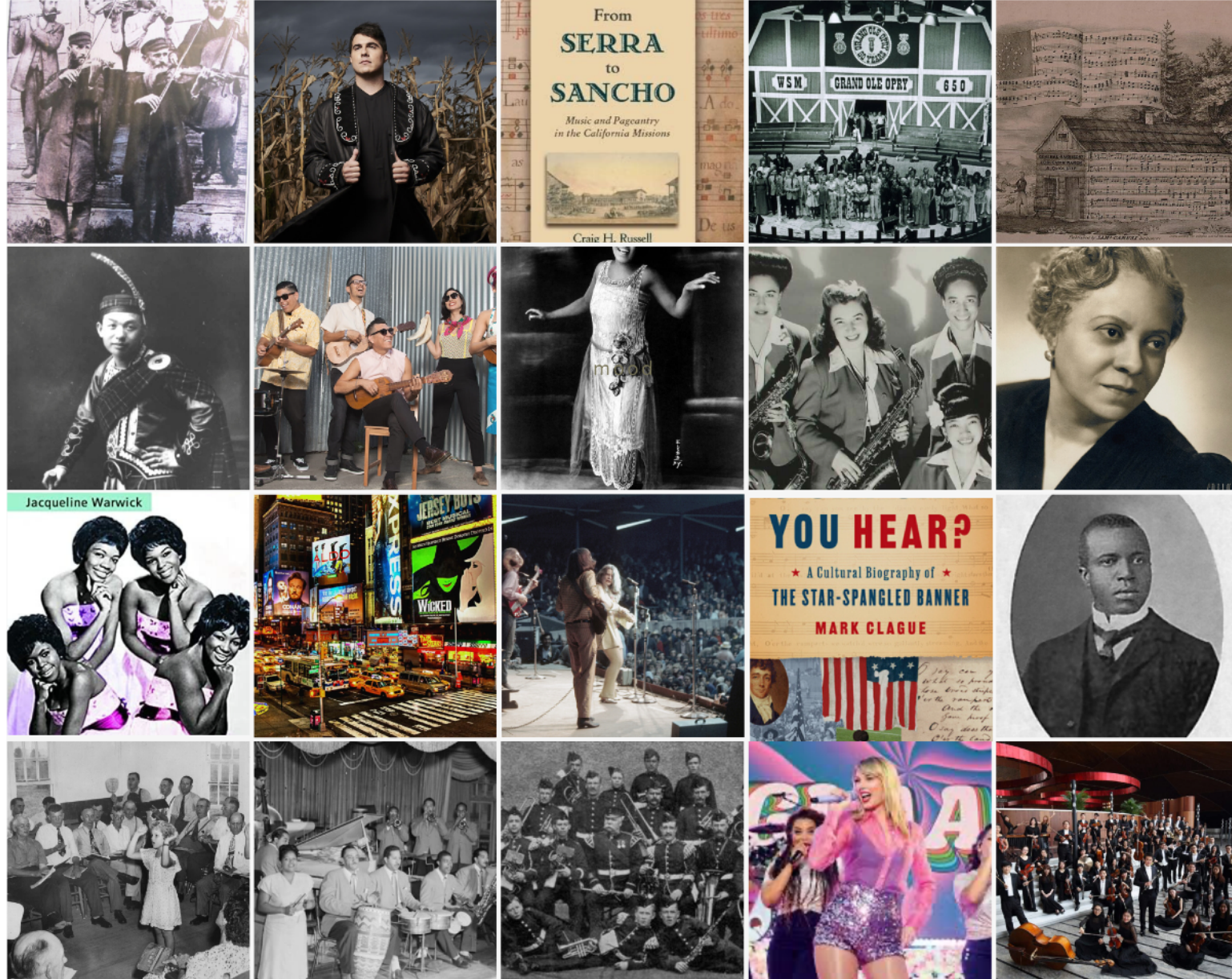




## MUCH 444: Music, Politics, and Power, post-1945

Fall 2024 Class Location/Times: Bishop Hall C303, Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:15pm

### Instructor

Dr. Erin Brooks

Email: [brooksem@potsgdam.edu](mailto:brooksem@potsgdam.edu)

Office: Schuette Hall A102

### Office hours:

Office hours can be in-person or via online meeting or by phone—any office hour is scheduled by appointment in order to maximize the overlap between your schedule and mine. 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 and Objectives:

MUCH 444 covers music from 1945 to today, and includes consideration of stylistic and formal elements together with aesthetic principles and historical perspectives. You will engage with primary sources, current scholarship, scores, and reference materials to gain knowledge of context, history and understanding about how such knowledge is created and revised. This course provides opportunities to hone intellectual skills such as close listening, score analysis, interpretation of original historical documents, critical thinking, and writing that requires synthesis. The focus of this course is analytical discussion of theoretical concepts, group discussion and consideration, and an independent project, which will be shared in class with peers during the various stages of research and development.

### **Special Focus: Music, Politics, and Power, post-1945**

While we will cover a broad swath of twentieth and twenty-first century music in this course, this class focuses specifically on the relationships between music and formative political events of the past seventy-nine years. Our class discussions will include connections to art, popular, and vernacular musics.

We will analyze a number of issues, controversies, and questions, including:

- How do composers, critics, and audiences forge musical meaning, particularly in terms of linking music to external events? How does this differ in an untexted work versus a composition with lyrics or programmatic titles?
- How did music serve not just as response to the cataclysms and controversies of the past seventy-nine years, but also as an active participant in these events?
- The past seventy-nine years have been a fraught period for the relationship between art musics and their audiences, encapsulated in Milton Babbitt's famous 1958 article "Who Cares if You Listen?" (or perhaps "The Composer as Specialist"). To what extent do various compositional strategies post-1945 attempt to retreat from political implications, or conversely, seek continued relevance through associations with extra-musical events?
- While this course syllabi includes works by women and people of color, compositional training, art music, and the concert halls of the 20th century are famously places of exclusion, dominated by the works of white men. How do intersectional characteristics of race, class, gender, and sexuality affect the bodies and reception of politically inflected musics?
- How do selected works representing the various "isms" of twentieth-century art music—such as total serialism, neo-Romanticism, minimalism, pluralism, etc—interact with political meanings, albeit in radically different stylistic ways?
- To what extent have works of music—such as Britten's War Requiem or Penderecki's Threnody—served as musical memorials for 20th century atrocities?
- What narratives do composers foreground about the political implications of their works? Why are we told what we are told? How do we critically assess politicized claims by composers and critics?

### **Learning Objectives:**

Upon successfully completing MUCH 444, you should be able to:

- Recognize vocabulary, styles, genres, forms, individual works, and larger-scale philosophical debates from our class units on various aspects of music and politics in the 20th and 21st centuries
- Think creatively about how the legacies of the 20th century influence your twenty-first-century relationships with music as an educator, performer, consumer, and audience member
- Demonstrate facility with resources for music history research
- Frame research topics related to the course theme

- Identify appropriate sources for exploring such questions & critically read secondary literature related to such topics
- Communicate your ideas to peers at various points in the research and writing process
- Engage in peer feedback with your colleagues, honing strategies for providing such feedback in a constructive manner

## Course Prerequisites and Requirements:

You should have successfully completed MUCH 201 and 202 (Music History I and II) or be admitted on a case-by-case basis—the course is intended for folks near or at the end of undergraduate studies, not for freshmen or sophomore music majors.

## Course Materials: Brightspace

There is no required text for this course. All readings and recordings for this course will be available to you through Brightspace. Visit <https://brightspace.potsdam.edu> for your course resources; we'll do this together starting Week 1.

You are responsible for regularly checking Brightspace for assignments, discussion questions, and any possible updates/changes. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are having any problems accessing any course materials. If you're having issues, the number to the Computing & Technology Services (CTS) helpdesk is 315-267-4444 or [helpdesk@potsdam.edu](mailto:helpdesk@potsdam.edu).

## How to prepare for class/homework/some general guidelines:

**What** kind of stuff might be assigned as homework?

- Throughout the course of the semester, you'll usually have to some work to do *before* coming to class—maybe some pages to read, music to listen to, a video to watch.

**How** much?

- I've tried to be as humane as possible: while this is a reading-intensive course (upper division music history seminar!), I have often tried to only assign one longer article per week. Occasionally this will mean that I'll split the class up into two groups (a Tuesday group and a Thursday group), and you'll only do the reading one day a week.

**How** to get to it?

- Course content and activities are structured using a weekly format on Brightspace
- You'll see a module for a week [Week 1, for example], then individual modules for each day [Tuesday/Thursday].
- All of the specific reading / listening / viewing instructions will always be provided on each day's module: exact assignment of required page numbers, PDFs and/or listening links.

**When** can I access the homework?

- I generally will have the work for the following week posted by the end of business on Friday, so you can do it as it fits into your schedule (over the weekend, or day by day).
- You should have a look at Brightspace every day for listening/reading assignments, discussion questions, quizzes, and any possible updates/changes.
- Anything that's listed for a day, please do it **BEFORE** I see you in class that day.
- Once modules are opened, they will remain visible for the rest of the semester.

Gentle reminder:

- SUNY guidelines assume **at least** 2 hours of study time per hour of class time or credit. For this 3-credit class, which meets 3 hours/week, they therefore assume you would potentially spend 6 additional hours a week outside of class (studying, listening, reading).
- Now: I don't think you always need to hit that number of hours outside class—some of that depends on YOU and obviously the number of hours you spend reading or listening will vary over the course of the week or the semester.....**but if you are obviously not doing work outside class, you will likely not be successful in this course.**
- Please feel free to come meet with me for guidance on how to organize your studying and reading time most effectively.

Course Evaluation:

Evaluation in this course attempts to encourage deep engagement but also minimize stress and anxiety: there are no exams and there is *\*some\** flexibility for deadlines (more on this below).

Assessment will be based on **five** overall categories: weekly short assignments, in-class work (attendance, participation in in-class activities, discussion, in-class writing, etc), short "open the door" projects, a mid-size "deeper dive" final project, and reflection questions. For more details on specific categories, see below:

|                                                                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Weekly assignments/forum posts on Brightspace                                     | 20% |
| 2. In-class work: attendance, Participation, Preparation                             | 20% |
| 3. "Open the Door" mini-research projects [5]                                        | 40% |
| 4. A Deeper Dive Final Project                                                       | 15% |
| 5. Reflection questions—we'll work on these together during the last week of classes | 5%  |

\* Explanation of procedures:

1. **Weekly Assignments/Forum Post/Discussion Forum Procedures and Guidelines:**

- a. You'll be asked to either complete an assignment or a discussion forum post on Brightspace at least once each week. Start early, stay on top of it, and it should help us start our discussions from a more interesting place!
- b. However many forum posts/homework assignments I give you—there will likely be about 12 of them this semester—you can miss up to **three** of them with no penalty.
- c. If you miss additional assignments beyond the three freebies, you will lose 10% from your weekly forum post grade for *each* additional missing assignment/post.
- d. Your grade in this section will consist of your individual grades on each post, averaged over the course of the semester.
- e. I will often give you some specific guidelines or things to think about to help you focus your thoughts a little. I also give you a basic rubric to explain what counts as a "good/thorough" response to a reading (this is the basis for my grading of this).
- f. Your post must be completed before our class, so there's not much flexibility on these assignments. Talk to me if you have concerns, but mostly these need to be done by the due date.

## 2. Class attendance/Participation/Preparedness Procedures:

This class will only be successful if it becomes an engaged learning community, especially because it's a seminar-style course. Simply put, you can't successfully engage with this course if you're routinely not here. Due to these factors, attendance and participation is essential and is encouraged through multiple means of evaluation.

I've tried to build in some **flexibility** into this class—**EVERYONE NEEDS IT!**—while also acknowledging the **reality** that you can't be successful in this class without being present.

- a. Each day during our class sessions, I will track in-class work (attendance and participation).
- b. There are a couple of days built into this semester when we won't meet in person, ranging from breaks/recess....and who knows what else will come up in addition (inclement weather days?). Overall, we're likely to have around 30 class meetings.
- c. This semester, you can miss **FOUR** classes for whatever reason with no penalty. Use these as you see fit—illness, mental health days, prep for some giant deadline or recital, whatever works. **I strongly suggest you reserve some of your absences for sickness, since everyone gets sick. Four days=two entire weeks of class, if you're counting.**
- d. If you miss more than **FOUR** classes, I have concerns about the extent to you are participating in our communal work and discussions. **Except in unusual circumstances, I will subtract 10% from your grade in this category for \*each\* additional absence after the four "use-as-you-see fit" absences.**
- e. If you have more extended issues this semester—crises or anything that significantly impacts your ability to attend the class sessions—please 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. It is to your advantage in these kinds of extraordinary situations to communicate with me and/or Dean Heuser so that we can help you find the right solution.
- f. Except under specific circumstances, if you miss more than **EIGHT** classes during the term (that's one month of classes or more than 25% of our class meetings), I reserve the right to consider that you haven't been able to do enough work to successfully complete the course (meaning you can't "pass"). This isn't automatic, but is a possibility.
- g. For any class you've missed, I strongly suggest you contact me to discuss missed content, as you'll still need to know it for projects.
- h. If you have a religious observance, any missed work during that particular class will not count against you. However, you should inform me before the absence and you'll still want to stay on top of the relevant work for that class date. This works the same way for an official class trip.

3. **Open the Door Projects:** To be explained in class during Week 2.

4. **Deeper Dive Project**—I'll explain this around Week 7.

5. **Reflection Questions**—Assigned during the last week of classes, with some in-class time to complete; prompts to help you to reflect on our work and help you continue thinking about music/sound/politics beyond this class.

## \*\* Single Seat Honors Procedures:

For an embedded single-seat honors course, students will be expected to follow the regular procedures of the class outlined in this syllabus.

In addition, the honors student will:

- Have a two 30-minute one-on-one meetings with the professor during the semester. During these meetings, the student will discuss an assigned reading (s) and engage in a dialogue with the professor regarding the concepts and ideas in the reading and their relation to course material.
- For the Open the Door projects, the honors student will have a longer assigned length/wordcount than students enrolled in the non-honors section, and will have an opportunity to work with the professor on additional development of research (finding additional sources, deeper dives into the subject matter). This may take place in formal meetings, emails, or a mix of both.
- For the final project, the student will meet with the professor an additional time to workshop the content and design of the final project; the honors student has the potential to work with the professor to exhibit their work through the course website, university study day, Learning & Research fair, or other appropriate public platform (depending on timing and topic).

## Course Policies

### Grading

The Theory, History, Composition department at SUNY Potsdam tends to use the following scale:

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

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

I believe that, if you put time, work, and deep thought into this course and you come to class & turn in your projects—basically you can earn the grade you wish to attain here!

### Grade Appeals

If you have questions about a grade, please speak with me (in person) first. Please note that the graduate 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 catalog: <https://catalog.potsdam.edu/index.php>

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### Emails:

- 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.

### Appointments/Office Hours:

- Office hours can be in person or via online meeting or by phone—any office hour is scheduled by appointment in order to maximize the overlap between your schedule and mine! 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.

### Trauma-Sensitive Teaching:

- In my entry ticket for the course, I asked each of you to feel free to come to me with any personal issues and/or other limitations that might impact your ability to participate in the session; please always feel free to keep me updated should your circumstances change.
- 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:

- I'd like to borrow a few words from the wonderful scholar Mimi Khúc (scholar/artist/activist in Residence in Disability Studies at Georgetown University): "**Everyone's** access needs matter, and we will try collectively to meet them as they arise. **Access needs are needs that when met enable participation in the course to the fullest--therefore they are wide-ranging and can be met in wide-ranging, creative ways.** I am committed to making participation as accessible as possible. Please let me know if anything comes up that makes participation feel hard....We are taught not to have needs, that needs mean we are "weak"; resist this impulse. Access is relational. This means that creating access and accessibility is something we do together, in relationship and community. It requires a shared commitment to each other's wellbeing and participation in the community space, and requires communication and negotiation and flexibility. We learn each other's needs and try to meet them as best we can, so that we can all participate as much as possible in this classroom space. **Everyone has access needs, and these needs change over time. I will try to anticipate as much as possible but I cannot know everyone's needs at all times. When you become aware of your access needs, please communicate them to me.**"
- If you have any concerns about our coursework, please let me know and I will work with you to find acceptable accommodations. I know that some of you may have a registration on file with Accommodative Services (<http://potsdam.edu/support/oas>)—you're very welcome to share these with me. I look forward to talking to all of you about your access needs as we work together this semester
- One important access need relates to both attendance and late work—I have tried to hit the sweet spot with both by offering flexibility but also some structure. Please come to me if you have questions or concerns.

### Classroom conduct:

- Active participation in this class involves taking notes, contributing questions and commentary, and challenging each other to think more deeply. Indeed, critical engagement—which should include reasoned debate, critique, and questions—is one of the best ways to learn. 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. Anyone who struggles with this policy will be asked to meet with me to figure out better approaches; please let me know if you have any concerns about discussion during the course.

A couple of particular notes about this class:

- We're dealing with *historical* subject matter in this course, so we will encounter earlier frameworks of thinking about race, gender, sexuality, etc (some of which will likely intrigue, surprise, aggravate, or infuriate us in turn). While these feelings are appropriate, we need to be able to discuss historical change—so don't be surprised to encounter dated terms or ideas at certain points in the semester. Some articles or readings may include as primary sources terms which may be considered offensive in modern contexts. We'll try to discuss this as needed, but also make sure we have a nuanced understanding of terminology and ideas used during the 20th-21st centuries [in addition to our modern terminology, which is itself always in flux!]
- This class material will deal with identities that are relevant to everyone. With that said, there is no chance that *all* the course material will be an identity you are part of. No one has lived experience of all identities or positionalities! : ) So this entire course is an opportunity for learning and growth and listening for each of us. It's also a good reminder to be thoughtful— we don't know where a specific person may be coming from, and we importantly and inevitably don't know it all. We'll each take a pledge to be as thoughtful and compassionate as possible, but also offer apologies and learning for when we may stumble at times—that's an important thing to practice, as well.
- I may occasionally give content warnings in class about particular class dates. Please feel free to let me know (in private) if you have any concerns about any class content in this regard and we can find a solution for you.

**Note taking:**

- A few friendly note-taking suggestions: If I use slides in the class, I will post the slides on Brightspace, 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).

**Technology:**

- we're likely to be using technology regularly 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. You'll likely find it helpful to bring laptops, tablets, or phones to class—I'll let you know in advance if there's a particular class where it is especially useful to have such devices. Regardless of what we're doing during our in-class meetings (unless we're specifically using the internet to look things up) please try to help yourself focus on your classmates by refraining from multitasking (texting, being on social media, etc).

**Late work:**

- See above, but as a general policy, all larger assignments have an automatic 1-week "grace period" (no need to ask for extensions, you can submit it up to two days after the deadline with no problems at all). I am unlikely to grant any extensions beyond this window, since it starts to cause problems for the upcoming week's material for both you and me! Please contact me with questions.

**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>) 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.

**\*Please note that this also includes working together on any assignments that are not explicitly framed as collaborative projects.**

I encourage you to discuss class content with each other inside and outside of class. Unless specifically described as a collaborative assignment, however, no collaboration with other students is permitted. Disguising words or 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.

#### **AI/Chat GPT, etc:**

- Here's a specific guide on ChatGPT: [https://library.potsdam.edu/citing\\_ai](https://library.potsdam.edu/citing_ai)
- While I don't have issues with you using AI as a research tool, I'll just say BE CAREFUL (it's got issues and makes a lot of weird mistakes....it may actually be getting less accurate with time, not more so!) and do not present such text as "your own" (it's not).

It's not the worst idea to use Chat GPT to help you with certain ideas or research prompts, but be aware that:

- AI often helps reinforce stereotypes and provides the most obvious answer first.....like the answer that you would come up with having little to no knowledge of a subject, which is not what you're hoping for : )
- any use of an AI assist would be your first step, not your last one (otherwise it's kind of like sight-reading your recital music in front of an audience....not a good call).

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.