

WS 305 C1: Music, Gender, and Intersectional Social Change
T/TH 3:30-4:45 pm, SOC B57

Instructor: Shannon Draucker

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-3 pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From nineteenth-century Verdian opera, to Helen Reddy's 1971 feminist anthem "I Am Woman," to Beyoncé's 2016 sensation "Formation," music has long fueled movements for social change. In this course, we will explore how humans have mobilized sound and song to foster explorations of gender, sexuality, race, and class. We will study a variety of musical genres, including classical, jazz, blues, soul, funk, folk, rock, punk, pop, hip-hop, and rap. Our course "texts" will include audio recordings, song lyrics, music videos, stories and films about musicians, and readings about music's historical connections to social and political projects. No prior expertise or knowledge of music is required.

We will investigate some of the following questions: how does music differ or depart from other artistic media – i.e. literature, theatre, dance – in its radical potential? Is there something about music itself that makes it uniquely revolutionary? What gives music the potential for subversion – is it the music itself, the lyrics, the sounds, the performers, or something more intangible? Students will also consider musical contexts with more complex or vexed relationships to progressive politics – the paucity of female conductors in the classical music world, the sexist lyrics that pervade a variety of genres, and the forms of cultural appropriation displayed in music videos and performances. We will also examine instances in which songs not explicitly intended for protest are mobilized as vehicles for social change ("Over the Rainbow" as a gay anthem, for instance).

COURSE MATERIALS

Most of your "texts" for this course are widely-available popular songs, which you are welcome to access in any way you like (YouTube, iTunes, Spotify, Soundcloud, CDs, etc.). Please be mindful of Boston University's copyright policies (<https://www.bu.edu/tech/support/information-security/docs/dmca-and-copyright-infringement/copyright-violation-policy/>), and let me know if you encounter difficulty accessing any of the musical material.

In some cases, I have asked you to watch videos of performances. In these cases, I have provided links to the videos on Blackboard under "Content."

All required readings are available on our class Blackboard site (<http://learn.bu.edu>) under "Content." Please bring assigned readings to class. I encourage you to print these readings in order to minimize laptop-related distractions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

(more information to be provided on individual assignment sheets)

“All Songs Considered” – BU Edition (due 9/19): Music podcasts such as “All Songs Considered,” “Song of the Day,” “Tiny Desk Concerts,” and “Sound Opinions” have changed the way we think about and discuss music. For this assignment, you will record a 3-5 minute podcast “episode” about a song or piece of music of your choosing. The purpose of this assignment is to help you become more comfortable talking about and analyzing music – an artistic medium that is frustratingly intangible and often difficult to discuss in concrete ways.

Song presentation and discussion lead (due on date of your choice): Each of you will give **one presentation** on a song assigned on the syllabus (or, in consultation with me, a song of your choosing from the week’s genre). You will speak for **approximately 10 minutes** on the history of the song/artist/album and its ties to social movements. You will then lead the class in a **short discussion (approximately 10 minutes)**. I will hand out a sign-up sheet for these presentations during the first two weeks of class.

Paper #1 (due 10/26): For this assignment, you will write a short paper (4-5 pages) on a song from the syllabus thus far. You must discuss the song’s historical context and make an **academic argument** that addresses the following question: is the song subversive or resistant? If so, how, and to what extent? If not, why not? Is the song subversive in some ways, but not in others?

Paper #2 OR Performative Project (due 12/12):

1) Paper: You will write an original research paper (6-7 pages, double-spaced) about a song, artist, genre, or musical tradition (not limited to those on the syllabus) and discuss the intersection between music and a specific social movement. You will conduct independent research on the historical context of your topic.

OR

2) Performative Project: In consultation with me, you may design an independent performative project. This may include, but is not limited to, performing a song for the class, writing an original composition, creating a music video, or organizing a social justice effort based on music. You may also wish to take a more activist bent – organizing a musical effort for a cause, for example. In any case, your work must have some ties to social change or to issues of gender, race, class, disability, sexuality, or other topics we discuss throughout the semester. Students opting to complete a project must also write a **short essay (2 pages)** explaining the goals of the project and the historical and theoretical principles and questions underlying it.

Regardless of which option you choose, you will ALL be required to give short, ungraded presentations (approx. 5 minutes) of your final papers/projects on 12/7 and 12/12

Extra Credit: Throughout the semester, you may attend musical performances and write one-page (double-spaced) summaries of the performances and their intersections with issues of social change. You may do this no more than **three times**. Completion of this extra credit will factor into your “Participation and Attendance” grade.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation, attendance, and engagement: 10%
Introductory “All Songs Considered” podcast project: 10%
Song presentation and discussion lead: 20%
Paper 1: 25%
Paper 2 OR Final Project: 35%

Late and Missed Assignments: Unless you make other arrangements with me well in advance of the deadline, graded assignments will be penalized by one-third of a letter grade per 24-hour period that it is late. For example, a “B” assignment submitted after the initial deadline will be reduced to a B-; if more than 24 hours late, it becomes a C+, and so on.

Grading Policy: I spend significant time and effort making sure that the grades I assign are fair and appropriate. I will not change a grade after it has been given, except in the case of mathematical error. However, I am available to discuss why a paper has been awarded a certain grade. I am always available before a paper is due to discuss your ideas and to help you write the best paper possible.

Participation and Attendance: Since this course is a discussion-based seminar, your regular attendance and participation are essential both to your own learning and to your classmates’ learning. Under ordinary circumstances, missing more than *three days of class* will automatically lower your final grade by one-third of a letter grade for each additional class missed. Missing more than *five classes* may lead to a failing grade in the course. Note that these absences need not be consecutive.

If you have a special obligation that will require you to miss several classes (e.g., varsity athletics, religious observances), please talk with me at the beginning of the semester. Exceptional circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Lateness: When you are late, I will notice and record your lateness. Please make an effort *not* to disrupt the class by slipping in late. Chronic lateness will adversely affect your grade.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the passing off of another’s words or ideas as your own, and it is a serious academic offense. Cases of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the disciplinary procedures described in the College of Arts and Sciences Academic Conduct Code. All WS students are subject to the CAS code, which can be read online:

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

Penalties for plagiarism can range from failing an assignment or course to suspension or expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about plagiarism, I invite you to speak with me.

RESOURCES

Boston University Libraries: The BU Libraries offer a wealth of online and print resources. Research Librarians will introduce you to the many resources the library offers in any field of research. They can work with you to develop a research plan and organize your sources. The Research Center welcomes you for walk-in consultations on the first floor of Mugar Memorial Library or at any other library on campus.

Research appointments can be made at <http://www.bu.edu/common/request-an-appointment/>.

Mugar Memorial Library
771 Commonwealth Avenue
Phone: 617-353-2700
<http://www.bu.edu/library>

Educational Resource Center: Offers tutorial assistance to all undergraduate students in a range of subjects, including WS classes.

100 Bay State Rd, 5th floor
Phone: 617-353-7077
<http://www.bu.edu/erc>

CAS Academic Advising: A central resource for all questions concerning academic policy and practice in the College of Arts and Sciences. The office is headed by the Associate Dean for Student Academic Life and has a staff of fifteen faculty advisors and five academic counselors. All students can receive academic advice and assistance through this office. Students who have not yet declared concentrations can receive pre-registration advising through this office.

100 Bay State Rd. 4th Floor
Email: casadv@bu.edu
Phone: 617-353-2400
<http://www.bu.edu/casadvicing/>

Here are links to the advising offices of other BU colleges:

CFA: <http://www.bu.edu/cfa/resources/advising/>
CGS: <http://www.bu.edu/cgs/students/fact-sheets/academic-advising/>
COM: <http://www.bu.edu/com/current-students/student-services/>
ENG: <http://www.bu.edu/eng/current-students/ugrad/advising/>
SAR: <http://www.bu.edu/sargent/current-students/academic-services-center/>
SED: <http://www.bu.edu/sed/faculty-staff/handbook/admin-and-org/> (see Student Affairs Offices)
SHA: <http://www.bu.edu/hospitality/academics/advising/>
SMG: <http://management.bu.edu/undergraduate-program/academics/advising/>

Office of Disability Services: Responsible for assisting students with disabilities. If you have a disability, you are strongly encouraged to register with this office. You may be entitled to special accommodations in your courses, such as additional time on tests, staggered homework

assignments, or note-taking assistance. This office will give you a letter outlining the accommodations to which you are entitled that you can share with your teachers. If you require accommodations, you must present me with an official letter from Disability Services.

19 Deerfield Street, 2nd floor
Phone: 617-353-3658
<http://www.bu.edu/disability>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: items are listed on the days they are **due**. Unless I have indicated otherwise, all readings and videos are posted on Blackboard under “Content.” Items marked “**Due**” are things you must hand in.

Week 1

Tues. 9/5: Introductions; syllabus overview

Thurs. 9/7: Why Music? Why Intersectionality?

-Due: Active Listening worksheet (bring to class)

-Read: Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, “Music and Cultural Change” (45-7); Jonathan C. Friedman, “What Is Social Protest Music? One Historian’s Perspective” (xiv-xvii)

-Watch: Kimberlé Crenshaw, “The urgency of intersectionality” (TED Talk, 2016)

Week 2

Tues. 9/12: Classical

-Listen: Ethel Smyth, “March of the Women”

-Watch: Yuja Wang, “Scriabin: Selections for Solo Piano”

-Read: Sophie Fuller, “Dead White Men in Wigs: Women and Classical Music” AND Zachary Woolfe, “Restrained, Then Madly Lyrical: The Pianist as Spring Mechanism” AND Anastasia Tsioulcas, “Violinist Hahn-Bin” (*NPR*)

Thurs. 9/14: Classical (cont.)

-Listen: Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 6, 4th movement; “Sempre Libera” from *La Traviata*; “Ecco Ridente” from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*

-Watch: “La Mamma Morta” scene from *Philadelphia*

-Read: “Symphony No. 6: Pathétique” (LA Philharmonic) AND Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen’s Throat* (9-18, 39-45, 205-6)

Week 3

Tues. 9/19: Spirituals

-Due: “All Songs Considered” podcast assignment (email before class)

-Listen: “Oh, Freedom;” “Go Down, Moses;” “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”

-Read: Burton W. Peretti, “Signifying Freedom: Protest in Nineteenth-Century African American Music” (3-18)

Thurs. 9/21: Blues

-Listen: Gertrude ‘Ma’ Rainey, “Cell Bound Blues;” Bessie Smith, “Young Woman’s Blues;” Billie Holiday, “You Let Me Down,” “Strange Fruit”

-Read: Angela Davis, “Blame it on the Blues” (91-119) AND ““Strange Fruit:” Music and Social Consciousness” (181-197)

Week 4

Tues. 9/26: Jazz

-Listen: Louis Armstrong, "Black and Blue;" Duke Ellington, "Black, Brown and Beige"
-Read: J.A. Rogers, "Jazz at Home;" "The Intersection of Jazz and Social Protest" (NPR)

Thurs. 9/28: Jazz (cont.)

-Listen: Nina Simone, "Four Women," "Young, Gifted, and Black," "Backlash Blues,"
 "Mississippi Goddam," "Strange Fruit"

Week 5

Tues. 10/3: Motown; R&B

-Listen: Martha & the Vandellas, "Dancing in the Street;" The Impressions, "People Get Ready;" Sam Cooke, "A Change is Gonna Come;" Marvin Gaye, "What's Going On"
-Read: James Smethurst, "A Soul Message: R&B, Soul, and the Black Freedom Struggle" (108-120)

Thurs. 10/5: Soul, Funk

-Listen: Isley Brothers, "Fight the Power;" Sam & Dave, "Soul Man;" James Brown, "Say It Loud – I'm Black and I'm Proud;" Sly & the Family Stone, "Stand!;" Curtis Mayfield, "Move On Up;" Stevie Wonder, "You Haven't Done Nothin;" Gil Scott-Heron, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised;" Aretha Franklin, "Respect"

Week 6

Tues. 10/10: NO CLASS – SUBSTITUTE MONDAY SCHEDULE

Thurs. 10/12: Folk

-Listen: Woodie Guthrie, "This Land is Your Land;" Pete Seeger, "We Shall Overcome;" Joan Baez and Paul Robeson, "Joe Hill;" Peter, Paul & Mary, "If I Had a Hammer;" Bob Dylan, "Masters of War" and "Blowin' in the Wind;" Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, "Ohio"
-Read: Eyerman and Jamison, "The Movement Personified: Guthrie, Seeger, Lomax" and "From the Thirties to the Nineties" (68-73)

Week 7

Tues. 10/17: Folk (cont.)

-Listen: Joni Mitchell, "Big Yellow Taxi;" Tracy Chapman, "Talkin' Bout a Revolution;" Ani DiFranco, "Lost Woman Song;" Indigo Girls, "Go," "Hammer and a Nail"

Thurs. 10/19: Rock & Punk

-Listen: The Beatles, "Revolution;" John Lennon, "Imagine;" Sex Pistols, "God Save the Queen;" Bruce Springsteen, "Born in the USA;" Green Day, "American Idiot"
-Read: Jacqueline Edmondson and Robert G. Weiner, "Radical Protest in Rock" (143-4, 146-7, 151-153) AND "The Sex Pistols" (*Rolling Stone*) AND Dick Weissman, "Popular Protest" (224-5)

Week 8

Tues. 10/24: Rock & Punk (cont.)

-*Listen*: Joan Jett, “Bad Reputation;” Bikini Kill, “Rebel Girl;” Sleater-Kinney, “Dig Me Out”

-*Read*: Shayna Maskell, “I Predict a Riot: Riot Grrrls and the Contradictions of Feminism” (184-197)

Thurs. 10/26: Pop

-**Due: Paper #1**

-*Listen*: Leslie Gore, “Don’t Tell Me;” Helen Reddy, “I Am Woman”

Week 9**Tues. 10/31: Pop (cont.)**

-*Listen*: Gloria Gaynor, “I Will Survive;” Madonna, “Vogue;” Frankie Goes to Hollywood, “Relax;” The Village People, “YMCA;” Lady Gaga, “Born This Way”

Thurs. 11/2: Pop (cont.)

-*Listen*: P!nk, “Dear Mr. President;” Lady Gaga, “Till It Happens to You;” Macklemore and Ryan Lewis, “Same Love;” Katy Perry, “Chained to the Rhythm;” MILCK, “Quiet;” Sara Bareilles and Leslie Odom, Jr., “Seriously”

-*Read*: Seth Mandel, “Protest music deserves better than Katy Perry” (*New York Post*) AND Jed Gottlieb, “Protest music helped save 20th-century America. But are today’s pop artists up to the task?” (*Quartz*)

Week 10**Tues. 11/7: Broadway/musicals**

-*Watch*: Performances from *Shuffle Along*, *Porgy and Bess*, *The Color Purple*

-*Read*: Janice Simpson, “Pivotal Moments in Broadway’s Black History” (*Playbill*) AND John Jeremiah Sullivan, “‘Shuffle Along’ and the Lost History of Black Performance in America” (*NYT Magazine*)

Thurs. 11/9: Broadway/musicals (cont.)

-*Watch*: Performances from *The Wizard of Oz*, *Falsettos*, *Rent*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Fun Home*

-*Read*: Ryan Bunch, “‘The Wizard of Oz’ in the Gay Community” (*PGN*) AND John M. Clum, *Something for the Boys: Musical Theater and Gay Culture* (5-10, 193-6, 269-274)

Week 11**Tues. 11/14: Broadway/musicals (cont.)**

-*Listen*: “Alexander Hamilton,” “Yorktown,” “Non-Stop,” “My Shot,” “The Schuyler Sisters,” “History Has Its Eyes on You” (*Hamilton*)

-*Watch*: K’naan “Immigrants (We Get the Job Done)” (*The Hamilton Mixtape*)

-*Read*: Jody Rosen, “The American Revolutionary” (*NYT*) AND Michael Schulman, “The Women of ‘Hamilton’” (*New Yorker*) AND Rebecca Onion, “A Hamilton Skeptic” (*Slate*) AND James McMaster, “Why *Hamilton* is not the revolution you think it is” (*HowlRound*)

Week 12**Tues. 11/21: Hip-hop & rap**

-*Listen*: Grandmaster Flash and Furious Five, “The Message;” N.W.A., “Fuck Tha Police;” Public Enemy, “Fight the Power;” Tupac Shakur, “How Can We Be Free,” “Words of Wisdom;” Kendrick Lamar, “Alright;” T.I., “War Zone;” Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar, “Freedom;” Lauryn Hill, “Black Rage;” Janelle Monáe, “Hell You Talmbout”

-*Read*: Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop* (xi-xiii, 320-2, 445-48) AND Greg Tate, “How #BlackLivesMatter Changed Hip-Hop and R&B in 2015” (*Rolling Stone*)

Thurs: 11/23: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING RECESS**Week 13****Tues. 11/28: Hip-hop & rap (cont.)**

-*Listen*: Salt N’ Pepa, “Ain’t Nuthin But a She-Thing;” Lauryn Hill, “Doo Wop (That Thing);” Queen Latifah, “U.N.I.T.Y.,” Roxanne Shanté, “Independent Woman;” M.I.A., “Bad Girls,” “Borders”

-*Read*: Gail Hilson Woldu, “Women, Rap, and Hip-Hop: The Challenge of Image” (171-183)

Thurs. 11/30: Hip-hop & rap (cont.)

-*Listen*: Beyoncé, “Run the World (Girls),” “Formation,” “Flawless ft. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie”

-*Watch*: Beyoncé, *Lemonade*

-*Read*: Brittany Spanos, “How Beyoncé’s ‘Lemonade’ Reclaims Rock’s Black Female Legacy” (*Rolling Stone*) AND bell hooks, “Moving Beyond Pain” AND Melissa Harris-Perry, “The Pain and Power of ‘Lemonade’” (*Elle*) AND Dingfelder, “A Hip-Hop Historian explains Black Lives Matter – and Beyoncé’s Lemonade”

Week 14**Tues. 12/5: Your choice! (songs/genres YOU want to discuss)****Thurs. 12/7: Final paper/project presentations****Week 15****Tues. 12/12: Final paper/project presentations (cont.)**

-*Due*: final papers/projects