

*Philosophy of Music Education*  
*M4811a*

Fall 2023

Delivery format: **Face to Face**

**Thanksgiving Holiday Monday October 9**  
**Reading Week October 30 – November 5**

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This is a continuation of a former (M1800) Introduction to Music Education class. As such there is a continued emphasis on critical examination of music education philosophy and practice but also on political and other factors affecting music in schools. An attempt is made to put music education philosophy and practice into larger educational, social, cultural, and political contexts. The aim is to develop and express your own ideas and personal philosophy of music teaching so that you can better contribute to intellectual conversations about the nature, role, and value of music education in democratic society. Considerable emphasis is thus also placed on clarity of thought as expressed through both the spoken (class presentations and discussions) and written word (personal reflections).

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course you should be able to

- demonstrate knowledge of the music education philosophies of leading scholars in our field.
- explain some of the implications of those philosophies for music teaching and learning in schools and universities (e.g., how teachers might choose and use specific works and to what educational, political, or other ends).
- understand why and how those philosophies relate to social justice themes.
- provide and intellectually defend your own rationale for why music should be taught in schools.
- locate music education within wider social, educational, cultural, and political contexts and debates affecting school music (e.g., the national music education standards in the United States, globalization, educational policy as it affects music education, etc.).
- demonstrate informed awareness of many of the political and other problems facing the profession while also proposing potential strategies for addressing them through your teaching and active participation in the profession.
- apply philosophy to professional practice by questioning and critiquing underlying assumptions of traditional music methodologies, pedagogies, and philosophies and by demonstrating basic knowledge and skills of argument analysis.

- demonstrate an ability to teach effectively by presenting and explaining issues and ideas to the class in an engaging manner while using appropriate illustrative materials (e.g., internet resources, videos, short handouts, diagrams, music recordings, etc.).
- participate intelligently in class discussions about the nature, purposes, and value of education in general and music education in contemporary society.
- relate music education to other subject areas in the schools in terms of any common problems, purposes or potential conflicts (e.g., science vs. art and music?).

### Evaluation:

Philosophy is about ideas, values, and the pursuit of truth, all of which are complicated and can be personally and collectively challenging because involving the questioning of assumptions, orthodoxies, traditions, biases, and more generally what we think. Although sometimes regarded as an exercise in negativity, because often critical, the Deweyan philosophy that undergirds this course is instead concerned with critiquing taken for granted ideas, habits of thought, methodologies, and traditions etc. that may have long hindered progress toward a more equitable and just society. Music and music education have throughout much of human history certainly contributed to the betterment of our societies, but it would be naïve to think that has always been the case, or that music and education are founded on objective truths and therefore necessarily socially abstract and culturally or politically neutral. In music education we accordingly owe it to ourselves and our students to engage in scrutiny, dialogue, and debate about the music and music education practices in our lives and in society so more aware of its power in shaping—while also being shaped by—society. Hence the purpose(s) of this course, which are to encourage you to intellectually grapple with many of the problems and complexities of music and music education by reading and sharing sometimes difficult literature while engaging in the dialogue, discussion, and debate that are necessary for understanding our profession. You will accordingly be evaluated based on the following criteria related to the above stated purpose(s) of this course.

You are expected to demonstrate reliable and timely attendance in class, complete the required weekly readings [see Class Schedule of Topics] presented in the attached schedule of classes and topics/readings, and contribute to informed class discussion and participation by:

- 1) Demonstrating knowledge of their contents through class **attendance, participation and general class discussion** (20%)
- 2) By **seeking out related information or examples of similar issues, ideas, or problems from on-line or other reliable sources** that can enrich our discussions by sometimes teaching us all something that we did not previously know or realize. How many of you, for example, already knew that some German musicians and music educators during the Nazi regime leading up to and throughout World War Two were happy to do Hitler's bidding in using music and music education as Nazi propaganda? Hitler was by no means unique in employing music to influence children and adults. The course textbook contains many examples of the power of music to persuade or otherwise influence. Some of those examples are wonderful and inspiring, others might be potentially dangerous, even toxic. The challenge for all of us—and including our students—is to be more attentive to the music we perform and listen to so more aware of the social meanings

embedded in, or attached to, the lyrics and/or the music's structural properties, some of which might be constantly shifting as individuals co-opt or possibly misappropriate the music in question for their own ends. As you will learn more about in the course textbook, politicians or all stripes are notorious for using music in ways that its composers might not have approved. On a more inspiring note, how many of you have heard about the Estonian Singing Revolution of 1989-1990 that helped that country achieve its independence from the Soviet Union? You can easily google it.

The idea is that each week you bring to class something that **you** have found in the course textbook or reliable on-line or other sources that is relevant to those readings and prior discussions and that can help enlarge our understanding of the profession and its problems. If you have difficulty finding something, you could explore optional readings provided on the course schedule of classes and readings for ideas and/or examples of events that help illustrate issues addressed in the class. Many of those optional readings are quite brief and easy to read. Perusal of some of our professional journals, such as the *Canadian Music Educator*, the *Music Educator*, the *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, and the Mayday Group *ACT* journal (for Action, Criticism and Theory in Music Education) can also introduce you to interesting ideas and issues about which you might not have been cognizant before but that can be included in school music curricula.

There are probably countless similar examples to be found that can be revelatory in helping us understand our profession, its subject matter, and our own moral and ethical responsibilities as teachers. I am depending on you all to help shape this course by contributing your own ideas inspired by the various course and other readings to class discussion.

(10%)

- 3) Each of you will over the course of the class be **assigned 4-5 shared presentations** with other classmates from the required readings in the class schedule that are to be briefly summarized using short power points (with a maximum of 8-10 bullet points) and audio-visual technologies to help bring the ideas to life for the class, and possibly provoke questions or concerns that might be worth exploring. The dates for these **audio-visual presentations** will all be listed in the Class Schedule of Topics [this Schedule of Topics will be available to you before our first class].

(30%)

- 4) **Short reflections (for a total of 4, with one reflection per month):** These are related to the above explanation of the nature of the course as revelatory—that is, attempting to open your eyes and ears to go beyond performance alone to locate music and music education within the wider world of politics and our own places within it, how music education is very much connected to politics because public schools serve the state, just as private ones are more likely to serve the wealthy or private interests (e.g., various churches). The reflections **are only 3 pages in length** (use font Times New Roman 12) and double spaced (but without additional spaces between paragraphs). The reflections should be responses to what you read, see, or hear in classes but also about how they relate to your own pre-existing beliefs about music education and its many role(s) and challenges in western schools. Reflections, however, are not simply opportunities to

uncritically champion what you think you know or to vent about things you don't like. They are about making explicit and critically examining your own ideas and beliefs, that is, examining the grounds for your own ideas and beliefs, why you think as you do, why you think something is or isn't true, how, where, when, and from whom you acquired your own beliefs and ideas, and about how you make your own judgments about ideas presented to you by your parents, peers, teachers, media etc. In short, reflections should demonstrate awareness of the people, institutions and events that shaped your personal understandings of music teaching and learning, including personal foibles and impediments to that understanding, but also those that have inspired you to learn and grown as students and citizens. When referring to ideas or 'facts' please be sure to include sources in APA style so I can see where you got the ideas. Usually, in APA, you would simply add the page reference at the end of a sentence, or immediately after a quotation, the author's last name, date of publication, and page number (e.g., Smith, 2019, p. 4). (40%)

Required Textbook:

Woodford, P. (2019). *Music education in an age of virtuality and post-truth*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. This book is available in digital format through the Music Library.

There are no other required textbooks, but you will find many excellent sources for ideas below and in the *Oxford handbook of music education* (2012), *The Oxford handbook of social justice in music education* (2015), and the *Oxford handbook of philosophy of music education* (2012). These books are available in the reference section of the Music Library, most are available digitally. Many additional sources are of course provided on our class schedule of topics that has been provided to you.

Additional information about the course textbook and other materials is provided on the schedule of class topics and materials which will be sent to you a few days before classes begin via Owl.

## University Policy Statements

i) **Course Prerequisites: Philosophy of Music Education 4811a.** Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

ii) **Grading scale:** A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

iii) **Academic Consideration for Student Absence & Missing Work ( $\geq 10\%$ ):** Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. Academic Consideration provides students with consistent, fair, and pedagogically appropriate consideration, without compromising the academic integrity of the course or program, when they have been unable to complete some component of a course due to short-term extenuating circumstances. Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions (physical or mental) that may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities are directed to seek Academic Accommodation through Accessible Education ([Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)).

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the end of the period of absence covered, to the Academic Counselling unit or Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210), of the student's Home Faculty together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the academic consideration being requested. Students are directed to read the Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness at the following website for further details regarding various requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf)

Whenever possible, students who require academic consideration should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

iv) **Academic Consideration for Missing Work ( $< 10\%$ ):** In cases where students miss work that is worth less than 10% of the total course grade due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, and if documentation is voluntarily submitted to the Associate Dean's office and the Associate Dean grants an accommodation, then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(zes) will be discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the Associate Dean's office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

v) **Academic Offences:** Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

vi) **Mental Health & Wellness:** Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in Thames Hall room 2170. **Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in Thames Hall 2170 or to click on the big green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.**

vii) **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students work with Accessible Education which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf)

viii) **Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays (other than statutory holidays), and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. The Diversity Calendar from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion provides information on multifaith, multicultural and diversity related holidays and observances and links to resources for more information.

<https://www.edi.uwo.ca/resources/2816-2023-Diversity-Calendar-PDF.pdf>