I. Course identity, teaching staff, and logistics

PS 372 Music and Politics
Professor Anita Chari
Department of Political Science
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Office Hours: TBD online
This class is online, conducted via Canvas and is entirely asynchronous (meaning you work on your own schedule), for 4 weeks during the summer.

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, primarily in the US context. 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.

V. How Grades Will Be Determined

Your grade will be based upon the following:

1) Weekly discussion boards (2 per week plus responses to other’s posts):
   50% (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 your classmates posts will be due by Thursday (for the first one) and Sunday (for the second one) at 11:59 pm for your comment on another person’s post. Discussion Board assignments begin Week 1. 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 (50%), and so you want to make sure that you complete these posts on time. There are no extensions for discussion board posts whatsoever so please be mindful of the deadlines.

2) Final writing assignment: 50% 8-10 page paper

   Your one and final writing assignment of 8-10 pages will be due by 11:59 pm on Canvas on August 18. This assignment will be available on July 30 with the release of Module 2 so you can begin working on it whenever you choose at that time.

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+: if given at all, given to 1 or 2 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.

VI. Modules

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

**Module 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).

Listen to weekly playlist

**Module 2: Politics of Pop**

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

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

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

VII. Course Policies

**Respectful classroom discourse:** My intention is to create an environment that is inclusive and that aims to be 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 paper policy:** *Please note that I will not accept late papers. Late papers receive a 0.* Papers must be submitted via Vericite. More specific directions will follow. Only cases of documented family or personal injury (death in the family or extreme personal accident/illness) will be accepted as exceptions to this rule and only in very very rare cases. Please do not use computer failure as an excuse, you should use an application like dropbox to backup your files at all times. Do not attempt to get in touch with me to receive an excuse unless you have documented proof 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, otherwise it may take a bit longer.
Academic Misconduct

The presentation of someone else's words or ideas as your own is plagiarism and is a serious offense. The University of Oregon takes a very hard line in questions of academic misconduct. It is never tolerable to present someone else’s work as your own. Sources: The failure to provide proper acknowledgment of your use of outside sources constitutes plagiarism. You must name all sources you are paraphrasing or quoting. Please consult with me if you are confused about how to make a proper citation. You can also consult Charles Lipson, *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), or the Dartmouth College’s “Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgement” (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/). Both manuals offer a full explanation of what constitutes plagiarism and how to cite sources, including documenting sources taken from the web. **In this class we will very seldom use secondary sources. Nevertheless, if you ever consult a secondary source you must cite to it.**

Student Resources

**Accessible Education:** *The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.*

**Academic Support:** The University Teaching and Learning Center provides numerous resources to help University of Oregon students succeed. Programs, workshops, courses, tutors, and mentors are among the many resources they provide to help with educational pursuits at the University of Oregon. For the services offered by the center see http://tlc.uoregon.edu/index.html

**University of Oregon Crisis Center:** A student-funded organization that provides students with confidential telephone crisis intervention 24/7 at (541) 346-4488.

**Title IX Information:**

Please find the university's policy at the following website:

https://titleix.uoregon.edu/resources

**Resources:**

SAFE website  
Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity  
Office of the Dean of Students  
University Counseling and Testing Center  
University Health Center  
University of Oregon Police Department