

## **HC231H Music and Politics**

Summer 2024

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Department of Political Science

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### **I. Course logistics**

Office Hours: TBD

This class is a part of the CHC London Study Abroad Prefreshman program. You will need to be onsite in London to participate.

No prerequisites needed for this class

Required course materials:

All texts are on Canvas.

### **II. Course description**

How does music relate to politics and power in social movements, subcultures, and the marketplace? This course will explore the relationship of music to politics, focusing on popular music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the US and UK. We will read about, write about, and listen to music from across genres and political moments including labor and civil rights songs, blues, R&B, hip hop, and pop, and we will look at the political contexts in which these forms of music are produced, performed, and consumed. We will be asking questions about what is political about music of these various musical styles and from diverse historical periods. We will not focus solely on music produced as an intervention into particular political movements, though we will look at examples of this kind (music from the American civil rights movement, for example). Rather, we are interested in how music of any and every kind is involved in the production of subjectivity, how changing formats of sound production and technology affect our sensory capacities as social and political subjects, how music structures collectivity, and how the relationship between form and content in music can be analyzed in ways that are useful for social and political critique. Our interests here are in the “micropolitics” of music. Above all, we will be learning tools for listening to music more deeply, so that we can have a deeper understanding of the ways that music impacts us and moves us, whether that be to action, inaction, political struggle, complacency, or emotion.

### **III. Expected learning outcomes**

## Skills

In this class you will learn:

- Analytical writing ability, including exposition, and analysis of philosophical arguments
- How to effectively read philosophical/theoretical texts
- How to connect theory with everyday experience
- How to integrate analysis with personal and creative reflection.

## Content

- You will learn about a significant literature in the field of Political Theory about the relationship between music, culture and politics.
- You will learn about the following concepts: race, culture, subcultures, capitalism, commodity fetishism, cultural appropriation.
- You will learn how to use the theories studied in class to perform analyses of media and artworks, as well as of contemporary political events.
- You will learn how to participate effectively in online discussion boards.

## IV. How Grades Will Be Determined

Your grade will be based upon the following:

1) Weekly discussion boards (2 posts per week plus responses to other's posts):

30% (assessed via Canvas discussion board).

You have 2 discussion boards for each module. For discussion boards, you will be posting an initial written response to the prompt, as well as a response to one of your fellow classmates posts from your discussion board group. You will each be assigned to a group for the duration of the quarter. **Discussion Board initial posts will be due every week on Wednesday (for the first one) and Friday (for the second one) by 11:59 pm PDT for your initial posts. Then your response to one your classmate's posts per board will be due by Thursday (for the first set) and Sunday (for the second set) at 11:59 pm for your comment on another person's post.** Discussion Board assignments begin Week 1. So you are writing 2 posts per week, and responding to 2 classmates' posts a week. This deadline structure remains the same every week for all four modules, so please plan accordingly. Please always make sure to write your post in a word doc and save it in case you have problems with Canvas (this is not unheard of). Discussion board posts are worth a big part of your grade (40%), and so you want to make sure that you complete these posts on time. **You'll also have 2 extensions to use on your discussion posts if you miss the deadline for any reason. Please don't write to me, just make sure you submit your posts to the discussion board for the posts you missed (up to 2 posts only) by the completion of the course (Sept. 17).**

2) 40%: Final group project

You will gather with a group of fellow students to develop a final group presentation on a topic of your group's choosing. You will deliver a presentation of about 25 min. to the class. The presentation will include a written and oral component.

### 3) 30% Site visit response papers x 3

As part of our course we will be going to concerts, talks, museums and events in London related to our course topic. You will write response papers discussing 3 of these events of your choice. More specific details about this assignment to follow.

Assignment of final grades: Students will receive grades based on their grades for each assignment, the percentage weights given in the table above, and the following criteria:

- A+: rarely given, sometimes given to students whose performance stands out as significantly stronger than all other students in the course
- A: all assignments completed in ways that demonstrate a strong and nuanced understanding of almost all course concepts and the ability to clearly connect theories from the course to empirical evidence
- B: all assignments completed in ways that demonstrate a solid understanding of most course concepts and the ability to adequately connect theories from the course to empirical evidence
- C: completed assignments demonstrate only a basic understanding of course concepts and/or one or more assignments missing
- D: missing many assignments and completed assignments demonstrate little understanding of material covered
- F: assignments completed account for less than 80% of total grade.

## V. Modules

### **Reading/Listening Schedule:**

[Note: All readings and playlists will be available at the course Canvas site. **There are a few online materials that must be purchased outside of Canvas, these are listed on the Getting Started Module**]

### **Module 1: Music and Society— (Week 1)**

#### **1.1:** Introduction

#### **1.2: Music and Society**

Plato, *The Republic*, Book III (pp. 398-403)

Homer, *The Odyssey* (Book 12, excerpt on the Sirens) (no page numbers—html file).

Dane Rhudyar, “When Does Sound Become Music?” (no page numbers—html file).

Listen to weekly playlist

### **Module 2: Politics of Pop— (Week 2)**

#### **2.1: Principles and Tools for Listening**

Listen to playlist 2.1 linked on Canvas and come to class prepared to listen, take notes, and to learn techniques for musical and cultural analysis.

Listen to weekly playlist

### **2.2: Pop I**

Simon Frith, “Pop Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock* (pp. 93-108)  
Listening selections linked on Canvas.

Listen to weekly playlist

### **2.3: Pop II**

Adorno, “The Fetish Character of Music and the Regression in Listening” (PP. 270-299)  
In-class listening selections drawn from class participants

Listen to weekly playlist

### **2.4: Deconstructing the Popular**

Raymond Williams, “Notes on Deconstructing the Popular” pp. 442-453  
Film: *Twenty Feet from Stardom* (2013)  
Listen to weekly playlist

## **Module 3: Music, Civil Rights, and the 1960’s— (Week 3)**

### **3.1: R & B, Race, Black consciousness II**

*Just My Soul Responding*, Brian Ward, Ch. 1 (pp. 19-55)  
Listen to weekly playlist

### **3.2: Music and Civil Rights**

*Just My Soul Responding*, Brian Ward, Ch. 3 (90-122)

“Black is a Country” BBC 4 podcast on the music of the Black Power Movement (to be listened to as homework)  
Listen to weekly playlist

### **3.3: Music of the 1960’s (and beyond)**

Eyerman and Jamison, *Music and Social Movements*, Ch. 3-5 (emphasis on 3 and 5). (pp. 48-139)  
Joan Didion, “Slouching Toward Bethlehem” (pp. 5-35)  
Listen to weekly playlist

### **3.4: Music of the 1960’s II**

Peter Doggett, *There’s a Riot Going On: Revolutionaries, Rock Stars and the Rise and the Fall of the 1960’s*, Ch. 3 (pp. 133-218)

Listen to weekly playlist

#### **Module 4: Hip Hop, Race and the Politics of Appropriation— (Week 4)**

##### **4.1: Hip Hop: “The Most Dangerous Art Form”**

Jeff Chang, *Can’t Stop, Won’t Stop* (PP. 89-211, 215-229)

Listen to weekly playlist

##### **4.2:**

##### **Hip Hop: Politics of Form**

View Documentary at home: *Scratch* (2001) (linked on Canvas). We will discuss this film in class along with other reading.

Michael Eric Dyson, “Know What I Mean?: Reflections on Hip Hop” (pp. 41-58)

Listen to weekly playlist

##### **4.3:**

##### **Black Culture, Agency, Resistance**

*Everything But the Burden: What White People are Taking from Black Culture*

Intro, Ch. 1, Ch. 10 (PP. 1-38, 124-135)

Eric Lott, “Love and Theft: The Racial Unconscious of Blackface Minstrelsy” (pp. 23-50)

Listen to weekly playlist

##### **4.4:**

##### **Global hip hop**

Watch on your own: *Hip hop: the furious force of rhymes* (2010)

We will discuss this film in class.

Listen to weekly playlist

#### **VI. Course Policies**

**Norms of communication:** My intention is to create an environment that is inclusive and safe for diverse voices. This means that we will create parameters as a class together for the norms of our discourse in discussion boards. I address this topic in the getting started module so you are aware of your responsibilities for creating that space.

**Late assignments policy:** For discussion board posts, you’ll have 2 extensions to use on your discussion posts if you miss the deadline for any reason. Please don’t write to me, just make sure you submit your posts to the discussion board for the posts you missed (up to 2 posts only) by the completion of the course (Sept. 17). For your final essay paper, due on Sept. 17, I will not be able to accept late papers, as the deadline is already the last

day of the summer term. In order to submit your grades, and in order for you to receive credit on the paper, I will need to have your paper by Sept. 17.

All assignments must be submitted via Canvas. More specific directions are in the assignments section of Canvas. Please always use an application like dropbox to backup your files at all times. In case of extenuating family emergencies, please have documentation of your situation in hand.

**Email correspondence:** Please identify yourself and the name of our course in all correspondence with the instructor. Also, when you email, please be aware that you should write grammatically. You should act professionally in this medium like in all communication. I will aim to respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays between 9 am-5 pm PST, outside this window it may take a bit longer.

## **VII. University Policies**

### Content Warnings

We deal with several topics in this class that could elicit a strong emotional response based on your history, experiences, identities, and other factors. Those topics include racism, sexism, and discrimination. Please take care of yourself as you engage with this material and be sure to seek out support as needed, which may include campus resources such as the UO Counseling Center.” I will do my best to make this classroom a space where we can engage bravely, empathetically, and thoughtfully with difficult content every week.

### Accessible Education

The University of Oregon is working to create more inclusive learning environments, including for students who identify as having a disability. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation, please contact me—your success matters.

You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu). The AEC offers a wide range of support services including note-taking, testing services, sign language interpretation and adaptive technology.

### Accommodations for Religious Observances

The University of Oregon respects the right of all students to observe their religious holidays, and will make reasonable accommodations, upon request, for these observances. If you need to be absent from a class period this term because of a religious obligation or observance, please fill out the [Student Religious Accommodation Request fillable PDF form](#) and send it to me within the first weeks of the course so we can make

arrangements in advance.

## Your Wellbeing

Life at college can be complicated. Students often feel overwhelmed or stressed, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationships, or just need help navigating challenges in their life. If you're facing such challenges, you don't need to handle them on your own--there's help and support on campus.

University Health Services helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the Duck Nest (located in the EMU on the ground floor) and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates.

University Counseling Services (UCS) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at [counseling.uoregon.edu](http://counseling.uoregon.edu) or by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number).

## Basic Needs

Being able to meet your basic needs is foundational to your success as a student at the University of Oregon. If you are having difficulty affording food, don't have a stable, safe place to live, or are struggling to meet another need, visit the [UO Basic Needs Resource page](#) for information on how to get support. They have information food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances (including emergency funds), and legal support.

If your need is urgent, please contact the Care and Advocacy Program by calling 541-346-3216, filling out the [Community Care and Support form](#), or by [scheduling an appointment](#) with an advocate.

## Respect for Diversity

You can expect to be treated with respect in this course. Each of us enters class with many identities, backgrounds, and beliefs. Students of all racial identities, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, citizenship statuses, ability and other visible and non-visible differences belong in and contribute to this class and this discipline. All students are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

Class rosters are provided to instructors with students' legal names. Please let me know if the name or pronouns I have for you are not accurate. It is important to me to address you properly. Please let me know if aspects of the instruction, course design, or class activities undermine these principles in any way.

### Academic Integrity

The University Student Conduct Code defines academic misconduct, which includes using unauthorized help on assignments and examinations, the use of sources without acknowledgment, and recording class without “the express written permission of the instructor(s).” It also includes using Chat GPT or AI software in your written assignments. Academic misconduct is prohibited at UO. I will report all suspected misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. If the Office finds a student has committed misconduct, consequences can include of the relevant assignment or exam, or of the course.

While unauthorized help and use of sources without citation is prohibited, learning together and citing sources is crucial! Each assignment and assessment will have a note about whether and how you might work with others so that you can clearly act with academic integrity. All assignments will use the Chicago Manual of Style author-date form of citation, and you can find support in using this form at the UO Libraries' Citation Guides research guide.

If at any point in the term you are unsure about whether a behavior aligns with academic integrity in our course, please contact me. I view student questions about academic integrity as a desire to act with integrity, so I welcome your questions.

### Student Experience Surveys

The midway and end-of-term Student Experience Surveys will be conducted in class during the 4th week and 10<sup>th</sup> week. of the quarter. These are important opportunities to provide feedback about your learning experiences. I value this feedback and am continually improving the course with students’ responses in mind. The key parts of the survey are the open-ended questions where you share concrete, actionable feedback and about the teaching practices that stand out to you. Thank you for your thoughtful reflections!

### Mandatory Reporter Status

I am a designated reporter. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see Employee Reporting Obligations on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. Students experiencing sex or gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence should call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE [7244] or visit safe.uoregon.edu for help. Students experiencing all forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment may contact the Dean of Students Office at 541-346-3216 or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator/OICRC at 541-346-3123. Additional resources are available at UO’s How to Get Support webpage.

I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect.”

### Academic Disruption due to Campus Emergency

In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto

Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also expected to continue coursework as outlined in this syllabus or other instructions on Canvas.

In the event that the instructor of this course has to quarantine, this course may be taught online during that time.”

#### Inclement Weather

It is generally expected that class will meet unless the University is officially closed for inclement weather. Our class is asynchronous so we will be unaffected by campus closures. If it becomes necessary to cancel class while the University remains open, this will be announced on Canvas and by email. Updates on inclement weather and closure are also communicated as described on the Inclement Weather webpage.