

MUSC 048/GSWS 048
 Fall 2017
 University of Pennsylvania
 Tuesdays/Thursdays Fisher-Bennett Hall Rm 406

Voicing Politics/Politicizing Voices

Class Meetings: Tuesday/Thursday 1.30-3.00pm
 Fisher-Bennett Hall Rm 406

Instructor: Maria Murphy
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 Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-5pm or by appointment
 Music Department, Lerner Center, Rm 103

What does it mean to have a voice? To raise your voice? To have your voice heard? What do our voices say about us and what do they fail to communicate? How we speak and how our voices are perceived impact our interactions in daily life, our participation in the political sphere, and our capacity to effect change through activism. In conjunction with Communication Within the Curriculum, this course explores the parameters by which voice is defined in the context of music and sound studies, social justice, philosophy, and media and communication studies. We will consider how voice embodies our political constitution through an examination of various operatic and art song repertoires; the vocal practices of artists such as Tanya Tagaq, Anohni, Juliana Huxtable, Laurie Anderson, Sikh Knowledge, and Lucas Silveira; the phenomena of voice-activated devices such as Apple's Siri and Amazon's Echo; and the collective voices of movements such as Black Lives Matter and the Standing Rock water protectors. No previous musical training required. May be used toward Music minor requirement.

Course Objectives

As part of the CWiC program (www.sas.upenn.edu/cwic), "Voicing Politics/Politicizing Voices" focuses on critical speaking and critical listening to examine the political capacities of the voice with a particular emphasis on developing public speaking skills. In this class, students will learn how to:

- analyze musical styles, performance techniques, and rhetorical devices to interrogate the voice as a primary mode of communication.
- engage with course material through various communicative exercises including individual and group presentations, facilitating and leading discussions, debates, and creative projects.
- conceptualize and articulate the historical contexts and communicative conditions that

help to catalyze musical and political movements.

- present and communicate clearly in various formats and for different audiences both inside and outside of the academy.

Canvas

There is a Canvas site for this course, for which you are automatically registered. Go to www.canvas.upenn.edu to sign in. It is essential that you check Canvas regularly. All class materials unless otherwise noted will be available on Canvas. I will use the site to post additional reading and listening assignments (always noted in the syllabus or indicated in class) and to announce important information about the class. There will also be a Canvas page dedicated to student content and discussion. I encourage you to post terms, share links, and comment on topics from class.

Course Requirements

Breakdown of grades

Class Participation: 25%

Group Presentation: 15%

Short Written Reflections: 20% (5% each)

Final Presentation: 20%

Podcast: 20%

Class Participation, 25%

Attendance & Preparation

Class participation comprises the most significant portion of your grade. Participation is integral in this class and I expect you to contribute thoughtfully to class discussion throughout the semester. Most importantly, this means that **attendance is mandatory**. Any absences should be reported through the Course Absence Report system. You are permitted two absences for **any reason**, after which your grade will be dropped one half grade for each additional absence.

In class, I encourage you to ask questions, make clarifications, and share your thoughts about the readings and recordings. To prepare for class, take notes while you are reading and listening to course materials. Look up names or concepts that are unfamiliar to you. I recommend keeping a running list of keywords/terms that we encounter throughout the

semester. While laptops are allowed in seminar, they should not pose a distraction to me, you, or the other students.

As part of your class participation grade, you are required to meet with an undergraduate speaking advisor twice outside of class time, once before the group presentation and another time before the individual presentation. The CWiC Advisor is an undergraduate trained and paid to assist students with their presentations. The advisor is not a subject-area tutor and will not offer advice on the course content. The advisor is not a TA and will not grade your work. The advising session is confidential. Both the group presentation and individual presentation will be video-recorded so we may review them together.

Difficult Content & Classroom Etiquette

In this class, we will be discussing some difficult topics. As your teacher, I will never do anything to intentionally shock or upset you, but it is also my intention to create a challenging and intellectually stimulating environment, which will occasionally involve unpacking and processing difficult topics. If you are having difficulty dealing with a class discussion, reading, viewing, or listening excerpt, you may voice these concerns in class or you may discretely step out of class (in this event, please send a quick email to me afterward). Also, be mindful of others' experiences when you speak. Avoid making assumptions about anyone's experience. Respect each others' names, preferred gender pronouns, and expressed identities; no one is required to share information about their identities or experiences. Do not hesitate to approach me if you feel there are measures I can take to make the classroom a safer space for you.

Group Presentation, 15%

As part of the CWiC requirements, you will participate in a group presentation. In groups of 3 or 4, you will choose one class for which you will present on the course materials for your peers. Each person in the group will present for 5 minutes. The format for the presentation will be up to you: you may, for example, organize the presentation by readings or listening assignments, include a performance, include music/media examples, plan an in-class oral exercise, distribute a hand out, or include discussion questions or prompts for group discussion to follow the presentation. *You must meet with a CWiC Speaking Advisor for a presentation rehearsal before the in-class presentation.*

Short Written Reflections, 5% each (20% total)

Over the course of the semester, you will submit four short written reflections, one from each unit of the course. In each reflection, you will demonstrate appropriate use of key terms while providing a brief analysis of a sound or musical example.

Final Individual Presentation, 20%

Throughout the semester, you will be encouraged to develop and investigate your own interests, which may be the subject of your final individual presentation. We will talk about best practices to use music and sound examples in presentations, but this is an opportunity for you to be creative. Feel free to experiment with different media, styles, and techniques and showcase (or discover!) your talents. You will be expected to incorporate communicative techniques that we have discussed in class while pursuing a topic that is relevant to your own studies or interests. Please plan to meet with me to discuss chosen presentation topics and appropriate formats. *You must meet with a CWiC Speaking Advisor before this presentation.*

Podcast Term Project, 20%

As a class, we will develop a small podcast series as a course project. We will have a tutorial in the music lab to learn about recording techniques and how to compile and mix sound materials. After listening to a sample of podcasts, we will brainstorm potential approaches to creating a podcast such as constructing a compelling narrative, clarifying and streamlining support in a position piece, formulating clear questions for interviews, and other stylistic strategies. On your own, you will choose a topic, create the content, and produce a 10-15 minute podcast episode.

Accessibility & Accommodations

If you need specific accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. I am available to discuss course accessibility in person, via email, or on the phone. To make arrangements for accommodations through Penn, please contact the Office of Student Disabilities Services at 215.573.9235. They are located at Stouffer Commons, 3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300.

Academic Integrity

Since the University is an academic community, its fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. Essential to the success of this educational mission is a commitment to the principles of academic integrity. Every member of the University community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of honesty at all times. Students, as members of the community, are also responsible for adhering to the principles and spirit of the following Code of Academic Integrity.

For more information, see <https://provost.upenn.edu/policies/pennbook/2013/02/13/code-of-academic-integrity>

Office Hours

My office is in Room 103 in the Music Building. I hope you take advantage of office hours to ask questions or just chat about music—you don't have to have an academic issue to come to office hours, and I enjoy getting to know my students better. I recommend that you plan to come to office hours at least once during the semester. This is a shared office with other graduate students, so please knock before entering the office.

Important Deadlines

September 13: written reflection 1 due on canvas by midnight

September 26: written reflection 2 due *in class*

October 5: written reflection 3 due on canvas by midnight

October 10: deadline to meet with me to discuss podcast topic and research

November 2: rough-cut of podcast listening session in class

November 9: written reflection 4 due on canvas by midnight

November 30: final presentations

December 05: final presentations

December 19: podcast due

Class Schedule

Unit I: Voice, Vocalizations, Vociferations

Tuesday 29 August

Introduction: Hello! Is it me you're looking for?

In-class exercise:

With a partner, briefly discuss an experience when your voice or another's voice was correctly identified, mischaracterized, or completely misheard. Perhaps you immediately recognized a friend's voice in a crowded room or you were mistaken for a relative on the phone. What are some of the assumptions we hear in and project onto voices? One student from each pair will report back to the group about these experiences.

Thursday 31 August**Amplified Voices**

Listening:

Kinley Dowling, “Microphone”

Reading:

Simon Frith, “The Voice” in *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (pages 97-107 on pdf)

Viewing:

“Why does Trump use a different microphone than past presidents?”
<http://www.msnbc.com/brian-williams/watch/why-does-trump-use-a-different-microphone-than-past-presidents-936034371829>

Tuesday 05 September**Instrumentalizing Voice**

Listening:

Yoko Ono’s “Voice Piece for Soprano”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GMH17bmlzw>

Reading:

Ben Macpherson et al., “What is Voice Studies?” in *Voice Studies: Critical Approaches to Process, Performance and Experience*

Thursday 07 September**Voice & Intimacy with guest Michele Zipkin**

Listening:

Damon Krukowski, “Ways of Hearing—Love”
<https://www.radiotopia.fm/podcasts/showcase>

Reading:

Mladen Dolar, “The Linguistics of the Voice” in *A Voice and Nothing More*

Tuesday 12 September**Physiology of the Voice with guest soprano Maureen Batt**

Listening:

Excerpts from *Lady of the Lake*, Maureen Batt

Reading:

Laurie Stras, “The Organ of the Soul: Voice, Damage, and Affect”
 Roland Barthes, “Grain of the voice”
 “Free Tutorials: The Vocology Toolbox,” www.voicescienceworks.org

Written Reflection 1 due (Wednesday 13 September by midnight on canvas):

Write a 500-word analysis on a podcast of your choosing. What techniques and strategies does the podcaster use to engage listeners? How does the podcast use music, sound, and/or voice to articulate the topic or theme of the episode?

Unit II: Voice & Media

Thursday 14 September Podcast Workshop with guest Prof. Naomi Waltham-Smith (Meet in music lab on second floor)

Listening: Naomi Waltham-Smith, “Ni Le Pen, ni Macron: Parisian Soundscapes of Resistance”
<https://soundstudiesblog.com/tag/naomi-waltham-smith/>

Tuesday 19 September Opera on Film

Reading: Marcia Citron, “The Sound of Desire” in *When Opera Meets Film*
Excerpt from Jelena Novak, *Postopera: Reinventing the Voice-Body*

Viewing: John Schlesinger’s *Sunday Bloody Sunday* (1971)
Laurie Anderson’s *Homeland* (2010)

Thursday 21 September Tools, Techniques, Technologies

Listening: Laurie Anderson, “Cultural Ambassador” and “O Superman”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vkfpi2H8tOE>

Reading: Mara Mills, “Media and Prosthesis: The Vocoder, Artificial Larynx, and, the History of Signal Processing”
Laurie Anderson, *Stories From the Nerve Bible* (excerpts)

In class exercise: Experimentation with vocoder

Tuesday 26 September The Processed Voice

Listening: Tupac Shakur, “California Love”
Zapp, “Computer Love”
K-Ci and Jo Jo “Crazy”

Reading: Alexander G. Weheliye, “Feenin’: Posthuman Voices in Contemporary Black Popular Music”

Written Reflection 2 due (in class, also please post to canvas discussion page):

Bring a 250-300 word written description of your voice using the vocabulary we have discussed in class. Consider, for example, how you hear your own voice, what work your voice can or cannot perform for you, and what you would like your voice to convey. We will experiment with voice processing tools such as a voice transformer, vocoder, and looper effects station to investigate how technological mediation alters how the voice communicates and is perceived.

Unit III: Embodied Voices

Thursday 12 October **Voices in Process with guest Craig Jennex**

Listening: Lucas Silveira, “Crying” (2009) and “Crying” (2012)
Sikh Knowledge excerpts TBA

Reading: Craig Jennex, “Audiotopia and Sikh Knowledge’s ‘A Fag Like Me’”

Tuesday 17 October **Hearing/Singing/Voicing Desire**

Listening: Anohni, “Watch Me”

Reading: Maria Murphy, “Desire & Surveillance in Anohni’s “Watch Me””
Juliana Huxtable, “Mucus in my Pineal Gland” (excerpt)
Tess Edmonson, “Juliana Huxtable on Crisis, Conspiracy, and
Collapse”
<http://topicalcream.info/editorial/juliana-huxtable-the-conspiracy-of-activism/>

Anaïs Duplan, “My Virtual Pussy, My Artificial Lungs”
<http://www.maskmagazine.com/the-camp-issue/work/mucus-in-my-pineal-gland-review>

Thursday 19 October **Voicing Alter-Egos with Guest Sound Artist E. Jane**

Listening: Mhysa, *Fantasii*

Reading: TBA

Unit IV: Voice & Political Representation

Tuesday 24 October **Voice & Agency in the Political Sphere**

Reading: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern speak?”

Thursday 26 October **Vocal Sovereignty & the Politics of Recognition**

Listening: Tanya Tagaq, Selections from *Animism*
Jeremy Dutcher, “Honour Song”

Reading: Audra Simpson, “Ethnographic Refusal: Anthropological Need”
Kim TallBear, “There is no DNA test to prove you’re Native
American”
<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22129554-400-there-is-no-dna-test-to-prove-youre-native->

Viewing: Winona Laduke, "It's time to move on from fossil fuels"
https://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/12/native_american_activist_winona_laduke at

Thursday 09 November NO CLASS

Written Reflection 4 due (on canvas by midnight):

Submit a one-page outline of your final presentation. Be as specific as possible with the proposed format and the content you plan to include. This may encompass a list of sound and visual examples, approximate timings for each section of the presentation, and/or a rough draft of the prose.

Tuesday 14 November Voice & Disability (Part I)

Reading: Chris Eagle, "Introduction" in *Literature, Speech Disorders, and Disability: Talking Normal*
 Chris Eagle, "On Speech Disorders in Theory" in *Dysfluencies*
 Joshua St. Pierre, "Distending Straight-Masculine Time: A Phenomenology of the Disabled Speaking Body"

Thursday 16 November Voice & Disability (Part II)

Listening: Public Enemy, "Fight the Power"
 Percee P, "Lung Collapsing Lyrics"
 Schoolly D, "P.S.K. What Does It Mean?"

Reading: Alex Porco, "Throw Yo' Voice Out: Disability as a Desirable Practice in Hip-Hop Vocal Performance"
<http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3822/3790>

Tuesday 21 November Whose Voice?

Reading: Adriana Cavarero, "Introduction" in *For More Than One Voice*
 Don Ihde, "A Phenomenology of Voice" in *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*

Thursday 23 November Thanksgiving Break (no class)

Tuesday 28 November The Service of Sound with guest Roksana Filipowska

Listening & Reading: TBA

Thursday 30 November Final Presentations

Tuesday 05 December Final Presentations

Thursday 07 December Voicing Politics Conclusions

Final Podcast Submissions due Tuesday 19 December