinking about music education and disability.

The student leading the discussion is required to provide (1) a brief (no more than 5-minute) introduction to and overview of the topic, and (2) questions to generate a 5-minute discussion. Based on previous experiences with this exercise, 3 question prompts should be prepared in advance to generate discussion. The student leading the discussion is also required to facilitate the discussion, which entails inviting classmates to share their perspectives on the topic(s).

Assignment 3 – Synthesis Exercise – 10%

Following conventions used in scoping reviews discussed in class, students will use a shared collection of articles to perform a synthesis of findings.

Assignment 4 – Annotated Bibliography – 25%

Following instructions presented in class on developing a guiding question for conducting a literature review and writing an annotation of a source, students will complete annotations of at least 12 research articles from music education journals. Each annotation will be 200-300 words.

Assignment 5 – Presentation – 25%

Using the content from Assignment 4, students will give a 20-minute presentation followed by a 5-minute discussion on their chosen topic. The presentations should serve as evidence that students have engaged with 12 or more sources related to their chosen topics.

Assignment 6 – Peer Reviews and Questions – 10%

Students will design and implement their own assessment tool for conducting peer reviews of the Assignment 5 presentations. Students are responsible for reviewing each

presentation that is NOT on the day of their presentation (e.g., a student that presents on Week 11 will be required to do their peer reviews on Week 12; a student that presents in Week 12 will be required to do their peer reviews on Week 11). In addition to the peer reviews, students must also be prepared to ask a question during the discussion period.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

Instructor Statement on Accessibility

The following statements related to accessibility (“Health and Wellness” and “Accessible Education Western”) are required components of a syllabus as determined by the Senate and SGPS. These policies may not adequately address a learner’s accessibility needs. In an attempt to address our collective access needs as a class community, we will discuss and navigate accessibility continually through regular check-ins. All members of the class are encouraged to dialogue with the instructor about their individual access needs if they do not feel comfortable doing so amongst the class. Because access is relational and access needs can conflict, there can be no guarantees that all access needs will be met; however, as a class, we will strive to make our learning environment as accessible as possible to everyone involved, inclusive of students, the instructor, and guests.

Health/Wellness Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support for a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Accessible Education (AE)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education (AE), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AE and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or

in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

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.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In general, I advise against using most “GenAI” tools in this course because it will not be beneficial for students to offload the cognitive tasks that they should learn how to perform as a researcher. There may be tools marketed as “AI,” such as those that use machine learning, that can be helpful to students in this class with some tasks. This is a topic that we can discuss on a case-by-case basis as we consider the ethical implications of the various tools available to us as researchers to perform labour.