

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

**COURSE**

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Instructor: Alice Teyssier  
Instructor Email: teyssier.alice@gmail.com  
Office: Waverly Building, room TBD  
Office Hours: Monday 12:30pm-2:30pm and by appointment  
Lecture Times: M/W 11:00am-12:15pm  
Lecture Location: Silver 320

**RECITATION INSTRUCTORS**

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**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**  
jmk873@nyu.edu  
CORE-UA 730-013: Fr 9:30-10:45, SILV 320  
CORE-UA 730-014: Fr 12:30-1:45, SILV 218

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**

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*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**

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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

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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. **DUE IN WEEK 6 SECTION**

b) Concert Report: Attend *three* events proposed or approved by the instructor; these can be concerts, a 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.] **DUE BY WEEK 10 SECTION**

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

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Attendance to all lectures and sections is mandatory, and due dates for your assignments are not flexible. Extensions for papers or make-up presentations will only be considered with a written, detailed request, in advance of the due date and with a valid reason. Up to three unexcused absences will affect your participation grade; beyond that, each absence will knock your final grade one increment (B to B-).

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

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

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

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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. For more information on NYU's policies regarding academic integrity, please see this website:

<http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html>

## **GUEST LECTURES**

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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." Lewis Nielson will come to address his view of ethical, engaged art-making in the Marxist tradition.

## **ETIQUETTE**

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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 cell phones off so that they don't interrupt the lectures and discussions.

## **DISCLAIMER ON THE SYLLABUS**

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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.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

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### **WEEK 1 | Introduction**

9.6 What is Resistance? What is Experimentation?

Readings: Eshun, “Operating System for the Redesign of Sonic Reality”

### **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

Readings: Pasolini, “Manifesto for a New Theatre”; Srnicek/Williams “Introducing Folk Politics”; Billet, “Bono Kills the Planet”

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*”; George Maciunas, “Fluxus Manifesto”

Listening: John Cage, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, George Maciunas, Yoko Ono, La Monte Young

### **WEEK 5 | The medium is the message**

10.2 Found Object Sound

10.4 \*TA’s choice\*

Readings: Christopher Dunn, “Tom Zé and the Performance of Citizenship in Brazil”; Betsill, “A New Musical Instrument”; Matthew Herbert, “Manifesto”

Listening: Tom Zé’s *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

Readings: Tricia Rose, "Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America"; Beighly: Political Rap Music; Henry Louis Gate Jr, Introduction to *The Signifying Monkey*

Listening: Rudy Ray Moore, "Signifying Monkey"; 2 Live Crew, "Me So Horny"; Grand Master Flash, "The Message"

**\*PLAYLIST ASSIGNMENTS DUE IN WEEK 6 RECITATION SECTION\***

## **WEEK 7 | Can I scream?**

- 10.16 The Scream: from *cante jondo* to hardcore to the avant-garde
- 10.18 An Aesthetic Revolutionary: Diamanda Galas

Readings: Janoc, *The Primal Scream*; Plotkin, "I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream at Opera"

Listening: Cante jondo: "Caña", "El Alcazatas"; Berg, *Lulu*; Mascagni, *Cavalleria Rusticana* (scenes); Bad Brains; Refused; Rolf Riehm, *Pasolini in Ostia*; Nono, *Djamila Boupacha*; Yoko Ono; Diamanda Galas "Schrei 27"; Meredith Monk

## **WEEK 8 | Every page should explode**

- 10.23 Dada and Anti-Art
- 10.25 *GUEST LECTURE*: Rick Burkhardt

Readings: Rick Burkhardt, "Interview on Music and Politics"; Bert Cardullo, "Dada"; Tristan Tzara, *Dada Manifesto 1918*; Isabella Smith, "Doing Dada Differently: The Women Behind the Movement"

Listening: Maurizio Kagel; Kurt Schwitters; Eric Satie; Mayor Taco Ghost, Mocrepe

## **WEEK 9 | Daydreaming subverts the world**

- 10.30 Détournement and the Situationist International
- 11.1 Reimaginings with Tyshawn Sorey

Readings: McKenzie Wark, "The Torrent of History," in *The Beach Beneath the Street*

Listening: Tyshawn Sorey "Perle Noire"; Nono, "La Fabbrica 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;

**\*CONCERT REPORT ASSIGNMENT DUE IN WEEK 10 RECITATION SECTION\***

### **WEEK 11 | The Gender of Now**

11.13 Deep Listening and the Feminist Avant-Garde  
11.15 Pauline Oliveros

Readings: Gender Research in Darmstadt (GRID): HISTORAGE Statistics; Ashley Fure: “Pigeonholes, Precarity, and the Zero-Sum Game of Time: On Speaking Out”; Timothy Taylor, “The Gendered Construction of the Musical Self: The Music of Pauline Oliveros”  
Listening: Pauline Oliveros, various

### **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: Assigned by guest lecturer

### **WEEK 13 | Conning the Game**

11.27 “New Conceptualism”: where the sounds matter less than the ideas  
11.29 Johannes Kreidler’s *Fremdarbeit*

Readings: Douglas Barrett, *After Sound: Toward a Critical Music*; Johannes Kreidler, “Sentences on Musical Concept-Art”  
Listening: Johannes Kreidler: “New Conceptualism” (film) and various; Nono, “Djamila Boupacha”; Haas, “I can’t breathe”

### **WEEK 14 | Cyborg**

12.4 Future Bodies, Future Spaces  
12.6 Afrofuturism: From Sun Ra to Janelle Monáe

Readings: Brian Ward, “Can I get a witness? Civil rights, soul and secularization”; Kodwo Eshun “Further Considerations on Afrofuturism”; John Corbett, “Brothers from Another Planet”  
Listening: Lee “Scratch” Perry; Sun Ra; George Clinton; Janelle Monáe; Yasiin Bey

### **WEEK 15 | Tag, you’re it!**

12.11 Final Performances, session 1  
12.13 Final Performances, session 2