EXPRESSIVE CULTURE: SOUNDS
Beyond the Protest Song: Resistance through Musical Experimentation
College Core Curriculum: CORE-UA 730-010
Fall 2017

COURSE

Instructor: Alice Teyssier
Instructor Email: teyssier@nyu.edu
Office: Waverly Building, room 268
Office Hours: Monday 12:30PM-1:30PM or by appointment
Lecture Times: M/W 11:00am-12:30pm
Lecture Location: Silver 320

RECITATION INSTRUCTORS

Alexandra McIe
alm735@nyu.edu
CORE-UA 730-011: Th 9:30-10:45, SILV 318
CORE-UA 730-012: Th 11:00-12:15, SILV 318

Charlie Kozey
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CORE-UA 730-013: Fr 9:30-10:45, SILV 320
CORE-UA 730-014: Fr 12:30-1:45, SILV 318

The recitation instructors for this course are brilliant graduate students who will soon be professors themselves. The recitation sections they lead are a central part of this course, and their evaluations of your written work and classroom participation will constitute the bulk of your grade. More importantly, they are on hand to answer your questions, help you learn how to become better writers and thinkers, and to make sure that your experience this semester is rich and positive. I trust that you will work closely with them, learn from them, and treat them with respect.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and cannot remain silent.”
—Victor Hugo

Moments of social and political progress throughout history have been linked with musical and artistic sites of resistance. In this course, we study musical and poetic techniques used by artists who fearlessly combat oppressive regimes through their creative contributions. Music, through its distinctly abstract language, has the ability to transform how we see, hear or read – truly perceive – the world; through experiencing new perceptions, we are confronted by a need for new perspectives. We will focus on how different approaches and methodologies of experimentation and subversiveness allow something new to emerge in the social, artistic and political discourse. We will reflect on our engagement in the world through listening, analysis, and a group-elaborated final performance project, while learning ways of discussing experimentation and socio-political resistance through new sensory forms.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is no textbook required for this course. I will provide reading materials and listening samples on the course Classes page, under the “Resources” tab. An ongoing document will be available for compiling additional resources, welcoming every participant in the course to contribute their ideas and impact class discussions. Readings and listening for each week should be completed before Monday’s lecture.
ASSIGNMENTS

You will be expected to complete several different kinds of assignments over the course of the semester:

a) **Playlist**: Elaborate a ~60-min playlist, and write one page of "liner notes" considering the way in which this collection is coherent and makes a political statement. Several playlists will be selected by the recitation instructors to be presented and discussed in lecture.

b) **Concert Report**: Attend an event proposed or approved by the instructor; this can be a concert, political rally, march, or artistic community event. Compose a short (2-4 page) paper describing the soundworld, its function, in what ways it impacted your experience of the event, and how your perception of it may have resembled or differed from its intention. [A calendar of events and concerts will be made available on the Classes site.]

c) **Group-elaborated projects and performances**: Over the last few weeks of the semester, recitation sections will break into groups of 4 or 5; in groups, you will conceive of, compose, rehearse and perform a 5-minute work. These works will be presented in lecture on the final week of class. Each student will be responsible for a short (2-4 page) paper detailing the dynamics of the community, your individual role, the experimental nature of the work and the political resistance potentially implicit in the sounds.

d) **Term Paper**: You will establish a topic to propose to your recitation leader by November 10. This can be an artist, a work, an approach, a movement or a historical period that you will analyze through the sound and affect vocabularies studied in class. An abstract and list of readings/listening you plan to use will be due by November 21 (before Thanksgiving break). You will then have until the end of the semester to complete your 5-7 page term paper (due on or before December 20).

Your papers will be graded for clarity of thesis, mastery of course terms and the quality and complexity of your thoughts. Do not hesitate to check in with me or with your recitation instructor for feedback, help and questions about your paper at any time; we will be happy to assist you.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Attendance to all lectures and sections is mandatory, and due dates for your assignments are not flexible. You should not expect an extension for a paper or a make-up presentation unless you provide us with a written, detailed request, subject to the professor's approval, in advance of the due date with a valid reason. Similarly, an absence will bring down your attendance score unless you provide appropriate reasons for your inability to attend (i.e. a note from your doctor). Computer meltdowns are not an appropriate excuse. Backing up your computer in hard drives, or archiving papers in your e-mail or cloud, is an indispensable step for anyone whose work depends on a computer.

Participation in lectures and sections is not only part of your grade, but it also allows you to contribute to the development of the class. If something interests you and you contribute, chances are you will have better explored, and perhaps even guided, the design and development of the class. This class will largely be what you make of it.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

| Short Papers and Section Assignments | 30% |
| Final Performance                   | 25% |
| Attendance and Participation        | 20% |
| Term Paper                         | 25% |
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Learning to engage with the work of other people by appropriately crediting their ideas as they impact your own is central to intellectual and academic life. This means that you should reference them in the body of the text and include proper citations and bibliographical references. Any case of academic dishonesty will be reported immediately and may result in disciplinary action or even expulsion.

GUEST LECTURES

We will have the great honor of visits from several active thinker-musicians. The eminent composer and activist playwright Rick Burkhardt will discuss his work and present on topics of political activism from the artist's perspective, and composer/sound artist Bradley Scott Rosen will introduce us to the ethical and political potential of “geomusics.”

ETIQUETTE

I expect my classroom to be the site of vibrant and respectful discourse. Carrying on conversations during lectures and recitation sections is distracting, so please refrain from talking when lectures and sections are in progress (this also holds for when video and audio examples are being played). The issues being discussed are complex and require concentration to engage with them. Your individual behavior goes a long way in setting a positive tone for the class. Your questions, comments and insights are more than welcome during lectures; just raise your hand and make your comments available to the entire class. In recitation sections, of course, all are expected to contribute regularly to discussions. Please do not use your computer or telephone during lectures or sections, not even discretely. Furthermore, please turn your cellphones off so that they don't interrupt the lectures and discussions.

DISCLAIMER ON THE SYLLABUS

This syllabus is a working document. As the semester progresses, we will make changes to reflect the needs of the group, your input, holidays and the schedules of guest lecturers. Updates to the syllabus will be posted on the NYU Classes site and announced in class.
WEEK 1 | Introduction
9.6 What is Resistance? What is Experimentation?


WEEK 2 | If one is forever cautious, can one remain a human being?
9.11 Reproducing Normal: Western Music Conceits
9.13 W.A. Mozart and Taylor Swift

Listening: Mozart, Clarinet Concerto K 622; Beethoven, Ninth Symphony, op. 125; Taylor Swift, various

WEEK 3 | No other red is as red
9.18 Music: Weaponizing Text
9.20 GUEST LECTURE: Lewis Nielson

Readings: Robert Fink, “Minimalism and the Phenomenology of Consumer Desire”; Rick Burkhardt: “Possible Futures of Text Setting”; Lewis Nielson, “Manifesto”
Listening: Luigi Nono, Intolleranza; Lewis Nielson, Iskra; HP TouchSmart PC Commercial/Vivaldi Summer; DirecTV Commercial/Mozart Lacrimosa

WEEK 4 | All you need is… love?
9.25 Happenings and the Counterculture Movement of the 60s
9.27 Yoko Ono: Game Changer

Readings: Hendricks, Fluxus Codex; Interview with Jennifer Walshe on “THIS IS WHY PEOPLE O.D. ON PILLS/AND JUMP FROM THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE”;
Listening: John Cage, Dick Higgins, Allison Knowles, Nam June Paik, Yoko Ono, LaMonte Young

WEEK 5 | The medium is the message
10.2 Found Object Sound
10.4 *TA’s choice*

Listening: Tom Zé and Tropicalia; Einstürzende Neubauten; The Birthday Party; Harry Partch; Karlhainz Stockhausen; Matthew Herbert “Plat Du Jour”
WEEK 6 | Signifying monkey
10.9 Hip Hop’s contribution to the black narrative discourse
10.11 Rudy Ray Moore, 2 Live Crew and Grand Master Flash

Listening: Rudy Ray Moore, “Signifying Monkey”; 2 Live Crew (lawsuit); Grand Master Flash, “The Message”

WEEK 7 | Can I scream?
10.16 *TA’s choice*
10.18 The Scream: from cante jondo to hardcore to the avant-garde

Readings: Janoc, The Primal Scream
Listening: Rolf Riehm, Pasolini in Ostia; Bad Brains; Refused; Nono, Djamila Boupacha; Yoko Ono/Plastic Ono Band; Meredith Monk; Bonnie Lander; Berg, Lulu

WEEK 8 | Every page should explode
10.23 Dada and Anti-Art
10.25 GUEST LECTURE: Rick Burkhardt

Listening: Maurizio Kagel; Kurt Schwitters; Éric Satie; Mayor Taco Ghost, Mocrep

WEEK 9 | Daydreaming subverts the world
10.30 Détournement and the Situationist International
11.1 Reimaginations with Tyshawn Sorey

Readings: McKenzie Wark, “The Torrent of History,” in The Beach Beneath the Street
Listening: Tyshawn Sorey “Perle Noire”; Nono, “La Fabbricca Illuminata”; Lachenmann “Tanzsuite mit Deutschlandlied”

WEEK 10 | Sound happens inside and out
11.6 Sound Art, Installation and Psychoacoustics
11.8 Maryanne Amacher and Alvin Lucier

Readings: R. Murray Shafer, The Tuning of the World; Matthew Herbert Manifesto
Listening: Maryanne Amacher, “Head Rhythm 1 and Plaything 2; Janet Cardiff’s psychogeographical audio walks;
WEEK 11 | The Gender of Now
11.13 Deep Listening
11.15 Pauline Oliveros

Listening: “A love song”;

WEEK 12 | Geomusics
11.20 GUEST LECTURE: Bradley Scott Rosen
11.22 Thanksgiving: No Class

Readings: McKenzie Wark, “New Babylon,” in The Beach Beneath the Street
Listening: TBD

WEEK 13 | Cyborg
11.27 Future Bodies, Future Spaces
11.29 Afropop: From Sun Ra to Janelle Monáe

Readings: Kodwo Eshun “Further Considerations on Afropop”; John Corbett, “Brothers from Another Planet”
Listening: Lee “Scratch” Perry, Sun Ra, George Clinton, Janelle Monáe, Yasiin Bey; Neil Harbisson,

WEEK 14 | Politics, Conceptualism, Resistance: What’s the Take-Away?
12.4 Gleaning the political in sound and music
12.6 Ongoing questions—what happens now?

Readings & listening: individual research for final paper

WEEK 15 | Your turn!
12.11 Final Performances, session 1
12.13 Final Performances, session 2