

MUCH 495: Music and Disability Studies

Syllabus, Fall 2020

Class Time and Location:

Tue/Thu, 9:35-10:50 am (no room assignment, class meets online)

Instructor

Dr. Erin Brooks

Email: brooksem@potdam.edu

Phone number: x2759

Office hours:

Virtual office hours (Zoom or by phone) are by appointment. Please email or message me to set up these office hour meetings; I'm very happy to discuss course material or just offer a supportive ear for anything you'd like to share in a safe space.

Course Description

Disability Studies—there is now a disability studies minor at SUNY Potsdam—is a new interdisciplinary area which studies the cultural dimensions of disability across different chronological eras, places, and cultures. As both a human condition and as a type of identity, disability is shaped by changing perceptions constructed by cultural ideas (from the social to the political). In MUCH 495: Music and Disability Studies, you will learn to employ the interdisciplinary approaches of disability studies to examine social and cultural aspects of disability in relation to music. Through readings in a variety of disciplines (such as musicology, cultural studies, and disability studies), you will explore the ways musicians have identified as disabled, as well as how disability has shaped music and reception. We will likewise explore how disability narratives have been used in discourse about musical style. Listening, viewing, and analysis will also form part of class assignments, and each of you will undertake a final research project on the topic of music and disability.

Course Objectives

Participants who successfully complete MUCH 495 (Music and Disability Studies) should be able to:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of music and disability
- Recognize vocabulary and identify larger-scale philosophical debates from our class units on various aspects of music and disability
- Critically consider constructions of disability as it intersects with gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and other identity categories
- Consider, develop, and implement modes of analysis that might be useful in examining relationships between music and disability
- Evaluate and critique a range of issues relevant to the seminar's subject matter, by presenting your ideas orally and engaging actively in group discussion and debate

- Reflect in written form on seminar topics
- Frame a research question related to the course topic
- Identify appropriate sources for exploring the question & critically read the secondary literature related to your research question
- Communicate your own research appropriately in both written and verbal presentation at a level suitable for an upper-division undergraduate music history course

Course Prerequisites:

Students enrolled in this course should have successfully completed MUCB 201 and MUCB 202 (Music History I and History II).

Students from outside of the Crane School of Music—particularly students interested in the disability studies minor—who do not have the prerequisites may be added by the instructor on a case-by-case basis.¹

Reading/Listening Assignments

There are **no** required texts for this course. All readings and recordings for this course will be available to you through the Moodle site for this course. Visit <https://moodle.potsdam.edu> for your course resources.

Readings and listening assignments are required, and should be completed prior to each class. For each class, log on to Moodle to access the materials—each day's module on Moodle will contain PDFs and links for each class.

It is your responsibility to make sure that you can access the class materials; please let me know as soon as possible if you are having any problems. I cannot troubleshoot issues involving your personal computer. Please understand that if you cannot access course materials through your own computer, you must work with computers on campus. The number to Computing & Technology Services (CTS) helpdesk is (315) 267-4444 or helpdesk@potsdam.edu

For additional help with your assignments, the Crane Music library has a vast variety of resources. The url <http://www.libraries.potsdam.edu/resources-subject/music.html> will take you to a page with several resources that will be useful, such as audio/visual resources and reference databases.

Class structure:

Course content and activities are structured using a weekly format on Moodle, with individual modules for each day. Modules for each day will open on or before your official class time, and once opened, they will remain visible for the remainder of the semester.

¹ For more information on disability studies minor requirements, please see <https://www.potsdam.edu/disability-studies-minor>

While each week may have some small variability—Moodle always has the most specific assignment information for each class—the following is a general explanation of how this semester will function. I have divided our two weekly class meetings into the following structure (note that only one of these meetings is “live,” which gives you a fair amount of flexibility).

- On Tuesdays, you will have assigned reading (s) and listening to do. All specific reading & listening details will always be provided on the Moodle module. I have tried to be judicious about assigning reading (not giving you extraordinarily long/complicated readings), so please dig in knowing that you have limited readings & listening only one day a week instead of two. You can do the readings & listening any time you’d like, but they should be finished sometime before Wednesday night on any given week.

After doing your readings and listening, you should post a paragraph with 2 questions to the Moodle forum for each week. **In terms of timing, you should make sure to make your post on or before Wednesday evening, 11:59 pm.** If there are reasons you can’t complete your post on time, just let me know. For more on Moodle posts, see “Course Evaluation.”

- On Thursday mornings, we will have a live “Zoom” discussion section, based on concepts from the readings, listenings, and responses to the Moodle forum discussion (sometimes a little lecturing from me). I’ll send out the link for Zoom via email and post it on Moodle as well. This meeting will take place during the 9:35-10:50am class time. For attendance policy, see “Course Evaluation.”

Course Evaluation

Grading will be based on four overall categories: discussion forum posts, class attendance/participation/discussion, and a final research project (which has a number of internal steps).

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| 1. Posts on the Moodle Forum (weekly) | 20%* |
| 2. Class Attendance, Participation, Preparedness | 20%** |
| 3. Final Project | 60% |
- More info with due dates posted on Moodle in Week 2, but the project division is:
 - Initial Research Topics—3%
 - One-on-One Consultation on Research Topics—2%
 - Research Question and Bibliography—5%
 - Abstract—5%
 - Draft of Podcast Script—10%
 - Peer suggestions on Podcast Script—5%
 - Revised Script (10%) and Final Podcast (15%)—25%
 - Peer Presentation during Finals—5%

*** Moodle Post/Discussion Forum Procedures and Guidelines:**

- You'll see a discussion forum on Moodle for each week of the class. Start early, stay on top of it, and it should help us start our discussions from a more complex and interesting place!
- You are required to post to the discussion forum **weekly** during the semester. You may skip **three** weeks with no penalty (so you should have 12 forum posts by the time the semester is over). If you miss additional weeks beyond the three freebies, you will lose a letter grade from your forum post grade for each additional missing post.
- A Moodle "post" will consist of at **least one paragraph** (3 full sentences, but you may write more), **plus 2 questions**. I will often give you some specific guidelines or things to think about to help you focus your thoughts a little. I will track the forum posts throughout the semester (and feel free to post followup comments in order to make the conversation better!)
- Your post must be completed before **Wednesday evenings, 11:59pm** (so that I and others can read them before class on Thursday morning)

****Class Attendance/Participation/Preparedness – 15%**

Individual class sessions will combine lecture, listening, and discussion, and overall MUCH 495 will only succeed based on the amount of effort that you invest in it and to the extent to which it becomes an engaged, active learning community.

- Each week during our Thursday synchronous session, I will track attendance and participation. For participatory discussions, you are expected to contribute (simply being present is not enough). You should *always* come to the zoom session having taken notes on the assigned materials and ready to respond and ask questions. I will assess your participation grade based on your preparation and thoughtful participation in class discussions. If participation in spoken class conversations is difficult for you—based on personality types, learning styles, access, etc—please come see me and we can find additional ways to make you feel more comfortable as you participate.
- You can miss three Thursday classes for whatever reason with no penalty. If you miss a Thursday class, you will be required to watch the video and submit an alternate assignment to me in writing (please contact me when this pertains to you).
- If you miss more than three Thursday classes, your participation grade will be docked by a letter grade for each additional absence.
- If you have more extended issues this fall—illness, family concerns, or anything else that significantly impacts your ability to attend the Thursday sessions—please schedule a time to talk to me **as soon as possible.** I want to help anyone in need find workarounds, but I can't help if I don't know the situation.
- Except under extraordinary circumstances, if you miss more than eight Thursday classes during the term, I reserve the right to fail you in this course.

- If you have a religious observance during the semester, any missed coursework during that particular class will not count against you. However, you must inform me before the relevant absence, you must still do the relevant coursework for that class date, and I reserve the right to give you alternate assignments.

Course Policies

Grading

All grades will be determined on the following scale (this scale is consistent throughout music history courses at Crane).

4.0: 95-100	2.7: 82-84	1.3: 68-71
3.7: 92-94	2.3: 78-81	1.0: 65-67
3.3: 88-91	2.0: 75-77	0.0: 0-64
3.0: 85-87	1.7: 72-74	

Please note that passing grade for this course is 2.0 (75% or above).

Grade Appeals

If you have questions about a grade, please speak with me (in person) first. Please note that the Undergraduate Catalog includes the specific criteria upon which you are allowed to appeal a course grade. If we cannot come to an informal resolution, you would then complete a formal Grade Appeal Form and we would consider if additional resolution is necessary. Details about the specific steps and timelines for this process are located in the Undergraduate Catalog: <https://catalog.potsdam.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=191>

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- **Email:** I check email several times a day; if you don't hear back from me within 24 hours, feel free to try again. Please make sure to check your campus email regularly—I frequently send essential updates or class comments via email.
 - **Office Hours:** Virtual office hours (Zoom, by phone, or whatever other method works best for you) are by appointment. Please email or message me to set up these one-on-one office hour meetings; I'm very happy to discuss curiosities, questions, problems, concerns or just offer a supportive ear for anything you'd like to share in a safe space.
 - **Pandemic-related Concerns and Trauma-Sensitive Teaching:** In my initial email, I asked each of you to feel free to come to me about personal issues and/or technology limitations that might impact your ability to participate in the semester; please always feel free to keep me updated should your circumstances change during the semester. I am committed to using trauma-sensitive teaching and learning principles to support your resilience and success in this course. Trauma-sensitive principles help create a safe, transparent, connected, and collaborative classroom environment where you feel

empowered and respected. Be sure to do periodic self-checks on how course material—and the ways in which material is delivered and discussed—are affecting you, and please talk with me if you are having difficulties with any aspect of the course. Getting support from friends, colleagues, family, and mental health professionals is also important, especially if you have risk factors or you find yourself becoming distressed. For additional links to campus and community services, see <https://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/wellness/counseling-center>

- **Accessibility:** In order to fully include all students in this course, it is essential to provide reasonable accommodations or program modifications for anyone with a disability. Please let me know **during the first week of classes** if you need any accommodations in curriculum, instruction, or evaluation. For many accommodations, you should have a registration on file with Accommodative Services (<http://potsdam.edu/support/oas>), located in Sisson Hall Room 111. If you're already working with Accommodative Services, or have worked with them in previous semesters, please inform me immediately. Any accommodations or modifications require advance notice, so make sure to work out these details with me well in advance. If you have concerns that are specifically related to virtual classroom environments, please come to me with those questions as well.
- **Classroom conduct:** In this class, it is inevitable and important that we will disagree with points in the readings, critical approaches, and with each other. Critical engagement—which should include reasoned debate, critique, and questions—is essential to the central questions of this class, and is often the way we all learn the most. It is essential, however, that we be considerate in the ways we conduct these discussions; have an open mind, don't make assumptions about your classmates, have respect for different viewpoints, and hone your ability to listen thoughtfully and compassionately to each other and the instructor. Please let me know if you have any concerns about discussions during the semester.
- **Note taking:** A few friendly note-taking suggestions:
 - **If I use slides in the class, I will post the slides on Moodle**, no need to copy down all the info directly from the slides as you go. In particular, it will help you the most to focus on ways of jotting down important **verbal** content from lecture (i.e. material beyond just copying down any information directly from a slide).
 - During the video lectures and sometimes our live zoom meetings, I will use slides and audio examples to illustrate examples and to cover concepts and material. While all teaching videos will be available to you throughout the semester—and everyone assimilates information differently—I do still suggest that you may want to take notes during class.
- **Technology:** Obviously we're all using technology constantly in this class! Please feel free to come to me personal issues and/or technology limitations that might impact your ability to participate in the semester. During our live Zoom meetings on Thursdays, I

ask that you use good Zoom etiquette with your classmates: mute yourself unless talking or asked to talk. In general during these Thursday meetings—unless there's a technological or personal problem—I would prefer you have your cameras “on” so that you can engage more directly with me and your classmates during these 75 minutes once a week. Similarly, during the live meetings (unless we’re specifically using the internet to look things up) please try to help yourself focus by refraining from multitasking (texting, being on social media, etc).

- **Attendance:** Only the required synchronous sessions on Thursday have an attendance component. You may miss **three** of synchronous sessions with no penalty, but you will be required to watch the video and submit an alternate assignment to me in writing (please contact me when this pertains to you). Per New York State Law, any student with a conflict between an academic requirement and any religious observance should be given an alternative for meeting the academic requirement. If you have a conflict with a class meeting or deadline due to a religious observance, please let me know well in advance (at least two weeks). You will not be penalized for missing class material, but you will have to makeup your class material in some alternate way. If you have more extended issues this fall—illness, family concerns, or anything else that significantly impacts your ability to attend the Thursday sessions—please schedule a time to talk to me **as soon as possible.** I want to help anyone in need find workarounds, but I can’t if I don’t know the situation.
- **Late work:** If you believe you will have difficulty meeting a particular deadline, you must talk with me at least *three days in advance of the due date*. In fairness to all students, there are no automatic deadline extensions for students who miss a regular class meeting (regardless of reason for the absence). If you do submit a late assignment—except in cases of hardship—I **may deduct 5% for each day the assignment is late.**
- **Formatting and Writing Guidelines:** I will provide you a wordcount for all assignments (or time length for a podcast). As a matter of policy, the typical style required by many journals is double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and one-inch margins (although I will not be policing acceptable font alternatives if you’re devoted to Avenir font). Footnotes and bibliographies should be in Chicago Manual of Style; if you have another citation style you would like to use, you would need to discuss this with me in advance. Assignments must be free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. Minor problems will result in deductions; major writing issues may result in a request to redo the assignment. Continued problems may result in grade deductions. While I am always happy to assisting you with revisions for assignments, note that you can also receive additional assistance from the SUNY Potsdam Writing Center: <https://www.potsdam.edu/about/administrative-offices/international-education-programs/international-students-scholars-2-5>
- **Academic Integrity:** This class will strictly follow SUNY Potsdam’s policies on academic integrity. Please consult the Academic Honor Code website (<http://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/studentconduct/honorcode>) or the Undergraduate

Catalogue for more information regarding your responsibilities as a student. In general, academic misconduct includes acts in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation. Examples include (but are not limited to):

1. Cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation.
2. Paraphrasing from the web or written texts without crediting the source.
3. Using notes in an exam when such use is not allowed.
4. Using another person's ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one's own.

I encourage you to discuss class content with each other. For assignments—unless expressly designed as partner or group projects—no collaboration with other students is permitted. Disguising work by others as your own undermines the academic community here at SUNY Potsdam. If you have any questions about this, don't hesitate to ask me. For specific questions on intellectual property and proper citation techniques, advice is available both at SCCS and the Writing Center.

Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, falsification and other academic honor code violations are taken very seriously. Any suspicious situations will be dealt with through proper judicial channels and may result in serious consequences. For more information about academic misconduct procedures, see the processes and procedures at the Academic Honor Code website.