

# Music and Revolution

Spring 2024



**STS-325: 002**

**FMH 310**

**Tues / Thurs 2:30 - 3:50**

**Dr. Adam See**

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**328 Cullimore (by appointment)**

The course explores the nature of music as an instrument for personal, cultural, and political change. We will discuss the power of music to influence political attitudes in liberation movements throughout history and around the world, as well as in fascist regimes and political campaigns. This course also discusses the co-optation of art by capitalism and through modern technology. Genres to be analyzed include indigenous musics, slave songs, the blues, folk, rock and roll, punk, hip hop, jazz, afro-beat, latin music (e.g., nueva canción), and a variety of experimental genres. Course materials are derived from philosophy, history, aesthetics, anthropology, and political theory.

**No Required Text** (just an .epub app / reader)

## GRADE BREAKDOWN

30%	PIAZZA PARTICIPATION
20%	MUSIC JOURNAL
15%	IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION
15%	CREATIVE PROJECT
10%	QUIZZES
10%	SONG-WRITING ASSIGNMENT

## IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students who are never absent and who speak up often with questions and comments will receive a perfect participation grade. I will update participation grades a few times throughout the semester. Phone use during class will lower participation grades.

**Missing Class:** If you need to miss class for any reason, you must contact the Office of the Dean of Students and request an **excused absence**. Your absence will be validated once I receive an email from the Dean of Students.

## QUIZZES

Expect occasional pass/fail pop-quizzes. Each quiz contains only one question, and is designed to be answered in a couple sentences within a 5-7 minute window. **Note:** if you are late and miss the quiz, or skip a class, your grade will be zero.

## MUSIC JOURNAL

There are **four** journal exercises spread throughout the semester, worth 10 pts each. Reflect on your own music listening that week in relation to our course content. Each submission should be a minimum of 600 words. Entries will be evaluated on how closely and creatively you utilize our texts.

For each entry, choose **one** of the following prompts:

- 1) Explore an unfamiliar genre/artist in reference to our syllabus or lectures.
- 2) Critique your own music listening habits in relation to current course content.

## SONG-WRITING ASSIGNMENT

During our unit on experimental music each student will compose, record, and share a song of their own. I am assuming that each student has zero experience in song-writing and recording. Permitted that you own a smartphone and/or laptop, software is free and easy to use. Your piece must be *at least ninety seconds* long and must be accompanied by a ~300 word description of what you set out to accomplish.

No musical background is required. I have intentionally placed this assignment in our unit on experimental music. I will provide a handout and in-class demonstration. You do not need to sing or use your voice if this makes you uncomfortable, but are encouraged to make something bizarre and meaningful that draws from samples (recorded from the real world, or spliced from youtube, text-to-speech software, etc.) and percussive samples of your own creation, e.g., tapping on glasses of water, pieces of wood, scraps of metal—*literally anything*.

## CREATIVE PROJECT

Students will have a lot of freedom to create a creative project of their own choosing. If you prefer to write a paper (1,500 word minimum), you can also do that.

Some ideas/examples of possible final projects:

- Create a podcast
- Create a video or short film
- Write a song or a series of songs
- Choreograph a dance
- Paint, draw, or sculpt a work of art or a series of works
- Make a comic book or zine
- Write a fictional short story or series of poems

In addition to your project, you are required to turn in a written component of approximately 500 words, explaining and interpreting the project you created by (1) addressing why you decided to do this project, (2) documenting the process, and (3) explaining how the project connects with the class. Your creative project will be due near the end of our course. I will provide you with a thorough handout, including due dates for various steps.

## PIAZZA PARTICIPATION (you must sign up [here](#))

Discussion boards are the most important feature of our class. Each student must make **at least three** substantive posts for each forum exercise (submitted via **Piazza**). Since the purpose of this exercise is back-and-forth dialogue, posts should be spread out throughout the week. This course has **3** forum exercises. Take them seriously!

### Forum Expectations

- You must make **at least three substantive posts** within the span of a week. To receive a high grade, these posts should be somewhat spread out over the week.
- **At least one** post must be **uploaded within three days of the beginning of each lesson, i.e., roughly Sunday**, to encourage/facilitate participation.
- **At least two** of these posts **must be substantive replies** to others.
- Your major posts (but not necessarily *all* of your posts) must be **informed by content from our class readings**.

### What is a Substantive Post?

Substantive responses do not have a word limit, but should be generally 250-400 words or longer. It is very difficult to say anything substantive in less space than that. Use your judgment. These forums are also intended to be big conversations so chat away naturally too! Occasional short responses are strongly encouraged. The tone should always be conversational.

The ultimate point of our forums is to evaluate you on your argumentative skills. If someone says something you disagree with, *respond to them*, get in there! And, if you get responded to, don't just reply like "oh yeah, my bad" -- no, *defend yourself*, or *change your mind*. Regardless of how you approach the forum, I want to see you anticipate strong counter-arguments to your own ideas. And, definitely, I need you to demonstrate familiarity with the assigned material.

### How to Construct a Strong Post

In Piazza, **always use the "Note" format** rather than the "Question" format.

Your posts are meant to demonstrate that you **(1)** have done the reading, **(2)** have thought closely about some *particular* aspect of the text, and **(3)** that you are willing to discuss the course content with your classmates.

### ***Never just summarize!***

I want you to critically analyze the text and engage with the ideas. For inspiration, here's an idea derived from Edward J. Gallagher. One can look at works of philosophy and/or science as if one has "four eyes". Each eye reveals a different perspective, and each one taps into a different level of your own thinking and requires the practice of a different skill. **The "four eyes" are...**

**(1) Hypothesize:** ask a detailed question and formulate a hypothesis about some element of the reading. Then, hypothesize potential *competing* answers to that question.

**(2) Analyze:** pick one portion of the text that confuses you and dive deep. What's really going on here? What does this concept really mean? What is the true foundation of this argument?

**(3) Synthesize:** relate a particular part of this reading to something else we read this semester. Could one idea from somewhere else be *productively* combined with one from this reading?

**(4) Criticize:** what did you like or not like about a particular part of the reading? Did particular arguments strike you as bad? Why? Create a hypothetical dialogue with a figure from the text.

### **How to Structure Counter-Argumentation**

- 1) Author X defends idea P in the following way...
- 2) I disagree with X; P is a weak argument due to the following reasons...
- 3) The strongest way that author X might *respond to my criticisms* is as follows...
- 4) Author X's counter-argument would be strong/weak because...

**OR:**

- 1) Author X presents argument P in defense of her ideas
- 2) I find argument P convincing, however it still faces the following issues...
- 3) The best way that author X might *respond to my criticisms* as follows...
- 4) Author X's counter-argument would be strong/weak because...

Essentially, think of counter-argumentation in this class as a ***dialogue*** where you engage in a concise 'back-and-forth' with the author/philosopher of the reading. The more engaging the dialogue, the higher your grade will likely be. As a rule of thumb: the stronger you present your opponents arguments, the stronger your *own* position will come across. **High scores are given to students whose responses are nuanced**, *i.e.*, partially critical of *all* sides, including of the strength of one's *own* positions. Be humble!

## Citation Format

Every homework assignment and forum post must be professionally cited. For resources cited in the lesson lecture or reading material, the author name in parentheses is sufficient, with page numbers where appropriate. For instance, your essay might read:

Turing said that the question “can machines think?” was “too meaningless to deserve discussion.” (Turing, 4)

## Uploading Your Piazza Post Record

After you have completed your participation, please copy and paste **all** of your posts from that week (even small ones) into a single document and upload it to the weekly assignment on Canvas with TurnItIn.

To easily collect your posts, **simply search for your own name** in the Piazza search field. Only copy and paste the posts relevant to the current lesson. Each copied post must have a date and time visible.

You can use Canvas to update / resubmit your post record if you decide to post more.

**To find the date/time stamp for each post:** hover your cursor over the part of your post where it says how long ago your post was made. The date/time stamp will appear.

**In-Class Technology Policy:** cell phone and laptop use is prohibited during lectures and will lead to a deduction in In-Class Participation points. If you have special circumstances that require you to have your phone out (children, occupation, family issue, etc.) just let me know.

## Final grades are calculated on the following scale

- |                           |           |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| • A (90% of total points) | • C (70%) |
| • B+ (87%)                | • D (50%) |
| • B (80%)                 | • F (49%) |
| • C+ (77%)                |           |

## Grading Policy

Your writing assignments will often be expressions of your own thoughts and beliefs on ethical issues. So I want to be clear that your grade will not depend on whether I agree with you. You are encouraged to think independently and to bring your own values and interests to our discussions. If you disagree with the views being presented or discussed in lecture and readings, you are *encouraged* to respectfully explain why by providing clear reasons and arguments. The grading rubric for this course is designed to be as objective as possible.

Many students struggle with abstract writing assignments, and many students do not have English as their first language. So I also want to be clear that your writing will not be graded on grammar or spelling, unless it makes your writing incomprehensible. The point of this course is not to write the perfect essay or perform extensive high level research. The goal of the course is to introduce you to pressing ethical issues and to provide you with various opportunities for thoughtful philosophical reflection on your *own* prior beliefs.

For this reason, your grade will largely depend on my impression of how seriously you have engaged with the course material in a thoughtful discussion of the issues. Substantive, thoughtful homework will be given more credit than half-baked or last minute homework that are transparent attempts to meet the minimum word count. To do well in class you need to demonstrate that you are thinking critically about the issues, and that you're taking the time to express your thoughts carefully.

Students are expected to attend all lectures, complete all assigned readings, and be active participants in discussions. As this is a philosophy class, much of our time together will be interactive. Missing class weighs *heavily* on your participation grade. Just as regular absences will weigh heavily on a student's final grade, regular and/or provocative contributions to discussion will also be strongly considered as I tally grades at the end of the semester.

**Late Policy:** Students who fail to hand in an assignment will receive a zero on the assignment. Students who fail to show up for a midterm will fail that exam. **Night-before or day-of excuses are almost never acceptable.** The only excuses that I will accept are those **accompanied by a doctor's note.** Otherwise, late work will be deducted a half-point each day.

**Plagiarism:** Suspected cases of plagiarism will be given **zero credit** for the assignment and **reported to the Dean** as a violation of the Student Code of Academic Integrity, which carries a maximum penalty of expulsion. Copying and pasting from the web is one form of plagiarism. Failing to provide adequate citations is also a form of plagiarism. Any work you use should be given adequate citation. If you use **any** resource in your research (including dictionaries, encyclopedias, and translation tools!), **even if you don't quote it directly**, provide a citation.

**ANY EVIDENCE OF AI WRITTEN WORK (INCL. GRAMMARLY) WILL RECEIVE A ZERO.**



# GRADING RUBRIC (Piazza)

## 1. OUTPUT / COMMUNITY

<b>3+</b> (Bonus Point)	<b>2</b> (Full Points / Great work)	<b>1</b> (Default Grade)	<b>0.5 / 0</b>
<b>5+ substantive posts</b> <p>You're a <i>serious presence</i> on the forums, but not in a point-grabbing kind of way. Your posts are numerous, spread out, and convey genuine interest in the course-content and our online community.</p> <p>Sometimes you function as an intermediary who clarifies or resolves issues that other students are struggling with.</p>	<b>~4 substantive posts</b> <p>Your posts are somewhat spread out over the week. Attempts are genuinely made to reply to those who reply to you.</p> <p>You do not simply agree with others. You either (1) disagree with them, (2) reveal a potential flaw in their argument, or (3) agree with them, but with qualifications, or with a new point of your own.</p>	<b>3 substantive posts</b> <p>Your overall output is satisfactory, but perhaps feels rushed at times in terms of length and content, usually posted all in one session.</p> <p><b>At least one post is uploaded within three days of the start of the lesson.</b></p>	<b>Beneath expectations</b>

## 2. CLOSE READING / ASSIGNED MATERIALS

<b>4</b> (Exemplary)	<b>3</b> (Close & Focused)	<b>2</b> (Surface-level Reading)	<b>1</b>
<p>The text is analyzed with a superior eye to detail. You demonstrate intellectual humility in the face of challenging material. You raise--and are not afraid to respond to--incisive questions about difficult concepts / arguments.</p>	<p>There is a clear sense of your mind working through hard problems derived from the text. Key terms are defined. Connections are drawn to previous readings.</p>	<p>Posts are either (1) not closely related to the readings, or (2) focus too much on merely summarizing the content.</p>	<b>Beneath Expectations</b>



### 3. CREATIVITY / CONTENT / CARE

4 (Exemplary)	3 (Original & Personal)	2 (Surface-level Analysis)	1
<p>Your posts are a real pleasure to read. They are original, creative, and entertaining, e.g., perhaps you construct a ridiculous yet insightful thought experiment.</p> <p>The strongest possible counter-arguments are constructed and considered.</p>	<p>You make an attempt to say something new or insightful about the text. Perhaps you evoke your own experiences.</p> <p>You start your own threads, do research, and aim to be a nuanced thinker by considering counter-arguments to your own views.</p>	<p>Posts are satisfactory in terms of content, but generally adopt an uncritical or non-nuanced perspective on the subject.</p> <p>Little-to-no attempt is made to entertain countervailing perspectives or to provide creative counter-arguments of your own design.</p>	<b>Beneath Expectations</b>

**Total: 10 pts (w/ option for +1 bonus)**

### Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Identify a wide variety of issues in the philosophy of aesthetics, ethnomusicology, political philosophy, economics, and world history.

Understand the roles of music in liberation movements, past and present.

Utilize and identify various approaches to interpreting music.

Develop critical skills at argumentation and counter-argumentation, particularly with respect to fostering intellectual humility.

Evaluate the cultural, personal, political, and environmental impacts of music and art, particularly in the spirit of DIY (do it yourself) philosophy.

# UNIT ONE

## Capitalism and Resistance Music

*“If it is art, it is not for all, and if it is for all, it is not art.”*

- Arnold Schoenberg

*“And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music.”*

- Friedrich Nietzsche

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### Lesson One: Music, Politics, and the Emotions

Garrett, *Music and Politics* ([Ch 1](#): 1-11, 13–23)

Nietzsche, [Birth of Tragedy](#) (Sections 1-2 [in-text pgs. 8-11])

Higgins, “[Nietzsche on Music](#)” (recommended)

Radiolab, [Touch at a Distance](#) (podcast - recommended)

Lugg, [How Pythagoras Broke Music](#) (video - recommended)

Garrett, *Music and Politics* ([Ch 1](#): 11–13)

Randall, “Partying for Your Right to Fight” in [Sound System](#) (Ch. 3)

### Lesson Two: Protest and Popular Music

Adorno, [On Popular Music](#) (pgs. 200-208)

Lynskey, [Revolutions per Minute](#), “Strange Fruit: Birth of the Popular Protest Song”

Randall, [Sound System](#), “Beyoncé & Black Lives Matter” (110-117)

Garrett, *Music and Politics* ([Ch. 5](#): 127-135)

[You About to Lose Yo Job](#)

Youn, [How K-pop stans are shaping elections around the globe](#)

Shirky, “Chapter Two: Means” from [Cognitive Surplus](#) (until Preserving Old Problems)

Sadler, “[Defiant Amplification or Decontextualized Commercialization? Protest Music, TikTok, and Social Movements](#)” (recommended)

### Lesson Three: Experimental Music

Benjamin, “[The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction](#)” (Sections 2, 3, 4, 14, and Epilogue)

[The Rise of Experimental Music in the 1960s](#) (documentary)

La Monte Young, “[Lecture 1960](#)”

John Cage, [Silence](#), “Experimental Music” and “Goal: New Music, New Dance”

## UNIT TWO

### Punks, Dadaists, Anarchists, and Fascists

*"In our society now, we prefer to see ourselves living than living."*

- Guy Debord

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#### Lesson Four: Punk Rock and Situationism

Marcus, [Lipstick Traces](#) (1-12, 25-31, 44-54, 91-103)

Gray, "Everyone Will Live in His Own Cathedral: The Situationists: 1958-1964" from [Leaving the 20th Century](#)

[The Velvet Underground](#) (documentary – recommended)

Svenonius, "Me Inc." (only Part 1) from [Against the Written Word](#) (recommended)

#### Lesson Five: Post-Punk, Hardcore, and Riot Grrrl

Reynolds, [Rip it Up and Start Again](#), "The Unfinished Revolution" (1-11) and "Public Image Belongs to Me" (15-25) (recommended)

[Salad Days: A Decade of Punk in Washington DC](#) (documentary - recommended)

Maskell, "I Predict a Riot: Riot Grrrls and the Contradictions of Feminism" in [Routledge History of Social Protest in Music](#)

[The Riot Grrrl Collection](#) (selections)

[The Punk Singer](#) (documentary - recommended)

#### Lesson Six: Anarchism and Animal Liberation

Chomsky, "Notes on Anarchism" in [On Anarchism](#) (118-129)

Tilbürger, ["Punk Veganism as a Culture of Resistance"](#)

Nocella, "'Anarchist Criminology Against Racism and Ableism and for Animal Liberation" in [Anarchism and Animal Liberation](#)

#### Lesson Seven: Fascism and Censorship

Garrett, *Music and Politics* ([Ch 2](#): 42-52)

Turino, "Music and Political Movements" in [Music as Social Life](#) (189-210)

Svenonius, "Responsible Use of Rock and Roll" in [Psychic Soviet](#)

[Winds of Change](#) (Ep 3: America's Secret Weapon 0–7:10 / 14:10–22:25)

Randall, "The Beatles, the Kremlin, and the CIA" in [Sound System](#) (16-26, 51-59)

# UNIT THREE

## Black Nationalism and Musical Militancy

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### Lesson Eight: The Blues and Jazz as Resistance Music

*What Happened, Ms. Simone?* ([Netflix](#) / [Amazon](#) documentary)  
Lynskey, [Revolutions per Minute](#), “Mississippi Goddamn”  
Davis, “[Blame it on the Blues](#)” from *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*  
Edet, “[One Hundred Years of Black Protest Music](#)”  
Switzer, “[Signifying the Blues](#)” (25-57) [[weblink](#)]

### Lesson Nine: Free Jazz and Black Nationalism

Malcolm X, [The Ballot or the Bullet](#)  
[Fire Music](#) (documentary)  
Neal, “[The Black Arts Movement](#)”  
Anderson, “Free Jazz and Black Nationalism” from [This is Our Music](#)  
Kofsky, “John Coltrane and the Black Music Revolution” from [Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music](#) (recommended)

### Lesson Ten: Black Power and African Liberation

[The Black Power Mixtape](#) (documentary)  
Lynskey, [Revolutions per Minute](#), “James Brown / “Say It Loud—I’m Black and I’m Proud” and “Gil Scott-Heron / “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised”  
Rabaka, “[Funk, Musical Militancy, and Black Power](#)” (148-168) (recommended)  
Aderinto, “Sorrow, Tears, and Blood: Fela Anikulapo Kuti and Protest in Nigeria” in [Routledge History of Social Protest in Music](#)  
[Fela Kuti: Music is the Weapon](#) (documentary)  
[The Birth of Afrobeat](#) (video)  
Onyebadi, “[Bob Marley: Communicating Africa's political liberation and unity](#)”  
Lumumba: Soundtrack to a Coup d'etat (documentary)

# UNIT FOUR

## Neoliberalism, Latin America, and the Middle East

*“Like Saturn, the revolution devours its children.”*

- Jacques Mallet du Pan

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### Lesson Eleven: Nueva Canción and Neoliberalism

Lynskey, [Revolutions per Minute](#), “Victor Jara / The Killing of a Protest Singer”  
Kinzer, “We’re Going to Smash Him” from [Overthrow](#) (recommended)  
Stieglitz, [Globalization and its Discontents](#) “The Promise of Global Institutions”  
Chomsky, [Profit Over People](#) “Neoliberalism and the Global Order” (pgs. 19-24 [recommended: 7-40])  
Randall, [Sound System](#), “Music of the Arab Revolutions”

### Lesson Twelve: Hip Hop and Reaganomics

Lynskey, [Revolutions per Minute](#), “The Message” and “Fight the Power”  
Davis, “The Prison Industrial Complex” from [Are Prisons Obsolete?](#)  
Zinn, “[Carter-Reagan-Bush: The Bipartisan Consensus](#)” (recommended)  
[Style Wars](#) (documentary)  
[13th](#) (documentary)

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*“Musical innovation is full of danger to the State, for when modes of music change, the laws of the State always change with them.”*

Plato’s Republic