

Open the Door Project #4: Music/Power/Politics, 1991-2008

These are conceived as “opening the door on a subject” (so named because you're opening the door on this topic, not doing something complete or finished)—mini research projects completed in the course of a few hours, with the hopes of finding a few sources, doing a brief bit of research, and coming up with some preliminary ideas and concepts on the topic.

As such, by design these projects contain ideas that would need editing or tweaking in another context, would need fuller context, a deeper dive into additional sources, etc.....but as preliminary jumping-off-points for future work, they are invaluable.

Instructions

Step #1:

- Pick one topic which connects music with politics somewhere during the period of **1991-2008**. This can be any musical genre from any part of the world. Can't be pieces we've already covered in class, though (Messiaen *Quartet for the End of Time*, for example)
- It's okay to have some broad topic—just to give some random examples: music and nuclear disarmament, politics in the recording studio, the Cuban Revolution, music in the Cold War, music education reforms of the era—but then as a case study related to that, pick something **VERY SPECIFIC**: a **single** work, song, performance, or event, etc. If you want to start out with your super specific example, that's perfect too!
- If you're totally drawing a blank, feel free to reach out to me for ways we can sort this out, but please choose something **YOU** find interesting, this is your opportunity for self-guided interest and research.

Step #2:

You should locate **four** sources related to your topic. Of these four:

- 1) **TWO** should be scholarly sources—typically that means a book or article published by a university press, such as Oxford University Press, University of Illinois Press, etc.
 - 2) If you're discussing a specific piece or performance, you may provide a link as one of your four sources.
- The other sources are up to you—whatever you want to use, whether books, articles, blog posts, newspaper articles, etc.

You can provide more than four sources if you want, but don't make toooooo much extra work for yourself. Rabbit holes are fun, but you already have a fair amount on your plate :)

How do you find sources? On the back of this handout is some "Researching Tips." Make sure you try the method to find articles. As one additional GREAT resource, you can look at the journal *Music & Politics* which includes tons of articles on all kinds of music and politics topics: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mp/9460447>.*

Once you've found your sources, have a skim and **make sure to provide citations for all four sources**. I'm fairly easy-going about your citation method, but give it your best shot. If you need assistance, I've attached an easy optional cheat sheet for how to use Chicago Manual Citation Methods to Brightspace. And I can answer questions if needed.

Step #3:

In a paragraph (or two if needed), please tell me and your colleagues what you've gleaned about your topic so far (remember—you're "opening the door," this is preliminary stuff, not a final analysis done after weeks!).

I'm envisioning around **half a page of single-spaced writing, or circa 400-500 words**. (You can write a *little* more if you're feeling it, but don't make toooooo much extra work for yourself or go way beyond this)

What's in this paragraph?

- A wee bit of context, a bit of information about different elements (sound, lyrics, place/site, composer or performer intent, audience reaction) as relevant. Try to offer a good assortment of information without overbalancing too much on one particular aspect.
- Depending on your example, sources, and style, your paragraph(s) may be more analytical (feel free to discuss the music!), historical, or critical. Be sure to tie together your single composer/performer/musician/event/etc with the political issue.
- Finally, this is not exactly a straight-up “opinion” piece. While you should feel comfortable writing in your own voice/tone, you should focus on the musical work/composer/event you're studying and support your points with evidence.

Step #4:

- Submit all your work to Brightspace, on the Discussion Forum for “Open the Door” Projects for Thursday, November 21
- Reminder: your post should include your chosen topic, citations for your four sources, your paragraph/half-page of preliminary findings.
- We will also discuss these individually in class on Thursday, via a short informal presentation of your topic & findings
- Let me know if you have questions! By the end of our session, I will have compiled these as a resource for your classmates, so you can see topics you may not have considered.

Due date:

Thursday, November 21, before 11:00am