

Content, Assignments, Topics, Themes: Music, Power, and Politics, post-1945 (summer 2025)

Week	Class Date	Assigned Readings	Listening/ Viewing	Themes	Assignments and/or In-Class Work
1, Power and Politics from 1945-1960	Monday, June 30	n/a	n/a	Course introduction; brief discussion of politics and power (handout); public transcripts and hidden transcripts; agency; resistance and oppression; music's particularly unique roles in conveying meaning; how to listen to MORE than just lyrics; short case study on Whitney Houston & the Super Bowl / short case study on samba and politics	Entry ticket; Short in-class writing prompt on "what examples come to mind when you think of 'music and politics'"
	Tuesday, July 1	No in-person meeting—online discussion forum work		Introduction to research methods and sources ; individual work on the open-source peer-reviewed journal <i>Music & Politics</i>	Discussion forum and responses on <i>Music & Politics</i>
	Wednesday, July 2	N/a	Marian Anderson, "Erbarne Dich" and 1939 Lincoln Memorial concert	Discussion of research skills & peer review; Why 1945?; Protesting through Song—Marian Anderson and the Lincoln Memorial (1939)	In-class group work and discussion). Handed out Open the Door #1 Assignment
	Thursday, July 3	Jill M. Sullivan, Excerpt from <i>Bands of Sisters: U.S. Women's Military Bands during World War II</i> ; Abby Anderton, Excerpt from "It Was Never a Nazi Orchestra: The American Re-Education of the Berlin Philharmonic," <i>Music & Politics</i> (2013)		Class discussion of gender stereotypes, instruments, and jazz; Additional resources/lecture from me provided by Jill Sullivan on women's military bands; de-nazification problems in the 1940s	Weekly Brightspace Homework response on reading; in-class discussion.
2, Power and Politics from 1953-1968	Monday, July 7	n/a	Video lecture on signifying politics through sound: serialism, folk music, and tonal music (Cold War); Music and American Civil Rights movements in the 1950s-1960s; score to Copland's <i>Connotations</i> provided	Shostakovich's incredibly complicated history (how do we understand his political stance in works like <i>String Quartet No. 8?</i>); Cold War association of sound with ideology (often, tonal music=Soviet bloc, serialism or jazz=the United States or Western Europe). Folk music....complicated. Aaron Copland's particular problems with politics around musical styles, from the folk styles of the 1930s and 1940s to McCarthy investigations to the serialist <i>Connotations</i> ; Music and civil rights and the role of jazz musicians—Mingus, "Fables of Faubus," Freedom Riders and Freedom songs, music at the March on Washington, Coltrane, "Alabama," Dylan, "Blowin in the Wind and Only a Pawn in their Game," Cooke, "A Change is Gonna Come." ; additional in-class info on "lavender panic" and anti-queer politics of McCarthy era; role of classical music institutions in segregation (discussion of Marian Anderson and Metropolitan Opera)	Weekly Brightspace discussion forum response on lecture; in-class discussion of Penderecki's "Threnody" and folk music collection by folk collectors and promoters such as the Lomaxes, promotion of folk musicians such as Leadbelly
	Tuesday, July 8	Monson, Ingrid. <i>Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. (selected pages from Chapter 5, "Activism and Fundraising from Freedom Now to the Freedom Rides")	Close listening and class handout to Max Roach's <i>We Insist! Freedom Now suite</i> .	In-class discussion and presentation on the cultural role of music in US civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s (participatory singing, events, benefits, multiple genres, musical responses). Role of the benefit concert—the good, the bad, the problems. Close listening and class handout to Max Roach's <i>We Insist! Freedom Now suite</i> . Differential treatment of Max Roach and Abby Lincoln's political stances. Nina Simone, "Mississippi Goddam," contrast between musical style or syntax and lyrical content.	Weekly Brightspace discussion forum response on reading; in-class discussion; small-scale group research project on finding scholarly resources on Cold War, State Department Tours, Mid-century folk music; raising money for a cause

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	Wednesday, July 9	n/a	In-class listening to: The Chantels, "Maybe," The Bobbettes, "Mr. Lee," The Shirelles, "I Met him on a Sunday," "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?," The Ronettes, "Be My Baby."	In-class lecture on Race, class, and Gender in Girl Groups of the 1960s. Politics around <i>where</i> you sing (public/private space), what you are supposed to talk about or avoid politically as a girl, the power issues in the music recording studio (example of the Ronettes but also broader class discussions on this topic). Intersectionality differences between girl groups (and expectations based on those). The specific pressures on girls, on pop artists, on mainstream artists in regard to politics. Ending with 1968—the limitations of the civil rights era legislation, divisions in the movement, assassinations, and the revolution year of 1968.	In-class discussion; in-class group work and forum posts on revolutions of 1968 around the world—what were they about, and how was music involved?
	Thursday, July 10	n/a			Open the Door #1, 1945-1968; short presentations, peer feedback
3, Power and Politics from 1968-1991	Monday, July 14	* Arnold, Ben. "War Music and the American Composer during the Vietnam Era." <i>The Musical Quarterly</i> 75, no. 3 (Autumn 1991): 316-335.	Karel Husa, <i>Music for Prague 1968</i> . In-class work on George Crumb, <i>Black Angels</i>	Finishing 1968. Karel Husa, <i>Music for Prague 1968</i> . Response songs to political events (Berio, Simone). Musical approaches to Vietnam: lots of protest music, many examples of classical music composers and their often quite literal incorporation of sounds of war into avant-garde (and often very infrequently played) works about Vietnam. How do people reject serialism in the 1960s and beyond? Collage music—George Crumb and <i>Black Angels</i> . Does this piece "succeed" in focusing on the Vietnam War because it is so unclear <i>what</i> it is actually about? Is it better to be vague than specific in political program music? optional resource shared—bibliography on music & disability;	Weekly Brightspace assignment response on reading; in-class discussion; In-class discussion forum/groupwork on 1968; discussion of Crumb's pieces through sheet music
	Tuesday, July 15	n/a. Additional resource given in class: link to bibliography on music and disability. Additional resource given in class from George Chauncey, <i>Gay New York</i> . Additional resource given in class by Luis-Manuel Garcia, <i>In Defense of Disco</i> .	Video lecture on Vietnam, Feminism, the Environment, Gay Rights, and Disability / Case study on Apartheid, South Africa, "Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika, Juluka, and Graceland	In-class work on rejecting serialism via minimalism in the 1960s. "2nd wave feminism"—both the legislative issues and in-class discussion of the musical styles and music industry practices for womyn's music in the 1970s; disco's role in queer communities of color in the modern gay rights movement—disco's liberatory potential as dance music and political organizing and via coded meanings; the co-opting of disco by Hollywood and the mainstream and the disco backlashes; disability rights activism of the 1970s; music, politics, and place in New York City (queer neighborhoods and politics in the 1920s through the 1970s).	Weekly Brightspace discussion forum response on reading; in-class discussion of disco, dancing, and queer politics.
	Wednesday, July 16	n/a	Pauline Oliveros, "Alien Bog," "Rock Piece" and <i>Sonic Meditations</i>	Thinking about sound in the world, the politics of listening, environment, situational listening. Environmental movements of the 1970s. Pauline Oliveros and Deep Listening. <i>Sonic meditations</i> (score handout in class), plus Sonic meditations activity and discussion—how are the sonic meditations political? Or, how do they subvert the norms of Western classical music presentational formats? In what way are they connected to 2nd wave feminism? Annea Lockwood, "River Archive," George Crumb, "Vox Balance."	In-class performance of "Rock Piece" and one of the <i>Sonic Meditations</i> ; discussion of these works as subversion of power hierarchies
	Thursday, July 17	n/a			Open the Door #2, 1968-1991; short presentations, peer feedback

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4, Power and Politics from 1991-2008	Monday, July 21	n/a. Additional in-class resource for group work on Riot Grrrl, “Constructing Communities and Identities—Riot Grrrl New York City,” Theo Cateforis and Elena Humphreys, <i>Musics of Multicultural America</i> , 317-342.	Video lecture on Music, Mourning and the Aids Crisis, with listening and interview with John Corigliano and movement of <i>Symphony No. 1</i> ; Riot grrl, with listening to Ramones, Bikini Kill, and documentary	Finishing our case study on South Africa and music’s role in activism and resistance; musical artists as resistance voices (Makeba, for example), and two landmark musical groups/projects of the 1980s: Juluka and <i>Graceland</i> . Much discussion of the many complexities of the Paul Simon project in terms of apartheid, boycotts, credit, etc. Societal background of the AIDS crisis and artistic and musical responses of the 1980s and 1990s; in-class reading and discussion and listening to parts of Corigliano’s <i>Symphony No. 1</i> —how is this piece a memorial? How is it <i>specifically</i> about AIDS, or not? How does Corigliano both memorialize specific friends and also keep their names private (see class handout on the symphony); AIDS Quilt Songbook; Hollywood portrayals; punk and rebellion	Weekly Brightspace discussion forum response on reading; in-class discussion of <i>Graceland</i> project; in-class listening and discussion about HIV epidemic and listening to movement I of Corigliano <i>Symphony no. 1</i> .
	Tuesday, July 22	Blim, Daniel. “Meaningful Adjacencies”: Disunity and the Commemoration of 9/11 in John Adams’s <i>On the Transmigration of Souls</i> .” <i>Journal of the Society for American Music</i> 7, no. 4 (2013): 382-420.	Optional: John Adams, <i>Transmigration of Souls</i>	Riot Grrl’s—purpose, musical elements, “3rd wave feminism,” ease of access for musical learning; safe spaces at concerts; 3rd wave feminist topics; female access to rage and anger; racial issues. What is the purpose and history of monuments and memorials? what are the controversies and decisions to be made? What might a musical memorial be? Are there special problems for musical memorials? What kinds of memorial approaches did Adams take in <i>On the Transmigration of Souls</i> , and how did different people at different times respond to these choices? What kinds of specifically musical elements did he include to reflect on 9/11? What were the controversies?	Weekly Brightspace discussion forum response on reading; in-class discussion; In-class discussion forum/groupwork on Riot grrl New York City—approaches, politics, musical styles, etc.
	Wednesday, July 23	n/a	Marie-Élaine Gagnon, live performance of Graziane Finzi, “Thème et variations sur ‘El Cant dels Ocells.’” Terence Blanchard, <i>A Tale of God’s Will (A Requiem for Katrina)</i>	Continued discussion of music & environmental questions: data sonification. Discussion of music as advocacy and response to disaster: case study on Hurricane Katrina. technology, copyright, lawsuits—the global music industry from 1995-2008 (consolidation & empire, market oligonomy, what is copyright?); the digital age; mp3.com and Napster, legislation and lawsuits, birth of streaming, intellectual property rights and power.	Short discussion forum homework on one piece of music that reflects the environment or environmental concerns in some way. In-class discussion forum/groupwork on these pieces, as well as data sonification, environmental advocacy, and music and disaster.
	Thursday, July 24	n/a			Open the Door #3, 1991-2008; short presentations, peer feedback
5, Power and Politics from 2008-2023	Monday, July 28	n/a. Shared optional resource on campaign advertising in 2016 election	Video lecture on cultural appropriation; music and elections (particularly 2012 presidential campaign); music in protest marches	what <i>is</i> cultural appropriation? what harm might it cause? what examples can we think of sonically? (in addition to visually or kinetically)? what does the law and intellectual property have to do with this?; music and elections—campaign playlists in the Obama vs. Romney campaigns; music and campaign ads; music at the political conventions; music and protest—sound studies, sonic occupation, analysis of chants, chant types and reuse, significance of place in protest. harmful sounds in general (music as weapon, music as torture).	Weekly Brightspace discussion forum response on video lectures; in-class discussion; in-class activity on music and protest from https://citiesandmemory.com/protest/ ; 2 scholarly sources on music and protest; in-class activity on example of musical cultural appropriation and 2 scholarly sources on the subject

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	Tuesday, July 29	Excerpt from Dylan Robinson, <i>Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies</i> (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021). Additional resource given in class: dialogue between Robinson and Dutcher; link to book on <i>Indigenous Pop Music</i>	Jeremy Dutcher on his creative work with the voices of his Wolastoqiyik ancestors (as heard in collected recordings); https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPyYc8T70Fo&amp;t=1s	Indigenous musics. role of ethnographic recordings—saving music and sound for museum collections, and the ethics and concerns and debates about it; "representation" of Indigenous music styles, or "writing about" versus "writing with"; compositional responsibility; inclusionary performance versus Indigenous + art music.	Weekly Brightspace discussion forum response on reading; in-class discussion
	Wednesday, July 30	n/a			Open the Door #4, 2008-2025; short presentations, peer feedback
	Thursday, July 31	n/a			Wrap-up event!