

MUH 6935

Music & Disability Studies

Spring Semester 2025
Wednesdays, 9:35am to 12:35pm
MUB 232

Dr. Jill Rogers
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Office Hours (407 Yon Hall or via Zoom):
Thursdays, 10:30am to 12:30pm
Or by appointment

Course Description

In this course, students will learn to employ the interdisciplinary approaches of disability studies to examine social and cultural aspects of disability in relation to music. Students will be introduced to the social model of disability through critical readings in musicology, ethnomusicology, cultural studies, disability studies, and other related fields. In addition, students will explore the ways musicians have identified as disabled, as well as how disability and/or ableism may have shaped their music and reception. This course will give students opportunities to analyze representations of disability in music, and to undertake research on the topic of music and disability.

Learning Objectives

- 1) Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of music and disability.
- 2) Students will present their ideas orally and engage actively in group discussion and debate.
- 3) Students will develop critical thinking skills in relation to constructions of disability as it intersects with class, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and other identity categories.
- 4) Students will consider, develop, and implement modes of analysis that might be useful in examining relationships between music and disability.
- 5) Students will evaluate and critique a range of issues relevant to the seminar's subject matter.
- 6) Students will formulate original research questions within the area of disability studies.
- 7) Students will develop public presentation skills, digital media skills, and advanced reading and writing skills through engagement with course assignments.

****This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.****

Assignments and Grading

- Preparation & Participation 20%
- Weekly Blog-Style Responses (300-500 words) 20%
- Individual Research Project Proposal & Bibliography 5%
- Mid-Term Podcast 15%
- In-Class Research Project Presentation 10%

- Individual Research Project

30%

Assignment Details & Expectations

Required Listening and Texts

Class discussions will be centered around the assigned reading and listening. In order to do well in this course, you will need to keep up with the reading and listening assigned throughout the semester. All course readings can be found on the Canvas course website. Most audio recordings can be found on the Spotify playlist that I created for this class. Your ability to access the course website and the Spotify playlist is essential to your ability to succeed in this course; therefore, if you have questions about using these, you should let me know as soon as possible so that I can help you.

If we are studying a piece with a score, you should have already listened to the piece with the score **BEFORE** coming to class, and you should come to class with the score (preferably marked up, etc.) for the piece(s) of music assigned for a given day. Many of these scores can be legally downloaded on the IMSLP website (<http://imslp.org/>), but much of the time I will post scores on Canvas.

Class Participation & Preparedness

In the majority of our class meetings we will focus on assigned reading and listening in seminar-style discussions, with our in-class time largely dedicated to group discussions and activities. In general, seminars are only as good as the effort that the participants put into them. The time that we meet each week is a time for thinking through the concepts introduced in assigned reading and listening together, as a group. This means that you must come to class having thoroughly processed the assigned materials, and armed with thoughtful questions and concerns. Your weekly blog posts are meant to jumpstart this process; however, in order to succeed in this course you should write something akin to a blog response for **everything** assigned for a given week. Your success in this module will largely be determined through what you bring to our class discussions, especially in terms of how well prepared you appear to be to discuss the assigned reading and listening, as well as your participation in individual and group presentations.

In addition, you will choose a week in which to present and lead discussion on a particular article. Your presentation should be approximately 10 minutes in length (and definitely no longer than 15 minutes), and should involve a somewhat detailed summary of the author's argument, evidence, and analysis. You will also need to write three (3) discussion questions and choose 1 or 2 to ask in class. You should email me your discussion questions two days in advance of your presentation (by end of the day on Monday of the week you're presenting). If you'd like to meet with me to discuss your presentation and questions, please don't hesitate to come to my office hours or set up an appointment with me. Your article presentation will constitute **20% of your total class participation grade.**

Attendance Policy:

Because I am running this course as a seminar in which group discussion and activities are central, **attendance is required.** I will take note of your presence during all of our class meetings. I make attendance mandatory because your classmates and I are counting on you to make this an enriching course. If you must miss a class and would like to have your absence excused, you will need to e-mail me in advance of the class; I will excuse students for almost all medical reasons, personal emergencies, and religious observances, but you must talk to me first. We will need to discuss together a way for you to make up the participation points you would otherwise lose. Your attendance directly affects your grade for the participation & preparation part of your course grade since, if you're not in class, you're not participating, and it is therefore impossible for me to tell if you are prepared.

Blog Posts

Central to your grade for this course are blog-style responses that you will submit **once per week for 10 out of the first 13 weeks of this term.** In other words, you need to submit 10 blog posts total throughout this course. For each class for which reading and listening is assigned, you have the opportunity to submit a short blog-style response (c. 300-500 words) to the materials assigned for that class. Although this response can be rather informal, it should still be thoughtful and well written. Unless prompted by a particular question or set of questions from me (which may happen at various points throughout the course), your response should involve some combination of summarizing authors' arguments; analysis and/or critique of their arguments; analysis and/or reflection on the assigned listening; and consideration of how the assigned reading and the listening might shed light on one another. Your response might also include one or two questions that you would like to propose for discussion in the next day's class meeting.

These posts are designed to help you process the materials assigned for a particular class period, as well as to give you practice in writing about music and the argumentation and research of other scholars, all of which will be crucial to your ability to produce the quality of work that I'm expecting you to produce in your final projects for this course. Your posts also give me helpful feedback so that I can tailor this course to your needs and concerns: the posts you submit on will help me to run our seminars with your concerns and questions in mind. With all of this in mind, please take these posts seriously. Your responses are **due by 11:59pm on Tuesday evenings** and constitute **20% of your final grade for this course.** I will not accept late responses for full credit without prior notification (see my late policy below).

Some tips for composing effective blog responses:

When summarizing you should clearly and succinctly detail the author's argument, including what evidence and bodies of knowledge s/he used to make their argument and the implications of their argument. In your response, you should engage *critically* with the author's argument. Saying that you like the essay is not enough; rather, you should express an *informed* opinion. What about the author's argument seemed well-reasoned? What might s/he have forgotten to mention? What kinds of evidence would have been helpful to their argument, or would have undermined the validity of their claims? Do you have a counterargument you might offer? You may find it helpful to look up a person to find out more about the perspective from which they're coming while composing your responses.

When you are discussing the assigned listening, you should go beyond whether or not you liked a piece, although this could very well be a starting point for further consideration/discussion/analysis. For example, if you don't like a piece, it might be helpful for you to contemplate why you don't like it—what musical or textual features are problematic to you and why? Whenever possible, you should go into detail about what you hear or notice in the score. You don't have to do a full harmonic analysis for each piece, but you should be able to comment in your response on the musical features that are interesting or meaningful to you and talk about why they are meaningful or interesting. It will often be helpful for you to draw on a piece's context to assist you with these responses. Because this is a music history course, much of your focus should be on understanding each piece in its historical and socio-cultural context; however, I would also encourage you to pay close attention to possible considerations of the performers, listeners, or composers of the assigned pieces.

Midterm Podcast Project

In this class you will create a podcast, for which you will also turn in a script, complete with proper footnotes & citations. You MUST submit a script with your assignment; if you do not complete this portion of the assignment, you cannot receive higher than 50%.

For this project, you will create a thoughtful, informative podcast on one of the following topics: 1) a historical or contemporary disabled musician and their musical craft (performance, composition, etc.); 2) an example of how ableism has affected someone's music-making or reception of their music-making; 3) a piece of media and how disability has been represented within it. You'll want to make sure that your podcast project does not repeat work that has already been done in this area (i.e. there should be some amount of original research involved). Drawing on course readings and your research, you will prepare a 10-12 minute podcast—with a script that is approximately 3-4 pages (or 1000 words) in length, not counting footnotes/bibliography—in which you address the relationship between music and disability for your chosen topic.

If you have never made a podcast before, don't worry! We'll be having a podcast workshop during class in week 6, on Wednesday, February 19.

You must let me know via email the subject of your very specific case study for this podcast **by the end of week 3 (by Friday, January 31 at 11:59pm)**. You must receive a green light from me before you proceed with your project. Your podcast will be **due to me via email in Week 8, by 11:59pm on Friday, March 7**. This assignment (script & media submission) constitutes **15% of your total grade** for this course.

Original Research Project

For this class you will develop, research, and write a 10-page research paper on a topic of your choice that relates in some way to music and mourning. After consulting with me and deciding on a paper topic via a required meeting scheduled in the first three weeks of the semester, you must submit a paper proposal (approx. 300 words outlining what you will examine, what approach you will take, including what sources and theoretical approaches you plan to use, preliminary observations, and a statement of intent) and 15-item bibliography via email by **Week 5, Tuesday, February 11, at 11:59pm**. Your grade for your proposal & bibliography will constitute **5% of your grade** for this course.

You **must** receive approval of your final paper topic from me before continuing with your project. I will give you feedback on your proposal and bibliography, and this may include requesting a re-write if the project appears unmanageable or not well thought out. If this is the case, we will arrange a new due date for your proposal.

The final draft of your research paper is due via email on **Thursday, May 1, at 5pm**, and constitutes **30% of your grade** for this course.

Alternative Formats: Lecture Recital or Podcast

Your research paper can appear in one of two alternative formats—a lecture recital or a podcast—with my approval, which you must obtain as part of the proposal/bibliography submission and feedback process in Week 5. As part of this project, you will need to record yourself giving this lecture recital or podcast, editing it so that it is high quality enough to appear on a website, or be included with an application of some sort. I am giving you these options because I realize it might serve some

of you better than a research project in the traditional written format would, but my expectations for it are just as high. For instance, I would expect you to take advantage of the visual/audio opportunities that these alternative formats allow you for the highest marks. If you have questions about what I expect, please don't hesitate to let me know.

The video of your lecture recital or your audio recording of your podcast, as well as your script for this recital or podcast (with all of the appropriate citations), will be due via email by **Thursday, May 1 at 5pm** and will constitute **30% of your final grade** for this course.

Preparatory Drafts & Materials

Very often the best research papers involve rigorous research that takes place over a significant span of time, as well as careful writing that has been thoughtfully edited, also over a significant span of time. To this end, you will be given a number of formative assignments to help guide you through the research and writing process in ways that will hopefully lead to well-written and well-researched final projects. These formative assignment (all of which will be looked at and commented on by me and/or your classmates) are due as follows:

Two or Three Paper Ideas (due during your meeting with me in weeks 1-3)
Proposal & 15-item bibliography (due Week 5, Tuesday, February 11 by 11:59pm)
Skeleton/Full Draft of Paper (due Week 11, Friday, April 4 by 11:59pm)

Please take these assignments seriously as they will help you immensely to produce strong projects.

In-Class Research Presentations

During the last two weeks of this course you will present the research you have been conducting throughout the semester to me and your classmates in an in-class research presentation (length TBD based on number of students who enroll in the course). I will put up on Canvas a Google doc sign-up sheet for presentation dates/times by the end of week 12. These presentations offer you a chance to get feedback on your project/paper, while also helping you to develop public presentation skills. You can present on any aspect of your research that you wish, although I often recommend that students present on as much of their project as possible in order to get the best feedback. You can choose to present with or without audio/video/Powerpoint; I always suggest that you use whatever tools you feel will help you to best present your research to your classmates in a clear, concise, and comprehensible way. Your presentation is worth 5% of your total grade for this course.

Assignment Formatting

Unless otherwise specified, you should format all assignments as follows: Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins all around. When submitting assignments electronically (which will be nearly all of them), you should title your assignments as follows:

First Name.Last Name.Assignment Title.YYYY.DD.MM.docx.

Example: Jill.Rogers.Final Research Paper.2025.05.01.docx

Your attention to detail in formatting for assignments—including formatting of citations—is crucial to your success on assignments. I will subtract points for improper formatting. All assignments that you turn in should exhibit thoughtful, well-written, original, and polished work that is thoroughly researched and properly cited (when necessary). These citations should be in Chicago Style. For a “quick guide” to this citation style, see http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. Alternatively, consider purchasing

Kate L. Turabian's wonderful resource: *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 2018).

Course Policies

For attendance and late policies, see above (under "Class Participation & Preparedness").

Class Environment:

One of the most crucial aspects of our classroom is that it provides a *safe and respectful environment* where everyone can feel comfortable both asking questions and voicing their ideas. This being said, I also think that discomfort is often necessary as part of the learning process. There will be moments when we discuss difficult issues that you may not have addressed in previous courses. However, I expect each of you to come to class with empathy, an open mind, and the recognition that you have an ethical responsibility to those with whom you share our classroom space. If *for any reason*, you feel that your classroom is not providing you with the environment you need, please e-mail me or schedule a meeting to see me immediately.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you know or think that you may have any kind of disability feel free to come and speak with me about this, and to avail yourself of the resources available to you here at UF. There are absolutely no penalties for seeking accommodations with Disability Support Services.

Here is UF's policy regarding disability accommodations: "Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting our [Get Started page](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester."

On Sexual Misconduct

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to create a positive learning environment for all students. Title IX and UF's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibit sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and dating and domestic violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. I encourage you to visit <https://titleix.ufl.edu/> to learn more.

It is also important that you know that Title IX and University policy require me to share any information brought to my attention about potential sexual misconduct with the campus Deputy Title IX Coordinator or UF's Title IX Coordinator. In that event, those individuals will work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available. Protecting student privacy is of utmost concern, and information will only be shared with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist.

Academic Honesty

University of Florida students are bound by the Honor Pledge. On all work submitted for credit by a student, the following pledge is required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Student Honor Code and Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code, as well as the process for

reported allegations and sanctions that may be implemented. All potential violations of the code will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a student is found responsible for an Honor Code violation in this course, the instructor will enter a Grade Adjustment sanction which may be up to or including failure of the course.

Office Hours

These will take place between 10:30am and 12:30pm on Thursdays, or by appointment, either in my office (Yon Hall 407) or via Zoom, depending on availability and comfort level. I love discussing music with students, so please, indulge me! I hope to get to know each of you this semester not only through our course, but also through working one-on-one with you in office hours.

E-mail Policy

I will always do my best to get back to you as soon as possible. However, I try not to respond to e-mails after 7pm for my own well-being; therefore, if you have questions about assignments before they are due, be sure to e-mail me well in advance. I reserve the right to request 24 hours to get back to you. If you have not heard from me within this amount of time, please resend your e-mail.

Late Submission Policy

I am generally willing to negotiate regarding late assignments. This being said, please plan ahead in order to account for possible issues (technological issues, scheduling conflicts, etc.) in the days just prior to the deadline. If you believe you will have difficulty meeting a particular deadline, you must request an extension in writing (this could be via e-mail) as soon as possible. If you request a last-minute or after-the-due-date extension for one of the above reasons, you must provide me with the appropriate form of documentation. I strongly recommend that you begin all of your assignments well in advance of their deadlines and communicate with me throughout the semester if you are having difficulty keeping up with assignments.

If you miss an assignment entirely, you can request in writing to be able to make it up for reduced credit (i.e. rather than be graded out of a possible 100 points, you might be graded out of a possible 80 points). There are no guarantees that your request will be granted, though I do try to accept late assignments when possible.

Course Evaluations Policy

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under 2 GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Schedule of Classes

Unit 1: Introductions to Each Other & Disability Studies

Week 1 (January 15): Introductions!

Week 2 (January 22): (Re)Defining Disability in Terms of Common Narratives and Medical vs. Cultural Models

Week 3 (January 30): Music, Autism, and Neurodiversity

Week 4 (February 5): Dr. Rogers is Out of Town – NO CLASS

Unit 2: Socio-Historical Constructions of Disability in Music

Week 5 (February 12): Sonifying Disability in the 16th through 18th Centuries

Week 6 (February 19): Music, Sound, and Disability in the 19th Century

Week 7 (February 26): From Stuttering to Stravinsky: Musical Representations of Disability in the Early Twentieth Century

Week 8 (March 5): Disability on Stage and Screen in the Late 20th and Early 21st Century

Unit 3: Performing Disability

Week 9 (March 12): Performing Disability

SPRING BREAK, Wednesday, March 19: NO CLASS

Week 10 (March 26): Disability and Voice

Unit 4: Disability, Musical/Sonic Cultures, Communities, and Technologies

Week 11 (April 2): Deaf Musicking

Week 12 (April 9): Music within Post-Trauma Communities

Week 13 (April 16): Music, Sound, Technology, and Disability Politics

Week 14 (April 23): In-Class Research Presentations

Schedule at a Glance: Important Due Dates

Due Date/Time	Assignment Due
Weeks 1-3	2-3 Project Ideas for your meeting with Dr. Rogers on project possibilities
Week 3, Friday, January 31, by 11:59pm	Podcast Idea for approval
Week 5, Tuesday, February 11, by 11:59pm	Project Proposal & 10-Item Bibliography
Week 8, Friday, March 7, by 11:59pm	Mid-Term Podcast Project
Week 11, Friday, April 4, by 11:59pm	Individual Research Paper Skeleton Draft
Week 14, Wednesday, April 23, in class	Individual Research Project Class Presentation
Finals Week, Thursday, May 1, by 5pm	Final Individual Research Paper