

Special Topics: Music and Disability Studies - MUSIC 9586
Winter 2024
Don Wright Faculty of Music
Course Syllabus

Instructor: adam patrick bell
Email: adam.bell@uwo.ca
Office Hours: by appointment
Class Times: Information available on OWL
Class Location: Information available on OWL

Course Description

In this course we will examine the complex construct of disability as both an identity and experience in the context of music. Engaging with readings and other resources such as videos and podcasts that draw on key concepts and ideas from the interdisciplinary field of disability studies, we will survey and discuss how disability is framed and experienced in diverse music contexts, both past and present. Furthermore, this course will provide opportunities to examine how disability intersects with other marginalized lived experiences (e.g., race, gender, sexuality), and both the promise and problems that music poses for inclusion.

Modeled on the concept of a “continuing conference,” this course will seek to make connections between topics discussed from week to week. Given that “music and disability studies” is intentionally broad in scope, students are encouraged to “roam” and engage with topics related to disability and music that are of particular interest to them. Therefore, this course will provide opportunities for students to engage in inquiries focusing on topics of their choice under the vast umbrella of music and disability studies. Students will be expected to present on their chosen topics and facilitate discussions. In addition, this course will include guest speakers who will present on specialized topics related to the course.

Course Materials

Required readings will be provided on OWL

Course Learning Outcomes

During this course, students will:

- examine, evaluate, and discuss relevant literature and other media related to music and disability studies
- discuss their understandings of theory related to music and disability studies
- conduct a literature review on a topic of interest related to music and disability studies
- present on a topic of interest related to music and disability studies
- integrate accessibility considerations into all assignments

Course Timeline and Format

Attendance and participation in class are expected and vital to the academic success of all learners. Given the seminar (low numbers) nature of this class, absences create significant disruption to the class structure. Please plan ahead so that absences are avoided.

Please note that the sequence of topics may need to be adjusted to accommodate guest speakers.

Week 1 (January 10) – Accessibility; Introduction to disability studies
Week 2 (January 17) – Key concepts in disability studies; doing research; bibliographies
Week 3 (January 24) – Introduction to music and disability studies; Assignment 1
Week 4 (January 31) – Bodyminds and music; Assignment 2
Week 5 (February 7) – Feminism and intersectionality; Assignment 2
Week 6 (February 14) – To be determined*
Week 7 (February 21) – Reading Week
Week 8 (February 28) – To be determined*
Week 9 (March 6) – Presentations (Assignment 3)
Week 10 (March 13) – Presentations (Assignment 3)
Week 11 (March 20) – Presentations (Assignment 3)
Week 12 (March 27) – From rights to justice; Assignment 4
Week 13 (April 3) – Disability futurities; Assignment 4

*The weeks marked as “to be determined” are planned to be flexible to accommodate for (a) guest speakers, and (b) focusing on topics as determined by the class

Weekly readings will be assigned and made available on OWL. Students can expect 3-4 readings (articles or books chapters) per week. Reading times vary between individuals, but based on previous experiences, students report taking anywhere between 20-60 minutes to read one article or chapter. Therefore, students should plan to dedicate 1-4 hours per week of reading time to this course based on their own respective reading paces. The instructor will aim to ensure the readings are compatible with screen readers.

Methods of Evaluation

There will be four assessed elements of the course:

Assignment	Detail	Weighting	Due date
Assignment 1	Presentation Pitch	10%	Week 3
Assignment 2	Discussion Facilitation	20%	Weeks 4&5
Assignment 3	Presentation (Literature Review)	50%	Weeks 9-11
Assignment 4	Podcast/Media Review	20%	Weeks 12&13

In keeping with the spirit of a “continuing conference,” all assignments will be presented in class to promote peer-led learning, peer discussions, and peer reviews. Students are welcome to use a modality of their choosing to “present” their assignments. For

example, a presentation could be oral, but it could also be a video, a text-based script, or another medium. *How* assignments are assessed (e.g., criteria of assessment, weighting of criteria, method of assessment) will be discussed and decided upon as a class.

Please note that all assignments are accompanied by approximate durations in minutes—these time estimates are intended to be guidelines for presenters to prepare accordingly, not hard rules. We will take the time needed to adequately discuss each topic within the time constraints of the allotted class schedule.

Assignment 1 – Presentation Pitch (approximately 10 minutes) – 10%

The presentation pitch is intended to be a relatively informal presentation of approximately 5 minutes, followed by an instructor-facilitated discussion of approximately 5 minutes. It is an opportunity for students to share their ideas on potential topics for Assignment 3 (presentation). Students are required to have identified at least 1 related reading/media source to their topic(s) of interest and share the main point(s) of the source(s). In addition, students should discuss (1) what or who is the focus of their proposed presentation, (2) why this topic is of interest to them, (3) how they anticipate preparing the presentation going forward. Following the presentation, we will have an open discussion in class about the topic, which can include asking questions and offering suggestions.

Assignment 2 – Discussion Facilitation (approximately 15 minutes) – 20%

Building on Assignment 1, students are tasked with leading a discussion on a topic of their choice. To help generate discussion, the student leading the discussion is required to provide (1) a 5-minute introduction to and overview of the topic based on 3-5 readings, and (2) questions to generate a 10-minute discussion. Based on previous experiences with this exercise, 3-5 question prompts should be prepared in advance to generate discussion. The student leading the discussion is also required to facilitate the discussion, which entails inviting classmates to share their perspectives on the topic(s).

Assignment 3 – Presentation (approximately 20 minutes) – 50%

Assignments 1 and 2 lead toward Assignment 3, building a foundation for it. Students are required to give a 15-minute presentation followed by a 5-minute discussion on their chosen topic. The presentations should serve as evidence that students have engaged with 12 or more sources related to their chosen topics. Students are required to submit an annotated bibliography prior to their presentation.

Assignment 4 – Podcast/Media Review (approximately 15 minutes) – 20%

Using a similar format outlined in Assignment 2, students are again tasked with leading a discussion on a topic/person of their choice, however, the focus of Assignment 4 is on non-academic sources, such as podcasts and/or other media produced by disabled persons. One example is Alice Wong's podcast, Disability Visibility: <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/podcast-2/>

Specifically, students are asked to consider how the podcast episode they chose to engage with informs their thinking about music and disability. In addition, students are asked to use the podcast episode as a starting point to lead to other related sources on

the topic/person.

Enrollment Restrictions

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in music education.

Statement on Academic Offences

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:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Instructor Statement on Accessibility

The following statements related to accessibility (“Statement on Health and Wellness,” “Statement on Accommodation for Medical Accommodation,” and “Accessible Education Western”) are required components of a syllabus as determined by the Senate and SGPS. These policies may not adequately address a learner’s accessibility needs. In an attempt to address our collective access needs as a class community, we will discuss and navigate accessibility continually through regular check-ins. All members of the class are encouraged to dialogue with the instructor about their individual access needs if they do not feel comfortable doing so amongst the class. Because access is relational and access needs can conflict, there can be no guarantees that all access needs will be met; however, as a class, we will strive to make our learning environment as accessible as possible to everyone involved, inclusive of students, the instructor, and guests.

Statement on Health and Wellness

Students who are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support for a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Statement on Accommodation for Medical Accommodation

The Graduate Program in Music recognizes that a student’s ability to fulfill academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by illness or injury. To ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student’s course grade shall be granted only in cases where there is documentation indicating that the student could not reasonably be expected to meet the academic responsibilities. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the office of the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), not to the course instructor. Students with special learning needs or other circumstances are asked to inform the instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be considered.

Accessible Education Western

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services

devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca or call 519-661-3568