



SYLLABUS

MUSIC AND POLITICS IN LONDON

Instructor Name: Professor Anita Chari

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Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hrs: 40

UO Quarter Credits:

Level: 300

LONDON, UK

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore the relationship of music to politics, primarily in the US and UK contexts. 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. An important part of our experience will involve interacting with the music scene in London, which is where our course takes place. 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). Instead, we look at 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 beings, 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 more profound understanding of the ways that music impacts us and moves us, whether that be to action, inaction, political struggle, complacency, or emotion. This process is both bodily and intellectual, and so our work together will also include perceptual and embodied practices that will deepen our capacity for listening.

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Additionally, this course uses concepts from Political Theory, Critical Theory and Cultural Studies to interrogate the relationship between music and politics. Such concepts include: commodity fetishism, consciousness, political universality, class, race, gender, democracy, subjectivity, the polis, and micropolitics. In the process of learning about music and politics, you will therefore also be exposed to some of the fundamental concepts used in these fields

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Write analytically and analyze theoretical arguments
- Effectively read philosophical/theoretical texts
- Connect theory with everyday experience
- Integrate analysis with personal and creative reflection.
- Deepen listening through embodied practices

In terms of the course content, you will have the opportunity to:

- Learn about significant literature in the fields of Political Theory, Critical Theory, and Cultural Studies, about the relationship between music, culture and politics.
- Develop familiarity with the following concepts: race, culture, subcultures, capitalism, commodity fetishism, cultural appropriation.
- Use the theories studied in class to perform analyses of media and artworks, as well as of contemporary political events.
- Listen to live music and connect live experiences to the texts under study.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

One third of the teaching time will be spent in PowerPoint lectures, videos and recordings, and class discussions in preparation for the week's visits and performances. The other two thirds will be spent in experiential learning sites in London (and beyond) concert venues, neighborhoods, museums and exhibitions where you will learn about specific contexts of music history in the UK. Performance/exhibition worksheets will form part of your journal assignments.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Students will be required to complete one structured writing assignment, a weekly reflection paper, and a final presentation. Students will also be evaluated on participation and attendance.

- Form and Content Assignment (about 4 pages) = 15%
- Weekly reflection/journal writing assignment (x 4) = 30%
- 2 informal in class presentations based on your reflection writing assignments = 15%
- Attendance and participation = 20%
- Final presentation = 20%

COURSE OUTLINE AND SAMPLE COURSE READINGS

See attached timetable from GEO London for times and locations of specific events each day. Please note that syllabus is subject to change. Note these are sample activities subject to change.

Class content/events	Readings and Assignments
Week 1	Music and Society & The Politics of Pop
<p>1.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom – Course Introduction • Intro to Form and Content • Concert TBD 	<p>Bring a journal/notebook to class and to all events Read: Plato, <i>The Republic</i>, Book III (pp. 398-403) Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i> (Book 12, excerpt on the Sirens) (no page numbers—html file, about 12 pages)</p>
<p>1.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Writing about Music' workshop with cultural critic Christopher Cook 	<p>Read Simon Frith, “Pop Music,” in <i>The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock</i> (pp. 93-108) Listening selections linked on Canvas.</p> <p>Optional: Jonathan Bellman, <i>A Short Guide to Writing About Music</i>, pp. 7-39</p>
<p>1.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit: Black Sounds walking tour of Brixton • Visit: Black Cultural Archives tour and exhibition • Performance: TBD 	<p>Read Dan Hancox, The Brixton Riots and Music, website, n.p https://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2017/04/brixton-riots-feature Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing the Popular” pp. 442-453</p> <p>Submit ⇒ Form and Content Assignment 1: <u>due Reflection Paper #1</u></p>
Week 2	Music and Traditions of Protest
<p>2.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit: Music walking tour of Soho 	<p>Read Eyerman and Jamison, <i>Music and Social Movements</i>, Ch. 5 (pp.106-139)</p>
<p>2.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit: Tate Modern, including current exhibition • Concert: TBD 	<p>Read Lipsitz, “Who’ll Stop the Rain: Youth Culture, Rock’n roll and Social Crises,” pp. 206-234</p> <p>Exhibition guide TBD</p>

<p><u>2.3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit: Whitechapel Gallery 	<p>Read Exhibition notes TBD</p>
<p><u>2.4</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom –Music and politics of the 60’s discussion 	<p>Read Joan Didion, “Slouching Toward Bethlehem,” pp. 5-35 Present ⇒ Response presentations in class</p>
<p><u>2.5</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day trip: Liverpool 	<p>Submit Reflection paper #2 due</p>
<p><u>Week 3</u></p>	<p>Blues People</p>
<p><u>3.1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom: Discuss Blues People Text 	<p>Read Amiri Baraka, <i>Blues People: Negro Music in Black America</i>, ix-xii, 1-10, 17-31</p>
<p><u>3.2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom – Guest: composer and activist Uri Agnon 	<p>Read James Baldwin, “The Uses of the Blues,” pp. 57-66</p>
<p><u>3.3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Library exhibition • Classroom: Discussion of music and racial politics 	<p>Read <i>Just My Soul Responding</i>, Brian Ward, Ch. 1 (pp. 19-55)</p>
<p><u>3.4</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day Trip: Brighton 	<p>Submit ⇒ Reflection paper 3</p>
<p><u>Week 4</u></p>	<p>Music & Technology</p>
<p><u>4.1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom — Guest: Brit Pop presentation with Andrew Whitehead • Concert: TBD 	<p>Read Michael Bull, “The Audio-Visual Ipod” (pp. 197-208) Shuhei Hosokawa, “The Walkman Effect” (pp. 104-116)</p>
<p><u>4.2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom: Music and Technology discussion 	<p>Read Kyle Chayka, <i>Filterworld: How Algorithms Flattened Culture</i>, pp. TBD</p>
<p><u>4.3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom: Final Presentations 	<p>Submit Reflection paper 4 due</p>

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Academic Misconduct

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at <https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>.

Generative AI Course Policy

Students may use GenAI tools in this course only with explicit instructor permission for certain tasks or on certain assignments. I will clearly indicate when you can use GenAI and provide clear guidelines for which GenAI tools are allowed and in what ways you can use them. I will also indicate how you will document your use of GenAI. In accordance with UO policy, if I believe you've handed in work created in whole or in part by GenAI tools used without permission, I may submit a report of suspected academic misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for that office to make a determination of responsibility and, if warranted, assess a grade penalty. The bottom line is, unless permission has been given, you should not use GenAI in this course. If in doubt, ask!

Accessible Education

The University of Oregon and I are dedicated to fostering inclusive learning environments for all students and welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Accessible Education Center (AEC) assists students with disabilities in reducing campus-wide and classroom-related barriers. [If you have or think you have a disability](#) and experience academic barriers, please contact the AEC to discuss appropriate accommodations or support. Visit 360 Oregon Hall or aec.uoregon.edu for more information. You can contact AEC at 541-346-1155 or via email at uoacc@uoregon.edu.

Reporting Obligations

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 to request information and resources. Students are not required to participate in an investigation to receive support, including requesting academic supportive measures. Additional resources are available at investigations.uoregon.edu/how-get-support.

I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

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Pregnancy Modifications

Pregnant and parenting students are eligible for academic and work modifications related to pregnancy, childbirth, loss of pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, lactation, and related medical conditions. To request pregnancy-related modifications, students should complete the [Request for Pregnancy Modifications form](#) on the OICRC website. OICRC coordinates academic and other modifications for pregnant and parenting students to ensure students can continue to access their education and university programs and activities.