

## **COURSE LIBRARY GUIDE:**

**<https://guides.library.harvard.edu/musicandactivism>**

### **Syllabus (subject to change)**

Music 178r “ Mondays, 3-5 pm

Course Heart: Esperanza Spalding

#### **Applied Music Activism**

This course invites everyone in the classroom to co-create living responses to the question:

How do we practice building response and service campaigns charged with the power of music, and track their efficacy? How do we use the tools of promotion to amplify our work as musicians/activists?

We will investigate events, gatherings, happenings, collective-actions, campaigns, (and more) in which music has been key to successful social movements; explore the practices employed by artists and the communities they partnered with; assess the efficacy of these campaigns in relation to their stated goals and outcomes, and utilize this learning for the design and launch of our own socio-music campaigns.

Through the investigation of these case studies, we will develop practices for developing, launching and tracking the efficacy of music-based activism campaigns - most significantly, the ones we design and launch during our semester together.

We will explore commercial advertising practices as tools that can be harnessed and utilized in service of music-based activism. Through in-class guidance from advertising professionals, we will learn how we may amplify the motives and narratives of our socio-music campaigns and identify the audience(s) we seek to reach through various media platforms.

As we progress through the semester, students will create, share, and analyze the impact and efficacy of their own public-facing practices of music-based activism.

Our work throughout the course will be supported and guided by individuals deeply engaged in community organizing and activism at the intersection of performance, advertising/marketing strategy, and right relation with community.

#### **The work:**

The course culminates in a public facing group project, which students will launch by week 11.

We will organize into work-groups during week five, and these groups will continue working as a team for the duration of the course.

Every work-group will make several works-in-progress presentations throughout the term. These presentations are a way for each group to get feedback from Prof. Spalding, from fellow students, and from the various guides sharing their expertise in relation to our work.

Each presenter in each group will be invited to reflect-on, and speak to the unique challenges and discoveries they have found in relation to the project at each phase of presentation.

#### **Grading:**

You will be graded on your willingness to engage and apply the practices explored and developed in class and in your own course related research. You will also be graded by how thoroughly you incorporate the assets and practices explored and designed in class, into your own music-activism projects.

During our works-in-progress presentations, and final presentation, you will have the opportunity to show how you are integrating tools and practices explored during our class time together, into the development, application and analysis of your projects.

Integration and application of course material into project outlines, design and presentations: 30% of grade

Implementation, tracking and analysis of socio-music/activism project:

40% of grade

Final presentation:

30% of grade

-Written homework assignments will be due on Canvas by 12:00pm, on Sunday before class (except where noted in syllabus). No late assignments accepted.

WEEK 1: PRACTICES FOR WORKING TOGETHER - *with, in and as community*.

(Sept. 9th): collective framing of core values and intentions that will guide our work and practice together throughout the semester.

Guest lecturer brontÃ« velez, (co-founder of Lead to Life) will guide the class in grounding the intentions and navigational value systems of our work in relation to the issues and visions we will engage through our activism, as well as working in right-relation to each other and the communities we may ally with during our socio-music campaigns.

Homework: TBD based on themes and questions that arise during in-class discussion and inquiry. (due Sep 15th)

WEEK 2 and 3: STUDYING THE BLUE-PRINTS - *review of past and present socio-music activism*

(Sept 16, 23): We will explore multiple examples of socio-music songs, campaigns, performances and events that have emerged in recent history. Our goal will be to identify and distill the elements of intention, design, partnership and process operating within the examples we study.

The fruits of our collective inquiry into the works of other socio-music activists, will be shared on the canvas site for this course, and serve as a “playbook” for visioning and designing our own socio-music campaigns.

Homework: Writing (200 words - due on canvas Sep 29th)

Through a conjectural reverse engineering of these campaigns, identify: what skills, passions, resources and intentions did these musicians start with as foundational elements of their campaigns?

What skills, connections, passions, intentions and resources do you have to offer as foundational elements to a socio-music campaign?

Week 4 and 5 : DEFINE: “EFFECTIVE” / WORK-GROUPS Get Together \*

“what can we do together that feels necessary?” - brontÃ« velez

(Sep 30) How are we discerning the effectivity of a socio-music project’s song, campaign, performance? Which aspects of the project are traceable as having a direct effect on the intended goal/issue/gathering/rift/wound?

We return to examples of socio-music activism we've engaged with thus far and explore:

What was really happening there? Inner mechanisms of composition, performance, connection of performer/song/event to issue, existing public sentiments about issue, etc.

Homework: (TBD )

(Oct 7th) We will explore and discuss various approaches to working in partnership with advisors, organizations, community partners.

We will take an inventory and identify our shared, complementary and contrasting skills, to aide us in the process of organizing ourselves into campaign/project work groups.

Homework: ( Writing due Oct 20th/Project Outline due in class Oct 21st as presentation)

Groups will work together to create a design and scope outline of their prospective socio-music project.

Outlines should include timelines working toward a "public-launch" date of Nov 18th.

*(samples of project outlines will be available for reference on Canvas)*

Writing: (200 words)

Clarify goal and partnership-web of prospective socio-music project.

What challenges might your campaign pose, in terms of ability to measure engagement, response, and impact?

Week 6 (Oct 14): INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY | NO CLASS

Week 7: DESIGN AND START TO BUILD

(Oct 21): Guest Lecturer: commercial ad campaign creative director Sanam Petri (Nike, Weiden and Kennedy, Beats by Dr. Dre)

How do we make something that captures the attention of our intended audience? We will explore key questions to ask when designing and launching any sort of campaign, project, event, etc. Each group will present a brief overview of their socio-music campaign/event outline. Ms. Petri (or TBD guest) will "consult" each group on their projected campaigns, offering insight, suggestions and clarifying questions.

Homework: (due in class Oct 28th): Each work-group expand on the design of their project harnessing the insights and suggestions shared by this weeks guest lecturer.

Week 8 : GUIDANCE FROM THE FIELD

(Oct 28) Each work group will outline the updated state and shape of their project designs. Each group will have the opportunity to receive feedback, reflections and guidance from our guest lecturers, coming from various backgrounds in community organizing and arts/music based activism. This Guidance Team will offer project-specific advice and references for moving/working toward and into our project launch phase while holding and practicing our commitments to work in right relation to place and community.

Homework:

Groups work: continue to design, build and prep your campaign/project to be ready for public "launch" on or before November 17th, 10pm.

## Week 9 (Nov 4th) READING AND WIRING OUR INFO RADIATORS

*“The strongest solutions happen through the process, not in a moment at the end of the process.” - Allied Media Projects*

We will explore and integrate methods for measuring and tracking the efficacy of a campaign/project at various stages of its development, co-creation and implementation.

Homework “ due at presentation in class Oct 28: Each group must draft an evaluation program for how to assess the efficacy of their outlined socio-music campaigns (including stats from social media, web-based media platforms, surveying, participant feedback, etc.)

## Week 10: PREPARE FOR LAUNCH

(Nov 11) Each student group will present the full portrait of their socio-music project design.

Homework (as project launch) due before November 17th, 10pm:

Launch/present/post/disseminate/stage/release/post your project/campaign by 10pm Friday evening.

## Week 11: CLASS DISCUSSION: “what’s going on?”

(Nov 18) Early stats, reflection, feedback, challenges, evolutions, discoveries

Do our projects/campaigns morph based on this information? Have the goals changed? Are there unintended effects? Who is responding, how and in which spaces?

Homework “ due Nov 24: Each group prepare a project performance evaluation of their socio-music campaign up to this point. Prepare to present these evaluation in next week’s class. Students should be prepared in-class to answer the following:

how have tactics gleaned from early examples been incorporated into each campaign projects, and how are they playing out in real time?

## Week 12 :DEBRIEF

(Nov 25) Homework “ due Dec 1: In consultation with Prof. Spalding, Rajna and our Guidance Team each group is invited to modify and/or continue tracking the impact/reach/shape of their campaign with the intent of deepening the efficacy and capacity for embodying the core values identified in week one.

We will revisit the intentions, agreements and values we as a class committed to holding for our work and practice during this semester. We will take inventory and ground into

## Week 13:

(Dec 2) Final project review/analysis and presentation consultations with Prof. Spalding. We will discuss details relating to these consultations in class.

## Week 14:

(Dec 4-9) Reading Week (Work groups may meet with Prof. Spalding and Rajna, for discussion and continued development on final project presentations)

## Week 15: CONFERENCE / FINAL PRESENTATIONS

(Dec 10-19) \*\*\*need to find out if we can do this on Dec 9, since Monday falls at the end of Reading Week, or if it should be scheduled for a different date during the official exam period.\*\*\*