

Unit 3 Project: Music and Social Change

Project description

Throughout this course, we have worked to hear music in reference to its place within society. Different artists and genres have played closely into the tectonic shifts in American history, but it is this decade that we cover in Unit 3, the 1960s, that is most known and widely recognized for social activism within the music industry.

For this unit's project, you will analyze attempts made by musicians, audiences, and other music industry figures to enact change in the society around them. This project is partly individual, but for the bulk of the work, you will put together a group "proposal," a strategy for enacting social change in the world around you, now, that makes use of music.

Objectives

Through this project, you will:

- Compare, interpret, and analyze a variety of works;
- Interpret previous musical styles in terms of their engagement in contemporaneous community and community issues;
- Analyze the goals, successes, and failures of musicians, audiences, and the music industry in terms of enacting social change; and
- Relate contemporary music to previous musical and social influences.

Directions

Like all of our projects, this is a multi-step process. Each stage has its own deadlines, listed in the calendar.

INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS: First, you will need to prepare and do some research by watching the lectures, completing the reading, and doing the listening. Check the course calendar and note the project deadlines.

You will then choose two social movements for your own individual analysis. These are broadly defined and can be subtle (for example, Motown's successes in getting black artists heard by white audiences or Elvis's stylistic fusion of country and R&B styles) or overt (Bob Dylan's outspoken songwriting to support the Civil Rights Movement, for example). In a short essay (500 words):

1. Compare the approaches and works of two different musical artists or other figures within the music industry as they promoted social change through musical or related activities; and
2. Analyze the specific conflicts involved in the creative activities of each, their opportunities for inciting change and the difficulties that they experienced.

This essay should follow these guidelines for full credit:

- Include references to specific songs and links to any musical examples that are not on the course's listening playlists.
- It is not necessary to supplement the class materials, but if you need to do further research to make your point clearly and persuasively, use a standard and consistent method of citation and include a bibliography.
- Check and recheck your spelling and grammar.
- Be sure that your essay makes an overall argument about the relationship between these two figures and the relationships between each and the context in which they worked. Introduce your argument and return to it in your conclusion.

Once your draft is complete:

1. Submit your essay through the Turnitin link for inclusion in your final project grade. (This MUST be done, as essays that are only submitted to the group discussion board will not be graded.)
2. Copy your essay into the group discussion board for discussion. For ease of reading, copy and paste your essay into the body of a new thread (labeled with your name) instead of attaching a document file. Provide links to Spotify or YouTube for any songs that are not required listening for the course.
3. Make sure to submit your essay to your group's discussion board and the Turnitin link by the posted deadline in the calendar.

DISCUSSION: In the second stage of the project, you will discuss the artists portrayed in each group member's essay and plan your own social movement. Soon after the individual analysis deadline, return to your group's submission forum and reach each of your group members' essays. At this point, you will start a discussion with your group and provide multiple contributions. Whomever is first can begin a new thread. In your first contribution, you will:

1. Prepare a short summary of your group members' work in which you compare the efficacies of these different artists and movements, giving special attention to the contexts and strategies that fostered success, and
2. Contribute ideas for a new social movement and a strategy for success that is based on those successes of past groups. These strategies should take into account any changes in the social, economic, political, and historical climate that may make certain plans more or less effective. This is just a first suggestion so you do not need a complete plan, but offer your ideas to the group.

As a group, you will then choose and assemble a strategy for enacting contemporary social change using music. You will analyze your surroundings, choose an issue to speak out for or against (from the suggestions of your group members), and utilize the lessons of past successes and failures.

GROUP PROJECT SUBMISSION: The third stage involves your preparation for final submission.

Each group will develop and share a cohesive approach to the issue in the form of a well-organized essay (1,000 words) written and revised by the group as a whole, which will:

- Introduce the issue that you plan to engage and its component parts.
- Propose your definition of success, the goals of your project.
- Outline your creative approach to building support for the issue through music. (This does not have to be explicitly musical. It might delineate the imagery, target audience, and lyrical content of an ensemble, as well as strategies for getting the attention of either a wide audience or a specific group of people able to best enact change.)
- Describe your audience and how your plan engages them.
- Describe your actors (who is involved, why them, are they real or imaginary?) and what they will be doing.
- Defend your plan through specific and clear references to things that have (and have not) worked in the past. This can be a summary of your group discussions and should include at least three examples that you drew on for support.

One group member will submit this document through Blackboard before the final deadline. (If you only discuss your project in the discussion board and do not submit it, you will not be graded).

Allow me to provide one rough example, along with the types of questions that you will need to answer:

- To address climate change, one could use Kickstarter to fund the tour of an activist music group that travels to the sites of major international political gatherings like the G20 conferences.
- What genres might be most useful? Do I want to focus on urban-folk style Americana that I believe may best engage young, white, urban, environmentalists? Should I instead focus on classic rock icons who have a history of using their cloud with a previous generation's activism, people like Bono of U2? Perhaps, if I see Chinese and Indian economic growth as the major concern for climate change, I may want to use famous Bollywood and Chinese pop stars to make the populations of those countries more aware.
- What audience do I need to grasp to best make my change? People who don't bother to vote? Idealistic youth? A specific locality's population? How am I addressing this audience directly or indirectly? What technologies am I using?
- Your issue can be as large or small as your group decides. If you are having trouble coming to a consensus, think more practically. For example, if gun laws are too contentious in your group, perhaps you can agree on promoting recycling or getting people to vote in local elections. And don't be afraid to be critical: do you think that past artist tours work, or are they just hot air? Does Mackelmore singing about gay rights help the cause, or does it just speak to those who already agree anyhow?

There is no extra credit for this project. Grades will be based on your individual analysis as submitted through Turnitin, your thoughtful contributions to the group discussion, your group's final submission, and a peer assessment of each group members' contribution. The score breakdown is as follows:

30%	Individual analysis as submitted through Turnitin (Use of effective and specific examples)
30%	Contribution to group discussion (Posting of ideas and discussion of other members' essays)
30%	Group final submission grade (All group members get the same grade on this portion, submitted through Turnitin)
10%	Peer assessment for participation (As completed through the link)