

## **AUDI 1062**

### **Songs of Protest: Words & Music in the Struggle for Change**

**Instructor: Chuck Hatcher**

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**Office Hours:** None. Available through email

#### **Course Description**

This course will survey the development of the “protest song” from the early 20th century to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>. The course will take an interdisciplinary approach to explore the synergy of words and music into a powerful communication tool in the struggle for change. It is not a course in music history or composition. Students will examine examples of protest songs and consider the song’s socio/political impact, the life of its composer/performer, the ethical values expressed, and the song’s place in history. Songs from social struggles including civil rights, gender equality, the rise of labor unions in America, and anti-war protests will form the core of the course content. Although the course will focus on the protest song in America, it will also touch on its global role in other countries including Chile, Nigeria and Jamaica. The central question to be considered is “how have songs been used as a tool to effect social and political change and have they been effective”?

Course work includes weekly online instructor commentaries, reading from the text and occasional additional selections, listening assignments, participation in a discussion group, and writing projects that focus on analysis of songs and their role in social struggles in America and beyond.

This course satisfies the Global Citizenship requirements for the social systems and human behavior knowledge area, and written communication skills area.

#### **Pre/Co-Requisites**

None

#### **Text Book**

The text for the course is *33 Revolutions Per Minute: A History of Protest Songs, From Billie Holiday to Green Day*. Author: Dorian Lynskey. ISBN: 978-0-06-167015-2.

It is available online through Amazon (new and used) and through the University book service. Used copies may be available.

#### **Content**

Social Systems & Human Behavior:

It is a natural and fundamental part of human behavior to want to make life better for ourselves, for our children and for everyone with whom we share the planet. This desire often results a struggle between those who “have” and those who “have not”. Sometimes the struggle is for economic gain but more often it is for social equality, recognition of the inherent rights and value of every human being. In today’s technological environment, the push for change is unrelenting and as a citizen of the

world, each of us is a part of the ongoing global struggle to improve not just our lives but also the life of our planet. Music, specifically the protest song, combines the intellectual and the emotional into a powerful tool with which to advocate for the changes we believe will improve the world. As students develop an understanding of the role of song in social/political protest and the struggle for change, each student will share their personal philosophical and ethical beliefs relating to an individual's role in accepting or changing their world through multiple writing exercises. By considering the rights of others and the ideal of social justice, students will develop insight into people who may be different from themselves and yet the same as they seek their own place in a global society.

### **Skills**

Written Communication:

The course requires students to demonstrate proficiency with several styles of writing (from casual to formal), and integrates an iterative component. In-class discussions, and the resulting posts, will enable students to develop their ability to express ideas through writing. Weekly written assignments will be graded for form as well as content, and feedback will be provided. The final, multi-stage, paper will allow for feedback at the various stages, providing the student with the opportunity to refine their writing skills.

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

At the successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of a protest song and its use as a tool in social/political protest both inside and outside of the United States. (SSHB)
- 2) Listen to and evaluate a protest song for its message both intellectual and emotional. (SSHB)
- 3) Analyze a protest song from both a personal and an historical perspective and communicate the resulting ideas in written form. (WCOM)
- 4) Synthesize the readings, listening and discussion of the course material as a part of a personal worldview demonstrated through active written participation in class discussions. (WCOM)
- 5) Utilize both formal and informal writing skills to effectively communicate concepts and ideas as demonstrated through examples produced to complete course assignments. (WCOM)

*This class will at times deal with controversial issues and songs. Students should be able to tolerate innovation, viewpoints different from their own, as well as creative and cultural diversity in the arts.*

### **Course Requirements**

Regular Reading and Listening Assignments:

The reading in this course provides a foundation for lectures and activities. The required reading will provide the basis for discussions as well as writing assignments and it is essential to success in the course that all readings, viewing of videos and

careful listening to all selected songs be completed according to the schedule. Those who fail to do so will fail to accomplish the goals of this course.

### Weekly Writing Assignment (40%)

Each week, students will be presented with a topic, idea, or song for analysis and comment. Specific directions and due dates will be provided. Selected papers, with the author's permission, will be posted online so all students will be able to read and respond to the work. In this way, students will take an active role in providing new content and discussion topics throughout the session. A successful response paper will meet the guidelines for length, be concise and have a clear point of view.

### Participation: Discussions and Quizzes (20%)

The Discussion Board will provide the space in which students and instructor exchange ideas, reactions and actively engage in the life of the course. Participation is vital to successfully completing the course requirements as well as to simply enjoying the experience. Without participation, it is impossible to truly achieve the learning objectives.

Students are expected to post a direct response to two instructor posted discussion questions and to reply to a minimum of two posted responses from class members per week. Participation beyond this minimum is encouraged. Each comment should relate directly to the topic and further the discussion. "Liking" a previous comment is ok but it will not be considered meaningful.

There will be a short quiz on the reading for most weeks of the semester.

### Analysis Paper (40%)

Each student will be required to write a longer, more in depth paper. The paper will compare and contrast three of the songs from the Featured Song list. The songs will be selected by week 8. This paper will be between 5 and 7 pages in length. Details will be developed during the first part of the course.

The paper will be completed in stages and must meet the schedule for each phase. Outline due in Week 10. First Draft due in Week 12. Final Paper due in Week 15.

### Grading Criteria

The distribution of final grades is as follows:

A = 93+ A- = 90-92 B+ = 87-89 B = 83-86 B- = 80-82 C+ = 77-79 C = 73-76  
C- = 70-72 D+ = 67-69 D = 60-66 F = 59 or less

Late assignments will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor AND with a valid excuse. Scores for excused late assignments will be reduced by 25% for less than one week late and 50% for one week to two weeks late. Work later than two weeks will not be accepted.

## **General Grading Standards and Expectations**

(Specific grading criteria will be provided)

**A** The A paper demonstrates clear expression of ideas and concepts; logical development of the core idea; a well thought out structure and engages the reader with fluent and polished writing style.

**B** The B paper is well written, the ideas and concepts clearly expressed and free of errors but lacks the complexity and development of the core idea of the A paper. It is readable and holds the reader's attention.

**C** The C paper is a satisfactory performance, contains a central idea but does not fully develop that idea. There are few errors in sentence or paragraph structure but the reader must work to finish the paper and is unclear regarding some concepts.

**D** The D is an unsatisfactory performance, demonstrating multiple errors in sentence or paragraph structure and spelling and contains no clear core idea or development of an idea. It is difficult to read and understand.

**F** The F paper is an unacceptable performance and demonstrates the inability to communicate effectively in written English.

Discussion group participation will be judged based on effective engagement in the ongoing conversation. Are the comments germane to the discussion? Do they move the discussion forward? Are they clearly written and, as with the written work, do they serve to develop the ideas being considered?

## **University Policy Statements**

This course is governed by the University's policies, as published in the University catalog.

**Academic Honesty:** The University is committed to high standards of academic honesty. Students will be held responsible for violations of these standards. Please refer to the university catalog for a definition of academic dishonesty and potential associated disciplinary actions.

**Drops and Withdrawals:** Please be aware that the Drop/Add and Withdrawal dates are listed each semester on the University website, in the University catalog and in the Course Description book. If the course is dropped within the Drop/Add period, no notation of the course will appear on the student's transcript. Withdrawals take place after the published Drop date and a "W" in the course will appear on the student's transcript.

**Special Services:** If you have registered as a student with a documented disability and are entitled to classroom or testing accommodations, please inform the instructor at the

beginning of the course of the accommodations you will require in this course so that these can be provided.

**Disturbances:** Since every student is entitled to full participation in class without interruption, disruption of class by inconsiderate behavior is not acceptable. Students are expected to treat the instructor and fellow students with dignity and respect, especially in cases where diversity of opinions arise.

**Student Assignments Retained:** Some random student assignments or projects will be retained by the School of Communications for the purpose of academic assessment as it relates to student learning outcomes. In every such case, the student's name and all identifying information about the student will be removed from the assignment or project.

*This syllabus is a contract between professor and student, and shall be treated as such by both parties. If you show up for class session #2, it is understood that you (the student) agrees to the terms detailed in this document.*

## **Course Calendar**

This calendar outlines the general themes covered in the course each week. Because we will build upon the topics and themes explored in each section, the material and assignments will be posted to Blackboard on a weekly basis.

This calendar is tentative, but the instructor will make every effort to follow the plan as written. However, the instructor reserves the right to make changes in response to the life of the course. In the event that changes are necessary, students will be allowed adequate time to adjust.

### **Week 1: Introduction and Songs of Labor**

An introduction to the course.

Online Q&A on the syllabus.

Definition of the term "protest song" and an analysis methodology.

Reading: Chapter 5 from *Talkin' 'Bout a Revolution* by Dick Weissman.

pp 171 to pp 229 This chapter will be provided.

And text: 33 Revolutions Per Minute: Prologue

Listening examples. Introductory discussion. Personal bio.

### **Week 2: 1939-1964**

Chapter 1 - Billie Holiday, "Strange Fruit",

Chapter 2 - Woody Guthrie, "This Land is Your Land" and

Chapter 3 - Zilphia Horton, Frank Hamilton, Guy Carawan, and Pete Seeger, "We Shall Overcome".

Listening examples. Discussion question. Song Analysis Worksheet.

- Week 3: 1939-1964 continued**  
 Chapter 4 - Bob Dylan, "Masters of War"  
 Chapter 5 - Nina Simone, "Mississippi Goddam"  
 Chapter 6 - Country Joe and the Fish, "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag"  
 Listening examples. Discussion question. Song Analysis Worksheet.
- Week 4 1965-1973 Part II**  
 Chapter 7 - James Brown – "Say It Loud – I'm Black and I'm Proud"  
 Chapter 8 - Plastic Ono Band – "Give Peace a Chance"  
 Listening examples. Discussion question. Analysis & Writing assignment.
- Week 5: 1965-1973 continued**  
 Chapter 9 - Edwin Starr, "War"  
 Chapter 10 - Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, "Ohio"  
 Listening examples. Discussion question. Analysis & Writing assignment.
- Week 6: 1965-1973 continued**  
 Chapter 11 - Gil Scott-Heron, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised"  
 Chapter 12 – Stevie Wonder, "Living for the City"  
 Listening examples. Discussion question. Analysis & Writing assignment.
- Week 7: 1973 – 1977 Part III**  
 Chapter 13 – Victor Jara, "Manifesto"  
 Chapter 14 – Fela Kuti and Afrika 70, "Zombie"  
 Listening examples. Discussion question. Analysis & Writing assignment.
- Week 8 1973 – 1977 continued**  
 Chapter 15 – Max Romeo and the Upsetters, "War Ina Babylon"  
**1977 – 1987 Part IV**  
 Chapter 16 – The Clash - "White Riot"  
 Listening examples. Discussion question. Analysis & Writing assignment.  
**Paper: Songs for Final Paper Chosen**
- Week 9 1977 – 1987 continued**  
 Chapter 17 – Carl Bean - "I Was Born This Way"  
 Chapter 18 - Linton Kwesi, "Sonny's Lettah (Anti-Sus Poem)"  
 Listening examples. Discussion question. Analysis & Presentation.
- Week 10 1977-1987 continued**  
 Chapter 19 - The Dead Kennedy's, "Holiday in Cambodia"  
 Chapter 20 - Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five feat, Melle Mel and Duke Bootee, "The Message"  
 Listening examples. Discussion question. Analysis & **Paper: Outline Due.**

**Week 11 1977-1987 continued**

Chapter 21 – Crass, “How Does It Feel?”  
Chapter 22 – Frankie Goes to Hollywood, “Two Tribes”  
Listening examples. Discussion question. Writing assignment.

**Week 12 1977-1987 continued**

Chapter 23 – U2, “Pride (In The Name of Love)”  
Chapter 24 – The Special AKA, “Nelson Mandela”  
Listening examples. Discussion question. **Paper: Draft Due**

**Week 13 1977-1987 Part IV concluded**

Chapter 25 – Billy Bragg, “Between the Wars”  
Chapter 26 – R.E.M., “Exhuming McCarthy”  
Listening examples. Discussion question. Lyric writing exercise.

**Week 14 1989–2008 Part V**

Chapter 27 – Public Enemy, “Fight the Power”  
Chapter 31 – Rage Against the Machine, “Sleep Now in Fire”  
Listening examples. Discussion question. Writing assignment.  
Paper: draft in process

**Week 15 1989–2008 Part V concluded**

Chapter 32 – Steve Earle, “John Walker’s Blues”  
Chapter 33 – Green Day, “American Idiot”  
Listening examples. Discussion question  
Writing assignment: Work on final paper

**Week 16 Conclusion**

Epilogue  
Discussion question.  
**Final Paper Due.**