Music 7: Music, Human Rights, and Cultural Rights

COURSE INFORMATION

Arms Music Center 102
Monday–Wednesday 2:00–3:20

Assistant Professor Jeffers Engelhardt
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Office hours: anytime by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

While music is commonly thought of as a human universal, questions concerning the universality of human rights and the relativity of cultural forms are becoming more urgent because of global interaction and conflict. Music gives voice to human dignity and makes claims about social justice. Music is a register of power and domination, as is its silencing. The specific cultural contexts that give music its meaning may not translate into global arenas, thus highlighting the dilemmas of universality. In this course, we will examine musical censorship in Indonesia, music and the indigenous rights of the Naxi in China and the Suyá in Brazil, the use of music as an instrument of torture by the United States military, music and HIV/AIDS activism in Uganda, popular music and minority language protection in the Russian Federation, music and the study of trauma, disabilities, and human ecology, and music in the lives of Tibetan refugees, for instance. The course will feature visiting performers and will pay particular attention to the discretely musical aspects of human and cultural rights. Our work will be oriented towards activism beyond the classroom.

This semester, we will engage with literature from ethnomusicology, anthropology, and other social sciences. You will become comfortable hearing musics and thinking about musical practices in terms of how sounds and the realities they create are related to rights discourses and claims. Finally, you will become fluent in speaking and writing about music and rights in a critical, original manner.

Because music, ideas about music, and claims about human and cultural rights are constantly emerging and contested, classroom debate and discussion are vital to this course. In other words, music, human rights, and cultural rights are about sound in fundamental ways, and the sound of exploration, debate, and discussion will be a central aspect of each class.

All weekly readings and listenings that are not in texts required for purchase will be accessible as .pdfs and .mp3s on the course website.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Needless to say, preparation for, attendance at, and active participation in every class meeting is essential. No unexcused absences are permitted. Graded in-class work cannot be made up, no exceptions. In order for an absence to be excused due to illness or an exceptional and unavoidable personal conflict, you must be in touch with me well beforehand. An email sent after an absence is polite, but it does not excuse that absence. All assignments must be submitted to me as an email attachment in .doc or .pdf format by their due date. I do not accept hard copies. Finally, I welcome and encourage you to speak with me at any time about any aspect of the course. Remember: the more you give to this course, the more I can give to you individually and as a group; the more you speak and listen critically and creatively, the more you will learn.

Your work in this course will be challenging, rewarding, and varied. I will hand out guidelines and rubrics for all the work you will do in order to make my expectations and standards for evaluation completely clear. At the end of each unit, you will write a short (750 word) essay addressing questions I pose that draws meaningfully and critically on the readings, listenings, and work we’ve done. At the end of the semester, there will be a final essay of more substantial length (2500 words) that will draw together the work we’ve done throughout the course. With the exception of your final essay, you may revise and rewrite any work you do in this course in order to realize more fully the given guidelines and rubrics. Growth through self-criticism and discussion with me are central to this process and to this course.

Our work in this course will be done according to Amherst College’s Statement of Intellectual Responsibility:

<https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/policiesprocedures/sir>

Here are due dates to keep in mind:

Position paper: Monday, September 22 at 8:00 PM
Essay #1: Friday, October 3 at 8:00 PM
Essay #2: Friday, October 24 at 8:00 PM
Essay #3: Friday, November 7 at 8:00 PM
Essay #4: Monday, November 24 at 8:00 PM
Final Essay: Wednesday, December 17 at 12:00 PM

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Participation in class—20%
Position paper and short essays—55%
Final essay—25%

COURSE TEXTS (available at Amherst Books)


Music 7: Music, Human Rights, and Cultural Rights—Jeffers Engelhardt


**COURSE WEBSITE**

<https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/courses/0809F/MUSI/MUSI-07-0809F>

1. **MUSIC, RIGHTS, AND THE DILEMMAS OF UNIVERSALITY AND RELATIVISM**

**WEEK 1**

*Required reading over the first two weeks*


*Additional reading*


*Listening*

Unit 1 mp3s

**WEEK 2**

*Required reading for Monday*


*Required reading for Wednesday*

Jane K. Cowan, Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, and Richard A. Wilson, eds.,


*Additional reading*


*Listening*

Unit 1 mp3s

**Week 3**

*Required reading for Monday*


*Additional reading*


*Listening*

Unit 1 mp3s

**Roundtable discussion and position paper presentation on Wednesday, September 17**

**Position paper due Monday, September 22 at 8:00 pm**
2. UNESCO, ITS IDEOLOGIES, AND ITS IMPACT IN THE BALTICS

WEEK 4

Required reading for Monday

*United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948)


*The Protection and Promotion of Musical Diversity* (UNESCO and the International Music Council, 2006)

*UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001)


Required reading for Wednesday


Additional reading


*Our Creative Diversity* (World Commission for Culture and Development, 1995)


*United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966)

**Listening**

Unit 2 mp3s

**Films**

*Laulupidu Marimaal/Mari Song Festival* (Aleksei Aleksejev, 2005)

*Eesti XXIV Üldlaulupidu “Alati teel”* (ETV, 2005)

*Eesti X Noorte laulu- ja tantsupidu “Ilmapuu lävel”* (ETV, 2007)
Week 5

Required reading for Monday


Listening

Unit 2 mp3s

Films

Laulupidu Marimaal/Mari Song Festival (Aleksei Aleksejev, 2005)

Eesti XXIV Üldlaulupidu “Alati teel” (ETV, 2005)

Eesti X Noorte laulu- ja tantsupidu “Ilmapuu lavel” (ETV, 2007)

Essay #1 due Friday, October 3 at 8:00 pm

3. Music, Violence, and War

Week 5 (cont.)

Required reading for Wednesday


Listening

Unit 3 mp3s

Films

War/Dance (Andrea Nix and Sean Fine, 2008)

Voices of Iraq (The People of Iraq, 2004)

Soundtrack to War (George Gittoes, 2004)

Week 6

Required reading for Monday

Suzanne G. Cusick, “Music as Torture/Music as Weapon,” Revista Transcultural de

Suzanne G. Cusick, “‘You are in a place that is out of the world…’: Music in the Detention Camps of the ‘Global War on Terror,’” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 2/1 (2008): 1-26


**Listening**

Unit 3 mp3s

**Films**

*War/Dance* (Andrea Nix and Sean Fine, 2008)

*Voices of Iraq* (The People of Iraq, 2004)

*Soundtrack to War* (George Gittoes, 2004)

**WEEK 7**

*Required reading for Wednesday*


**Listening**

Unit 3 mp3s

**Films**


*A Kabul Music Diary* (John Baily, 2002)

*Breaking the Silence* (Michael Broughton, 2002)

*The Rock Star and the Mullabs* (Salman Ahmad, 2007)
WEEK 8

Listening

Unit 3 mp3s

Films

_Amir: An Afghan Refugee Musician’s Life in Peshawar, Pakistan_ (John Baily, 1985)

_A Kabul Music Diary_ (John Baily, 2002)

_Breaking the Silence_ (Michael Broughton, 2002)

_The Rock Star and the Mullahs_ (Salman Ahmad, 2007)

**Essay #2 due Friday, October 24 at 8:00 pm**

4. HIV/AIDS, Healing, and Music in Africa

WEEK 8 (cont.)

Required reading for Wednesday


Additional reading


Listening

Unit 4 mp3s

WEEK 9

Required reading for Monday and Wednesday


Listening

Unit 4 mp3s
WEEK 10

Required reading for Monday


*Listening*

Unit 4 mp3s

**Essay #3 due Friday, November 7 at 8:00 pm**

5. ABILITY AND DISABILITY

WEEK 10 (cont.)

Required reading for Wednesday


*Additional reading*


*Listening*

Unit 5 mp3s

WEEK 11

Required reading for Monday


In class on November 12: performance and discussion with musicians from the Berkshire Hills Music Academy

*Additional reading*


Listening
Unit 5 mp3s

WEEK 12

Required reading for Wednesday

Evelyn Glennie, “Disability Essay,”
<http://www.evelyn.co.uk/live/disability_essay.htm>

Evelyn Glennie, “The Hearing Essay,”
<http://www.evelyn.co.uk/live/hearing_essay.htm>

Additional reading


Listening
Unit 5 mp3s

Film

Touch the Sound: A Sound Journey with Evelyn Glennie (Thomas Riedelsheimer, 2004)

Essay #4 due Monday, November 24 at 8:00 pm

Week 13 Break!

6. Music, Rights Activism, and Development

WEEK 14

Required reading for Monday


In class on December 3: Presentation and discussion with Susan McLucas of Healthy Tomorrow/Stop Excision

Listening
Unit 6 mp3s
**WEEK 15**

*Required reading for Monday*

Jeffers Engelhardt, “Jonah Ndirangu’s Story and Songs: Towards a Musical Ethnography of Microfinance Participation”


*Additional reading*


*Listening*

Unit 6 mp3s

**Final essay due Wednesday, December 17 at 12:00 pm**