

Music & Social Justice

MUS 302, Section 0 (4 cr.), Fall 2023
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Felicia K. Youngblood (youngbf@wwu.edu)
Class Location & Time: TR 3:00-4:50pm, PAC 047
Office Hours: W 9:00-9:50am, R 1:30-2:20pm, & by appointment; PAC 139

Course Description

This course investigates the relationships between music, culture, and social justice, especially as they exist within North American contexts. Students will gain a deeper understanding of intersections between music, culture, and social justice across various contexts and identities, such as gender, race, ability, environment, war, citizenship, and public health. We will explore these concepts through class lectures and discussions, individual and collaborative research, audiovisual analysis, and service project design.

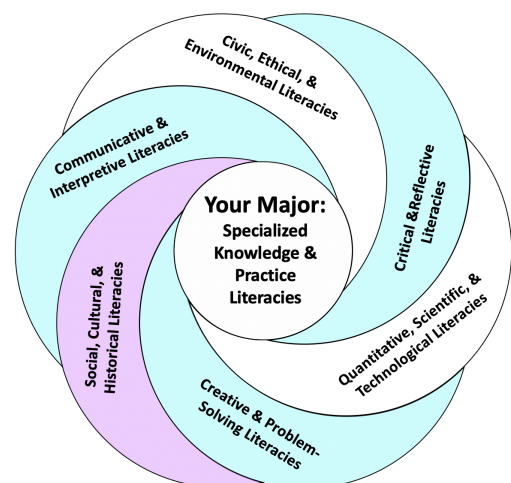
Course Objectives and Prerequisites

This course is open to all students—regardless of major—and there are no prerequisites. It is designed to achieve five objectives. Students will:

1. Develop listening skills and vocabulary to address course-related concepts
2. Collect and analyze data that will provide insight into each student's musical relationship with notions of social justice
3. Investigate sociocultural issues surrounding the in/exclusion of historically resilient populations in musical creation, distribution, and compensation
4. Construct individual projects to develop a more informed understanding of musical contributions to social justice through critical thought and analysis
5. Develop collaborative service projects that will allow for a tactile and theoretical interaction with course themes and related issues

GUR Designation

This course serves as a General University Requirement (GUR) in Social, Cultural, & Historical Literacies. As seen in the above objectives, we will build foundational knowledge with aesthetic, theoretical, and methodological approaches for studying the diversity of human experience in relation to music, culture, and social justice. In particular, our assignments, lectures, discussions, and labs will allow you to build upon Communicative & Interpretive, Creative & Problem-Solving, and Critical & Reflective Literacies (descriptions pg. 2-3). This course also fulfills credit toward the Block B GUR attribute in Comparative, Gender, and Multicultural Studies (BCGM).



Learning Strategies & Participation Expectations

Throughout the quarter, students will participate in a variety of active learning activities from guided discussions to collaborative projects. Students are expected to listen carefully and with an open mind, engage in discussion in a thoughtful manner, be respectful of everyone's time and experiences, and be willing to reflect and analyze on personal and group levels. Please see guidelines on Canvas for an introduction to communication, participation, and language guidelines and expectations for this course.

This class is four credit hours in total. Tuesdays will be spent in lecture and discussion while Thursday meetings will include a mixture of lecture and lab (one hour each). If students have any issues related to participation, assignments, or other matters, they may contact the professor in person or at the email listed above. Students are *highly encouraged* to utilize office hours. To ensure protection and accountability, there will also be an anonymous option to provide feedback, ask questions, or make suggestions.

Text & Materials

Reading and discussion are important elements of this course. Participating in these activities will not only help the individual but will enrich the entire classroom experience. On occasion, students will also be asked to listen to podcasts and music recordings, peruse websites, and/or watch videos for homework. You are expected to treat these assignments as seriously as the reading. All reading, listening, viewing, and interactive assignments will be posted under weekly Canvas modules. There you can also find materials referenced in lectures and discussions under our "Running Bibliography."

For Thursday lab group meetings, you will need a laptop, tablet, or smart phone and something to take notes with (if you prefer handwritten notes). Depending on your group's final presentation, you may want or need to bring other items to the classroom, such as a musical instrument or hand-drawn logo sketches.

Grading System

Student autonomy is an important component of justice-based teaching. Therefore, choice is woven into each assessment, all the way down to the method of grading in this course. We use a points-based (NOT percentage-based) system, for which your total score corresponds to a traditional grading scale out of 100 points.

The only required assignment in MUS 302 is your Collaborative Music Service Project (CMSP), which accounts for up to 50/100 points of your final grade. It is up to you to decide how you want to earn the remaining 50 points. In addition to the CMSP, student assessments include opportunities for weekly reflections, research, and creative activities. A chart of potential point combinations, displaying maximum points per assessment, and a grade scale are demonstrated on the next page.

	CMSP	C&R Reflections	Protest Song of the Week	Playlist & Liner Notes	Total Score
Student 1	50	7x5=35	15		100
Student 2	50	3x5=15	15	20	100
Student 3	50	2x5=10	15	20	95
Student 4	50	9x5=45			95
Student 5	50	8x5=40		20	110*

* = this student has earned “extra credit” and has points to spare in case of deductions on assessments

Grade Scale (Based on Points)

A = 100 – 93	B- = 82.9 - 80	D+ = 70.9 – 69
A- = 92.9 - 90	C+ = 79.9 – 77	D = 68.9 – 65
B+ = 89.9 - 87	C = 76.9 - 73	F = 64.9 and below
B = 86.9 - 83	C- = 72.9 - 71	

Assessments

Class & Reading Reflections

Due: Every Tuesday, 11:59pm

In addition to projects and fieldwork, our primary form of learning in this course will be through lectures, discussions, and readings/podcasts/website explorations. This course does not use a quizzing or testing format; therefore, class and reading responses will help you reflect upon and internalize course material. A weekly template will be posted on Canvas to help guide you in your reflections. This template will generally include space for a brief summary of the week’s main concepts and will also contain a few focused questions based on the lesson/reading content and your personal thoughts on the given topic. There are 9 Class & Reading Reflections and they are each worth 5 points, yielding a possible total of 45 points.

Protest Song of the Week

*Due: Thursdays between 10/10-11/30, 3:00pm *Weeks 4 &5 are due on Tuesday*

To encourage individual investigation and analysis of music and social justice, students will be required to research a protest song related to one of our unit topics. You will synthesize this information into a brief presentation (5-7 minutes) that details biographical information and background on the artist/song, including musical, lyrical, historical, and sociocultural analysis. There will be opportunities to present 2-3 songs of the week at the beginning of each assigned class. Students will sign up for a topic/week via a Google Doc that will be linked under our Week 1 module. Specific details concerning the objectives, rubric, and instructions are available on Canvas. Your Protest Song of the Week presentation counts toward 15 points of the final grade.

Playlist & Liner Notes Project

Due: Thursday, November 2, 11:59pm

To deepen your investigation of music and social justice, you will create a playlist on a specific social justice movement or theme and an accompanying set of liner notes. The topic must be different than your Protest Song of the Week, should you also choose to engage in that project. Your playlist should be made in YouTube or Spotify and must include at least 8 songs/compositions. Your liner notes should detail the sociocultural and musical aspects of each work, explaining their significance to the theme/movement in question through musical and sociocultural analysis. Specific details concerning the objectives, rubric, and instructions are available on Canvas. Your Playlist & Liner Notes project counts toward 20 points of the final grade and is due on Thursday, November 2.

Collaborative Music Service Project

Presentation Due: Thursday, December 7, 11:59pm

Final Dossier Due: Wednesday, December 13, 11:59pm

In a small group with classmates, you will collaboratively design and propose a project that relates to social justice, is designed to benefit students on our campus, and could also have benefits for the broader community in Bellingham and beyond. Your project must include music in a large and concentrated manner and you should seriously consider the potential impact, feasibility, and sustainability of your work. We are partnering with WWU's Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund (SEJF) to consult with us as we develop projects, apply for grants, and, if funded, assist with operations. We will view examples of projects from past MUS 302 courses and from the SEJF as inspiration, though you are encouraged to exercise your own autonomy and think creatively about potential new ideas and pathways.

You will be split into five groups of five at the beginning of the quarter based on topical interests and working styles. Together with your group members, you must consider all logistics of the project, such as community needs, advertising, song choices, funding, artist communications, and natural and human resources. You will work on this project during class in weekly lab sessions on Thursdays but you are also expected to engage in outside research and activities as a component of your weekly homework. The professor will provide weekly prompts to help guide your project's development during lab sessions, but students may also assess and address missing pieces that are subjectively related to their group's project. You will be assisted weekly by the instructor and a representative from the SEJF, Zinta Lucans (lucansz@wwu.edu). SEJF student ambassadors may also join us as consultants on occasion. Zinta will guide us in such matters as project design, campus partnerships, and basic grant writing practices. She will function as a resource and collaborator, not as a judge or gatekeeper, and students should feel free to reach out to Zinta if they have questions or want help brainstorming at any point during the quarter (you don't have to wait until she's present in class).

By the end of the quarter, students are expected to have developed a comprehensive dossier of materials in Google Drive which will include, among others, answers to

weekly prompts, a semi-final draft of an SEJF grant application, and a statement concerning whether all or some members of the group would like to submit the grant application and continue pursuing the project in the future, should it be accepted, and/or hand the project off for further development with other campus groups or future class members. Should you choose to pursue the project further, you may receive capstone credit in a future quarter while you work to actualize and host your project and its related events. (Information about the capstone course number and description will be announced at a later date.)

- Please note that—while students are encouraged to follow through with projects if they have the capacity to do so—deciding to submit your grant application and operationalize the project are NOT required for course credit. While you are still required to prepare all materials as if you will be applying for funding, you will not be penalized in any manner for deciding not to pursue your project beyond the quarter in which you are enrolled in MUS 302.

In addition to the dossier, each group will present a 10-15 minute project proposal during the last day of class. The presentation should be based on the project design, highlight dossier items, and pay special attention to the musical components of your project. There will be a Q&A after each presentation and you will have several days after to adjust elements of your dossier and grant proposal based on the advice of your audience.

Specific details concerning the assignment objectives, instructions, and rubric for both the dossier and final presentation are available on Canvas. The Collaborative Music Service project is the only required assessment in this course and counts toward 50 points of the final grade (points breakdown: dossier= 40; presentation = 10).

Resources & Policies

Important policies for students regarding Academic Honesty, Accommodations, Ethical Conduct, WWU Network and Computing Resources, Finals, Medical Excuse Policy, and the Student Conduct Code are available at <https://syllabi.wvu.edu/>.

Syllabus Change Policy

With the exception of adding unplanned assessments during the final week of classes, this syllabus is subject to change. Changes, if any, will be announced in class and on Canvas immediately upon implementation. Students are responsible for all changes.

Acknowledgement of Tribal Homelands and Stewardship

Our classes are held on the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish Peoples, who have lived in the Salish Sea basin, throughout the San Juan Islands and the North Cascades watershed, from time immemorial. It is because of the enduring care and sustaining efforts of our shared lands and waterways by the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe that we are able to learn in this environment. It is not a right but, rather, a great and undeserved privilege that I am able to teach you from this platform.

Course Calendar

Please refer to the below course calendar for a detailed schedule of weekly topics, readings, and assignments. Note that Protest Song of the Weeks are due at the start of class on your assigned date and are, therefore, not listed in this calendar.

MUS 302 Course Calendar - Fall 2023

Date	Unit Topic	Lab Work	Due Dates*
Week 1 9/28	Foundations: Music, Social Justice, & Their Intersections	Group Work Survey	
Week 2 10/3-5		Review SEJF requirements & Basic project design	CRR1 10/3
Week 3 10/10-12	Gender & Sexuality	Intended Populations & Networking	CRR2 10/10
Week 4 10/17-19		Musician Support & Representation I	CRR3 10/17
Week 5 10/24-26	Race, Ethnicity, & Citizenship	Peer Mini-Pitches & Representation II	CRR4 10/24
Week 6 10/31 -11/2		Cultural Responsiveness & Education	CRR5 10/31; P&LN 11/2
Week 7 11/7-9	Environment, Disability, & Deafness	Resources & Sustainability	CRR6 11/7
Week 8 11/14-16		Accommodations & Progress Check	CRR7 11/14
Week 9 11/21-23	War, Religion, Age, & Class	No class 11/23 - Break	CRR8 11/21
Week 10 11/28 - 11/30		Grant Writing 101 & Final Tasks	CRR9 11/28
Week 11 12/5-7	Final Collaborative Music Service Project Meetings & Presentations	Presentation	Present CMSP 12/7
Finals Week	<p style="text-align: center;">CMSP Dossier Due 11:59pm on Wednesday, December 13</p> No final exam meeting - Youngblood & Lucans available for final project and/or grant consultations on Tuesday, December 12, 10:00am-12:00pm in PAC 139		