

Pop Star Activism from the Beatles to Beyoncé

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Is Beyoncé a committed feminist or a cunning marketer? Why is Sam Smith's use of the pronoun "he" of social significance? When pop stars speak out politically, how do they do so without jeopardizing their commercial appeal? Why does pop-culture and celebrity activism so often come from the music world? In what ways did music advance the civil rights and black consciousness movements, and how do pop-star activists of today help identity-based movements and causes? How does a pop-star's politics factor into the marketing strategies of brands and causes?

Such questions about the nature of issue advocacy in popular music provide the focus of this class in *strategic communication*, an umbrella term for the study of persuasion and influence in public relations, advertising, marketing, and political and social advocacy. With significant attention to cultural diversity, this *communication and culture* class explores the role of popular music at the intersection of commerce and cultural politics, from the freedom and civil rights struggles of the 1960s, to the celebrity humanitarianism of the 80s, to the identity politics of today.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To provide an engaging and deep historical context for studying strategic communication and cultural diversity, specifically elements of issue advocacy, cause marketing, identity-based advocacy, cross-cultural communication, and celebrity branding and activism
- To sharpen your critical thinking, listening and communication skills
- To help you become more critical and empowered as *media consumers*, and more effective and ethical as *media producers*
- To introduce you to some awesome music that will enrich your life

READINGS, TEXTS, MATERIALS

- One book. Advertising Revolution: The Story of a Song, from Beatles Hit to Nike Slogan. By Alan Bradshaw and Linda Scott. Repeater Books (subsidiary of Random House), 2017. Can be purchased via Amazon or [publisher website](#).
- Course Reader. Available *after the first week* of class at Jenn's Copy and Binding.
- Playlists via Spotify. [Spotify for Students](#) is only \$4.99/month and if you don't like it you can cancel your subscription when the class is over.
- Documentary Films. We will watch some films in class, but we won't have time to watch all of them during class time. So some documentaries you will need to access on your own and finish

watching on your own, and some you will need to view in their entirety on your own. All will be available online.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION FOR PR378 and ADV 378

Listening-Room Prompts	10%
Quizzes	20%
Two Exams	50%
Final Playlist Project	20%

FINAL GRADES

Final grades will use the plus/minus grade system and follow this breakdown:

A	94-100
A-	90-93.9
B+	88-89.9
B	84-87.9
B-	80-83.9
C+	78-79.9
C	74-77.9
C-	70-73.9
D+	68-69
D	60-66
F	0-59

PROTOCOL AND ASSIGNMENTS

Lectures: You need to come to lecture every day to do well in the class. Questions that will appear on quizzes and exams will come from lecture as well as the reading, viewing and listening material. In lecture, I will present new information, review and explain ideas from the readings and other material, and discuss with all of you the material in question. Much of the content for the course is music, and we will listen to music EVERY day of class. One of the most valuable aspects of class will be the feedback you give me and the conversation we have. So come class ready to listen, ready to talk and excited to engage.

Listening Room: The Listening Room is the weekly playlist you will be required to listen and be prepared to respond to or answer questions about.

Listening-Room Prompts and Quizzes: Almost every week you will have to take **either** an online quiz related to the material of the week, or answer an online prompt related to the music of the week.

FINAL PLAYLIST PROJECT: Finally, for your final project, you will create a **curated advocacy playlist and listening guide** of roughly 3-4 pages, with the following sections: issue profile, strategy statement, annotated list of songs, and closing statement. The final project will be due the last week of class.

HELP and OFFICE HOURS: I love talking about music and I love talking to students. Please visit my office hours or Pratik's office hours whether or not you have a pressing question or concern.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Please read more information at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php (Links to an external site.).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone).

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

Notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable timeframe.

COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Taking care of your general well-being is an important step in being a successful student. If stress, test anxiety, racing thoughts, feeling unmotivated or anything else is getting in your way, there are options available for support.

For **immediate** support: Visit/Call the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC): M-F 8-5p | SSB, 5th floor. [512-471-3515](tel:512-471-3515) | cmhc.utexas.edu
CMHC Crisis Line: 24/7 | [512.471.2255](tel:512.471.2255) | cmhc.utexas.edu/24hourcounseling.html

CARE Counselor in the Moody College of Communication is: Abby Simpson, LCSW
CMA 4.134 | [512-471-7642](tel:512-471-7642) (Please *leave a message* if she is unavailable)

FREE Services at CMHC:

Brief assessments and referral services

Mental health & wellness articles - cmhc.utexas.edu/commonconcerns.html

MindBody Lab - cmhc.utexas.edu/mindbodylab.html
 Classes, workshops, & groups - cmhc.utexas.edu/groups.html

COURSE CALENDAR

Exam dates are fixed but the daily calendar may need adjustments. Any changes will be communicated clearly and with sufficient notice to accommodate preparing for exams.

Wk	Dates	Topic	Material	Exams/Assign
1	Jan 21,23	Intro	Playlist 1	
2	Jan 28, 30	"Give Peace a Chance": The Beatles, John Lennon and the Modern Pop Star Activist	Playlist 2 Documentary Film: "The U.S. vs. John Lennon" Pop Star Activist <i>Celebrity Influence: Politics, Persuasion and Issue Advocacy</i> (reader)	Quiz/Prompt
3	Feb 4,6	Cont.	Playlist 3 <i>from Music and Musicians in the Service of Social Movements</i> (reader)	Quiz/Prompt
4	Feb 11,13	"Say it Loud": James Brown, Nina Simone and the Sound of Black Consciousness	Playlist 4 Documentary Film: "What Happened, Miss Simone?" "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by MLK, "Ballot or the Bullet" by Malcolm X	Quiz/Prompt
5	Feb 18,20			Exam 1 Feb. 20

6	Feb 25, 27	"I Woke up Like This": Intersectional Feminism from Riot Grrrl to Beyoncé	Playlist 5 Readings TBA "The Riot Grrrl Manifesto" "Becoming the Third Wave"	Quiz/Prompt
7	March 4,6	Cont.	Playlist 6 Readings TBA	Quiz/Prompt
8	March 11,13	Cont.	Playlist 7 Readings TBA	
	SPRING	BREAK	SPRING	BREAK
9	March 25,27	"Born this Way": Gay Music Advocacy from Disco to Drag Race	Playlist 8	Quiz/Prompt
10	April 1,3		Playlist 9	Quiz/Prompt
11	April 8,10	International		Exam 2 April 10
12	April 15,17	International	Playlist 10	Quiz/Prompt
13	April 22,24	"Revolution" Case Study	Playlist 11	Quiz/Prompt
14	April 29 May 1	TBA	Playlist 12	Quiz/Prompt
15	May 6,8			FINAL PLAYLIST DUE