

Political Science 4257: The Politics of Music

Florida Atlantic University, Spring 2023

Course Credits: 3.000 Prerequisites/Corequisites: None

TR 2:00 – 3:20PM, General Classroom South Boca 117

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca LeMoine

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Office Hours: Wed. 1:00 – 3:00PM,
or by appt.

Course Description

Thanks to the invention of the iPod and the smartphone, as well as streaming services such as Spotify and Pandora, music has become a ubiquitous feature of modern life—played everywhere from the car, to the workplace, to the gym, to the home. Despite the importance of music in our daily lives, we seldom stop to consider what these developments in the accessibility and pervasiveness of music might mean for political life. Does music matter politically, or is it simply a harmless form of entertainment? Should we be worried about citizens listening to violent or misogynistic music? If music has no political power, then why do most regimes practice some form of musical censorship, and why have some gone so far as to jail or murder musicians?

This course provides an opportunity to examine the relationship between music and politics by studying a combination of theoretical writings drawn from throughout the history of political thought and practical examples discussed primarily in contemporary political science scholarship. The major theme of the course is that music is a tool that, like any other tool, can be used for good or bad. In Part I, we examine some of the theoretical concerns relating to music that have occupied political thinkers since the time of Plato. The first section of this unit considers the power of music over individual beliefs and behaviors; the second section builds on the first by studying the power of music over communities. In Part II, the course turns to concrete, historical examples of the uses of music to gain a better understanding of the role of music in political life. In the first section of this unit, we will see how countries like Nazi Germany, Afghanistan, North Korea, and the U.S. have used music as a form of political control. The final section of the course examines the use of music as a form of political resistance.

Though no knowledge of music theory is expected for this class (nor will this course deal heavily with the technical aspects of music), an appreciation for music is a prerequisite since we will be listening to a fair amount of music from a variety of genres and time periods. Students should also be prepared to subject their own musical preferences to examination.

Course Delivery Mode

This class is designated as an “**In-Person**” course. Attendance on campus is required.

Objectives

- 1) Become familiar with major questions, themes, and approaches in the study of the politics of music.
- 2) Learn to read and interpret political theory texts and scholarship on politics and music.
- 3) Improve ability to construct persuasive arguments, both verbal and written.

- 4) Practice a more contemplative and self-aware form of citizenship, and consider its effects on political life and personal fulfillment.

Classroom Expectations

To be successful in this course (i.e., to meet the course objectives and to receive a passing grade), you should:

- 1. Regularly attend class.**

Regular attendance is vital for success in this course. Therefore, attendance will be taken promptly at the start of every class meeting. Arriving late, leaving early, or repeatedly leaving and re-entering the room is disruptive both to me and your peers; if you cannot regularly be present for the duration of the class, then you should reconsider your enrollment. Please note that if you are being too disruptive, you may be asked to leave.

- 2. Actively and respectfully participate in class discussions.**

This class aims to bring to life the art of Socratic conversation. Though I may stop at points to clarify some fundamental concepts with the help of a few PowerPoint slides, a video clip, etc., the vast majority of our class time will be spent working through the material *together*. You should therefore endeavor to contribute regularly to class discussions, whether by offering thoughtful reflections on the assigned readings, pointing us to relevant passages, or asking questions. For a Socratic discussion to work, everyone must be present—not just physically, but psychologically. You cannot be present if you are checking email, texting, watching ESPN, etc. Accordingly, **electronic devices are strongly discouraged. If you choose to use an electronic device, be prepared for me to call on you.**

Please note that I expect you to treat your peers and me with respect. We may disagree, but we will do so cordially. That means being an attentive listener, raising your hand and waiting to be called on, and critiquing the argument rather than the person who made it.

- 3. Complete all assigned readings prior to the start of class.**

For this class to be successful, it is essential for everyone to show up having carefully read the assigned material. Throughout each session, I will ask questions to help you all uncover the meaning of the text for yourselves. This questioning can take many forms. I may ask you to turn to a specific passage, read it aloud, and then explain what you think the author means. I may ask a more open-ended question (e.g., “What does the author say about x?”) and expect you to provide the textual evidence. I may break you up into small groups to discuss whether or not the argument is persuasive. As should be evident from these examples, if no one has done the readings, or only a few students have done the readings, then the class will not go very far. Such is the nature of Socratic inquiry: it depends heavily on student engagement. The purpose of this is to help you become a better reader and thinker. You and your classmates will get out of the class what you put in. Aim to be a good classroom citizen.

- 4. Practice “close” reading.**

Some of the readings in this course are drawn from the political theory canon. As you will discover, political theory readings tend to be dense, requiring focused attention. There are no “abstracts” at the top, nor is it possible to skim these readings and retain much

understanding. Rather, the readings are often similar to what you would expect from a philosophy course: a series of arguments you must closely follow. This means you should set aside ample time *before* class to read the material listed on the syllabus for that day, as you will likely find that you need to *re-read* parts of the text. You should also be an active reader. As you read, write a few words summarizing each paragraph in the margins, underline/highlight any phrases or passages that stand out to you, look up the definitions of unfamiliar words, write down any questions or reactions you have in response to the arguments the author is making, etc.

5. Practice “sympathetic” reading.

While “critical thinking” is valuable, before we can think “critically” we need to ensure that we have understood the text properly and given the arguments fair consideration. The practice of “sympathetic” reading, which entails approaching each text as though it were a friend, will therefore be encouraged throughout the term. Each class session, I will push you to think “sympathetically” about the text by taking on the voice of the author in defense of the arguments. This means at times I will appear to adopt some unsavory positions. If you are uncomfortable with teachers who play “devil’s advocate,” or don’t like it when teachers sometimes withhold their own opinions in an effort to get you to think for yourself, then you probably will not enjoy this class.

6. Be pro-active with your education.

With many students and limited class time, not every question will be satisfactorily addressed for every student. If you find yourself confused about anything, first try re-reading the syllabus or assigned reading. If you are still lost, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me during office hours or via email.

Required Texts

The following books are available for purchase at the FAU Bookstore. **I highly recommend that you purchase paper copies of these exact editions.** Throughout each class session, you will be asked to turn to specific pages in the book. If you do not have the same edition or cannot easily turn to a given page, you will be lost and unable to contribute as effectively. That said, the choice is yours. **If you choose to use an electronic device, be prepared for me to call on you.**

1. Mattern, Mark. *Acting in Concert: Music, Community, and Political Action*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998. ISBN: 9780813524849.
2. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques and Johann Gottfried Herder. *Two Essays on the Origin of Language*, trans. John H. Moran and Alexander Gode (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). ISBN: 9780226730127.
3. Street, John. *Music and Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012). ISBN: 9780745635446.

Course Requirements

Participation:	20%
Quizzes:	20%
Research Paper	45% (Proposal: 5%; Annotated Bibliography: 10%; Outline: 5%; Final Paper: 25%)
Research Presentation	15%

Participation (20%)

Your participation grade will be comprised of two, equally weighted components: attendance and participation in class discussions/activities.

- **Attendance**: Attendance will be taken promptly at the start of each class meeting. Everyone is permitted *one unexcused absence* and *two excused absences*. **Excused absences require make up work, which is due within a week of the absence.** For an absence to be excused, you must clear it with me in advance or, in cases of illness or emergency, as soon as possible. The following generally count as *unexcused* absences: slept through alarm; need to study/work; need to finish an assignment; leaving early/arriving back late from vacation; bad hangover.

If you think you will miss more than three classes due to University-approved activities, please see me at the start of the semester. Please note I will abide by *FAU's official attendance policy*: "Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence."

- **Participation**: Attendance makes up only half of your overall participation grade; the other half is based on your participation in class discussions/activities. This means **you cannot earn above a 50% for your participation grade if you never speak in class, even if you have perfect attendance.** Students who struggle with classroom participation should therefore schedule a meeting with me during the first week of class to discuss strategies for increasing classroom participation. It is also possible to *supplement* one's participation grade with office hour visits, emails demonstrating engagement with the material, Canvas discussion board posts, etc. If, on the other hand, you do not struggle with public speaking, note that speaking frequently does not guarantee you a good participation grade. **I value quality of contributions over quantity.** You must reference details from the readings and point the class to specific passages to earn a good participation grade.

Quizzes (20%)

A short quiz will be administered promptly at the beginning of each class. These quizzes will test how closely you read the text(s) assigned for that day. Please note: **if you do not do the reading, you will not pass the quiz.** As you will discover, the quizzes will ask about details not found on Sparknotes, Wikipedia, etc. It is therefore essential to do the readings in full. During the quiz, you may use notes you have handwritten on a separate sheet of paper or in a notebook created for this class. To ensure your grade is not adversely affected by a particularly difficult quiz, **I will drop your lowest three quiz scores.** There are **no make-up quizzes.** If you walk into class after the quiz has already been collected, you will not be able to take it.

Research Paper (45%)

Your major assignment for the course is an 8-10 page (double-spaced) research paper examining the relationship between politics and a specific musical artist/group/album/song/event/genre/etc. of your choice. Early in the semester, you will submit a 1-2 page research proposal in which you will explain your research question and provide a list of 10-20 scholarly books/articles related to your topic. After receiving the professor's approval to go ahead with your research, you will read through these sources and submit an annotated bibliography of the 10 sources you find most helpful in providing a comprehensive answer to your research question. Next, you will develop an outline for the paper, which you will also submit for credit. Finally, you will write the full paper, which will be due by the end of the course's scheduled exam period. Further instructions will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class.

Research Presentation (15%)

During the final two weeks of class, students will present their research papers to the class in the form of a short PowerPoint presentation. Your presentation should include a sample of the music you are writing about (with lyrics, if applicable), a discussion of your major findings, and reflections on how your research contributes to broader conversations we've been having in the course all semester. Further instructions will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class.

Grading Policies

- *Quizzes:* There are no make up quizzes. If you miss a quiz for an unexcused absence, that quiz will count as one of your 3 dropped scores. If you miss a quiz for an excused absence, then the number of points for that quiz will be subtracted from the total number of quiz points when calculating your quiz grade. In other words, if you miss a quiz for an excused absence, then the quiz simply won't count for or against you.
- *Presentations:* Unless you receive an excused absence for one of the legitimate reasons listed in the "attendance" section above, you must give your presentation on the assigned day. If you miss class that day due to an unexcused absence, you will receive a 0 for the presentation.
- *Papers:* Papers are due to the relevant Canvas folder at the beginning of class on the date listed. Late papers will be penalized 5% if less than an hour late. Beyond an hour late (even by a single minute), papers will be penalized 10% per every 24-hour period late. This means that your paper will not be accepted for any credit if it is 10 or more days late. The best way to avoid a late penalty is to make sure to submit your work well ahead of the deadline. **Note that copy-editing and revision are integral parts of the writing process. Papers that show an unacceptably high level of error or carelessness (for instance, five or more errors in a paragraph) will be returned for you to proofread before resubmitting them. You will have five business days to edit the paper and to resubmit it with an automatic penalty of 10%. After five days, the grade on the paper will automatically drop to an F.**
- *Graded Work:* I will not discuss grades on any assignments for 24 hours after they have been returned. If, after 24 hours reflection, you do not understand why you received a particular grade, send me a written memo via email and I will respond as soon as possible.
- *Extra Credit:* There will be an extra credit question on every quiz, allowing you to accumulate extra credit points throughout the semester. In addition, you can receive a 1% bump to your final course grade (which can mean the difference between an "A" and an "A-") by scheduling an office hour visit to discuss the material with me. To receive the extra credit, you must: (1) prepare a few questions or passages from the readings you want to discuss and (2) complete the visit **by the end of the final exam period (by 3:45PM on Tues., May 2nd)**. You can only

receive the extra credit points once, though additional office hour visits can help to supplement your participation grade.

Grading Scale

A = 94-100	A- = 91-93.99	B+ = 87-90.99	B = 83-86.99
B- = 80-82.99	C+ = 77-79.99	C = 73-76.99	C- = 70-72.99
D+ = 67-69.99	D = 63-66.99	D- = 60-62.99	F = below 60

Please be aware that you can track grades for individual assignments on the Canvas 'gradebook' but do not rely on the Canvas reported grade. The percentages do not calculate correctly and many assignments cannot be inputted correctly into the interface. Throughout the semester, if you have any concerns you can ask me for an update on your grade.

Honor Code Violations

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg_4.001_5-26-10_FINAL.pdf.

Please note that I take plagiarism very seriously. If I catch you plagiarizing on an assignment, you will receive an automatic "F" in the course and will be reported to the university, which will likely result in a permanent honor violation notation on your transcript. So that we are all on the same page, here is the university's definition of plagiarism (found in the document linked above):

- 1. The presentation of words from any other source or another person as one's own without proper quotation and citation.*
- 2. Putting someone else's ideas or facts into your own words (paraphrasing) without proper citation.*
- 3. Turning in someone else's work as one's own, including the buying and selling of term papers or assignments." (FAU Code of Academic Integrity, 2.B)*

Disabilities

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/. If you require a special accommodation, please make an appointment at the beginning of the semester to discuss the accommodation with me.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAP) Center

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>.

Policy on the Recording of Lectures

Students enrolled in this course may record video or audio of class lectures for their own personal educational use. A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to student presentations (whether individually or as part of a group), class discussion (except when incidental to and incorporated within a class lecture), labs, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, and private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the lecturer, is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation or class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the University’s Student Code of Conduct and/or the Code of Academic Integrity.

It should also be noted that one of the objectives of this course is to facilitate critical thinking and debate around topics, theories, and concepts where disagreement is not only anticipated, but encouraged. The ability to think critically, express your ideas clearly, and respond to the professor and other students civilly are the keystones of the academic experience. In this course, the professor will provide instruction in an objective manner and will remain open to a wide variety of viewpoints, so long as those viewpoints are evidence-based and presented in a respectful way. During class, the professor may take positions and make statements for the sole purpose of accomplishing an academic objective or enhancing the learning environment. Additionally, the adoption of class materials for this course does not imply an endorsement of the full content of those materials or the positions of the authors of those materials. Often the professor will provide materials as a point of departure for critical thinking and debate. Students should keep in mind that the ideas presented or discussed during class may not necessarily reflect the professor’s personal beliefs or opinions on the subject matter.

Course Schedule

(CV) = reading on Canvas

PART I: MUSIC AND POLITICS IN THEORY

Section 1: Music as Civic Education

Date	Topic	Readings	Deadlines
10-Jan	Introduction		

12-Jan	Music and the Character of the Self/Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plato, <i>Republic</i>, excerpts (CV) 	
17-Jan	Is Rock Music Harmful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bloom, <i>The Closing of the American Mind</i>, p. 68-81 (CV) Robert Wright, “I’d Sell You Suicide’: Pop Music and Moral Panic in the Age of Marilyn Manson,” <i>Popular Music</i> 19.3 (2000), p. 365-85 (CV) 	
19-Jan	Is Hip-Hop Music Harmful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ogbar, “Slouching toward Bork: The Culture Wars and Self-Criticism in Hip-Hop Music,” <i>Journal of Black Studies</i> 30.2 (1999): 164-83 (CV) 	

Section 2: Music and Community-Building

Date	Topic	Readings	Deadlines
24-Jan	Music as Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rousseau, <i>Essay on the Origin of Languages</i>, ch. 1-5 	
26-Jan	Music as Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rousseau, <i>Essay on the Origin of Languages</i>, ch. 12-14, 16-19 	
31-Jan	Music in Cultural Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rousseau, <i>Essay on the Origin of Languages</i>, ch. 8-11, 15, 20 	
02-Feb	Music as a Universal Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nietzsche, <i>Birth of Tragedy</i>, “Attempt at Self-Criticism,” “Preface to Richard Wagner,” and sec. 1-10 (CV) 	Paper Proposal
07-Feb	Music as a Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mattern, <i>Acting in Concert</i>, pp. 1-36 	
09-Feb	Music as a Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mattern, <i>Acting in Concert</i>, pp. 119-146 	

PART II: MUSIC AND POLITICS IN PRACTICE

Section 1: Music and Political Control

Date	Topic	Readings	Deadlines
14-Feb	Music & Political Campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schoening and Kasper, <i>Don’t Stop Thinking About the Music: The Politics of Songs and Musicians in Presidential Campaigns</i>, p. 205-46 (CV) 	
16-Feb	Music as Propaganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keith Howard, “Dancing for the Eternal President” in <i>Music, Power, and Politics</i>, ed. Annie J. Randall, p. 113-132 (CV) 	

21-Feb	Music as a Weapon of Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garratt, <i>Music and Politics</i>, p. 42-48 (CV) • Cloonan and Johnson, “Killing Me Softly with His Song: An Initial Investigation into the Use of Popular Music as a Tool of Oppression,” <i>Popular Music</i> 21.1 (2002), p. 27-39 (CV) 	
23-Feb	Music as a Weapon of Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cusick, “‘You are in a place that is out of the world...’: Music in the Detention Camps of the ‘Global War on Terror,’” <i>Journal of the Society for American Music</i> 2.1 (2008), p. 1-26 (CV) 	
28-Feb	Music Censorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street, <i>Music and Politics</i>, p. 1-40 	
02-Mar	Music Censorship: Nazi Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ludwig, “Silenced Voices: Music in the Third Reich,” <i>Religion and the Arts</i> 4.1 (2000), p. 96-112 (CV) • Kater, “Forbidden Fruit? Jazz in the Third Reich,” <i>The American Historical Review</i> 94.1 (1989), p. 11-43 (CV) 	
07-Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>No Classes</i>	
09-Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>No Classes</i>	
14-Mar	Music Censorship: Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baily, “Music Censorship in Afghanistan Before and After the Taliban” in <i>Shoot the Singer!: Music Censorship Today</i>, p. 19-28 (CV) 	Annotated Bibliography
16-Mar	Music Censorship: Zimbabwe & Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyre, “Playing with Fire: Manipulation of Music and Musicians in Zimbabwe,” in <i>Shoot the Singer!: Music Censorship Today</i>, p. 94-105 (CV) • Watch in class <i>Fela Kuti: Music is the Weapon</i> 	
21-Mar	Music Censorship: USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scherzinger, “Double Voices of Musical Censorship after 9/11,” in <i>Music in the Post-9/11 World</i>, p. 91-122 (CV) 	

Section 2: Music and Political Resistance

Date	Topic	Readings	Deadlines
23-Mar	Music as Political Representation and Activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street, <i>Music and Politics</i>, pp. 41-61 	

28-Mar	Music as Political Representation and Activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street, <i>Music and Politics</i>, pp. 79-97 	
30-Mar	Contemporary Protest Music: Women's Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woldu, "Gender as Anomaly: Women in Rap," in <i>The Resisting Muse: Popular Music and Social Protest</i>, p. 89-104 (CV) • Royster, "Who's Your Daddy? Beyoncé, the Dixie Chicks, and the Art of Outlaw Protest," in <i>Popular Music and the Politics of Hope: Queer and Feminist Interventions</i>, ch. 3 (CV) 	Outline
04-Apr	Contemporary Protest Music: Punk & Indie Rock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrett, "DIY Democracy: The Direct Action Politics of U.S. Punk Collectives," <i>American Studies</i> 52.2 (2013), p. 23-42 (CV) • Atchison, "'Agony & Irony': Indie Culture's Sardonic Response to America's Post-9/11 Devolution," in <i>The Politics of Post-9/11 Music: Sound, Trauma, and the Music Industry in the Time of Terror</i>, p. 145-60 (CV) 	
06-Apr	Contemporary Protest Music: White Power Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love, "Mobilizing White Power: Music, Culture, and Politics," in <i>Trendy Fascism: White Power Music and the Future of Democracy</i>, p. 1-36 (CV) 	
11-Apr	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Presentations 	
13-Apr	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Presentations 	
18-Apr	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Presentations 	
20-Apr	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Presentations 	
02-May, 1:15 – 3:45PM	Concluding Remarks	Research Paper Due	Final Paper