

MUSC 699P

Public Musicology

Professor: William Robin

Contact: wrobin@umd.edu

1. Course description

In recent years, the phrase “public musicology” has become an oft-invoked buzzword in the field, symbolizing a range of activities from blogposts to newspaper articles, tweets to podcasts, preconcert lectures to forensic testimony. What these activities share in common is a desire for scholars trained in music studies to reach audiences outside the academy. In taking public musicology as its subject matter, this seminar has two main purposes: an exploration of the methods and histories of public scholarship in musicology and ethnomusicology; and an immersion in the practices of creating scholarly work aimed towards public audiences. Taking a holistic approach, this course will equally examine public musicology and applied ethnomusicology.

The first half of the course will focus on approaches towards public sector work, considering the history and utility of the “public intellectual,” the social responsibility of the university, the ethics and limits of presenting research to non-academic audiences, and the history of public work in our disciplines. In the second half of the semester, we will practice public musicology in multiple forms, including reading and writing blogposts, online “thinkpieces,” and program notes; creating preconcert lectures; learning about outreach programs to local schools and communities; examining political and activist scholarship; and better understanding the work of museums and institutions for cultural preservation. Along with weekly readings and short assignments, the course will involve three projects: an annotated bibliography of pre-existing public work by a musicologist or ethnomusicologist of your choice; the writing of an online article or “thinkpiece” aimed towards publication; and the execution of a “public” project (broadly defined), accompanied by an essay reflecting on its methods. Finally, in the course of our study, we will create an online platform to define public musicology for our colleagues and more general audiences curious about this emergent field. This course is open to all graduate students.

Project 1: Annotated bibliography (due 2/26)

Each student will choose a musicologist/ethnomusicologist who has engaged substantially in public scholarship and prepare an annotated bibliography of 8–10 items of their public-aimed work. These items might include articles, books, websites/blogs, outreach projects, record labels, or community engagement initiatives. Each citation should be followed by a 100–200 word description of the resource that examines the content of the item and—drawing on what we have studied in class thus far—how it is geared towards the public.

Project 2: Thinkpiece (pitch due 3/12; first draft due 4/8; final draft due 4/24)

Each student will write a “thinkpiece” of 1300–1600 words, aimed towards a specific mainstream publication. We will discuss the concept of a thinkpiece in more detail in class: for the purpose of this course, these articles will involve drawing on your scholarly knowledge to address newsworthy topics in a longform essay aimed at a savvy but non-academic online audience. After researching various publications, you will choose a specific venue that you would imagine this article “fitting well” within. You will “pitch” the article to an editorial board of your peers, and we will discuss and refine these pitches in class; you will write a first draft of the article, which we will workshop together; and you will write a final draft of the article for which, if you would like, we can attempt to seek out actual publication.

Project 3: Public project and reflection paper (proposal due 4/15; project completed and paper due 5/15)

For our final project, each student will devise a public project of their own choosing. The format could be anything that we have studied in the course, whether a piece of public writing, a set of program notes, a preconcert lecture, a community outreach event, a blog, a podcast, etc. But the project must be fully executed: the article should be published, the preconcert event should be presented, etc. Your project must be accompanied by a paper (6–8 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced) examining how you approached the project, considering the readings and discussions from our course that informed your approach, and reflecting on the methodological questions that were asked and answered in the process of execution.

The instructor has designed this syllabus to accord with the university’s Syllabus Guidelines.

PDF = available on ELMS; A = article available through library databases; R = item on reserve at MSPAL

PART I: HISTORIES AND METHODS

Week 1: Introduction (1/30)

Why public scholarship?

- Kristof, “Professors, We Need You!”
https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/16/opinion/sunday/kristof-professors-we-need-you.html?_r=0
- Responses to Kristof:
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/19/opinion/the-decline-of-the-public-intellectual.html>
 - <http://coreyrobin.com/2014/02/16/look-who-nick-kristofs-saving-now/>
 - <https://storify.com/tressiemcphd/kristof-engagedacademics-and-resources>
- Lye, Newfield, and Vernon, “Humanists and the Public University” **PDF**

And what is public musicology?

- O’Brien, “Listening as Activism” <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/listening-as-activism-the-sonic-meditations-of-pauline-oliveros>

- Lentjes, “Gendered Sonic Violence” <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2016/10/31/gendered-sonic-violence-from-the-waiting-room-to-the-locker-room/>
- Polzonetti, “Don Giovanni Goes to Prison” http://musicologynow.ams-net.org/2016/02/don-giovanni-goes-to-prison-teaching_16.html [Also read all comments in PDF]
- Gordon, “The Perils of Public Musicology” <http://musicologynow.ams-net.org/2016/02/the-perils-of-public-musicology.html>

Week 2: Intellectuals, their publics, and their purpose (2/6)

What is a public intellectual?

- Greif, “What’s Wrong With Public Intellectuals?” <http://www.chronicle.com/article/Whats-Wrong-With-Public/189921>
- Jacoby, “The Latest Intellectuals” <http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Latest-Intellectuals/234339?cid=cp16> and responses
- Dyson, “Thinking Out Loud” <https://newrepublic.com/article/122756/think-out-loud-emerging-black-digital-intelligentsia>

What is a public?

- Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics” **PDF**

What’s the point?

- Bok, “The Purposes of the University and Its Responsibilities to Society” (*Beyond the Ivory Tower R*)
- Fish, “Do Your Job” (*Save the World on Your Own Time R*)

Assignment: Read one of the following essays by a public intellectual, investigate its history and reception, and make a one-page bullet point summary of your findings [consider both its content and how it presents itself to a “public”]

- Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch”
- Baldwin, “The Fire Next Time”
- Coates, “The Case for Reparations”
- Arendt, “Eichmann in Jerusalem”
- Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp’”
- Chomsky, “The Responsibility of Intellectuals”
- Carson, “Silent Spring”

Week 3: Applied ethnomusicology (2/13)

What is applied ethnomusicology?

- Titon, “Applied Ethnomusicology, a Descriptive and Historical Account” (*Oxford Handbook R*)
- Dirksen, “Reconsidering Theory and Practice in Ethnomusicology” <http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/17/piece/602>
- Titon, “Music, the Public Interest, and the Practice of Ethnomusicology” **A**

What are the methods and practices of applied ethnomusicology?

- Seeger, “Theories Forged in the Crucible of Action” **A**
- Sheey, “A Few Notions About Philosophy and Strategy” **A**
- Davis, “Careers, ‘Alternative Careers,’ and the Unity Between Theory and Practice” **A**

Assignment: Choose a chapter from the Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology (R) and create a one-page bullet point summary of its main contributions.

Week 4: Public musicology (2/20)

What was (public) musicology?

- Tovey, excerpts from “The Forms of Music” **R**
- Lang, “Musicology and Musical Letters” (*Musicology and Performance* **R**)
- Lang, “Wagner: The Master of Tristan” (*Musicology and Performance* **R**)
- Taruskin, “Last Thoughts First,” “The Modern Sound of Early Music,” “Tradition and Authority,” from *Text and Act* **R**
- McClary, “Constructions of Subjectivity in Franz Schubert’s Music” (*Queering the Pitch* **R**) and Holland, “Dr. Freud, Can Tea Really Just Be Tea?”
<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/02/17/arts/critic-s-notebook-dr-freud-can-tea-really-just-be-tea.html>
- Philip Gossett, “Scholars and Performers: The Case of *Semiramide*” (*Divas and Scholars* **R**)

What is public musicology?

- Musicology Now, “Musicology Now and Later” <http://musicologynow.ams-net.org/2016/11/musicology-now-and-later.html>
- The Avid Listener, “About” <http://www.theavidlistener.com/about.html>
- “The Past, Present, and Future of Public Musicology”
<http://musicinnewjersey.com/conference/> (browse website and read abstracts)
- Buehrer, “Billy Joel Academics Get in a Piano State of Mind,”
http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/11/arts/music/billy-joel-conference.html?_r=0
- Marshall, “The Man Musicians Call When Two Tunes Sound Alike,”
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/12/arts/music/the-man-musicians-call-when-two-tunes-sound-alike.html>
- Hess, “Public Musicology...1939” <http://musicologynow.ams-net.org/2013/11/public-musicology-1939.html?q=hess>
- Ross, “When Music is Violence”
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/07/04/when-music-is-violence>

Assignment: Choose one of the following public musicologists, investigate their work, and provide a one-page summary of their activities for the public.

- Richard Taruskin (writing for *New York Times* and other publications)
- Mark Clague and/or Susan Key (*Star-Spangled Music*)
- Ellen Rosand (Yale Baroque Opera Project)
- Joseph Horowitz (public writing, work with the Brooklyn Philharmonic and Postclassical Ensemble)
- Philip Gossett (critical editions and Italian opera in performance)
- Oscar Sonneck (Library of Congress, report on the *Star-Spangled Banner*)
- Alex Ross (books and writing for *The New Yorker*)
- William Cheng (various articles online; book *Just Vibrations*)
- Alfred Einstein (popular histories of music)
- Mark Katz (Beat Making Lab, state department program Next Level)

- Vivian Perlis (Yale Oral History of American Music, co-publications with Copland)
- Micaela Baranello (opera reviewing at blog Likely Impossibilities, writing for *New York Times*)
- Olga Haldey (writing for *Opera Today*)
- Linda Shaver-Gleason (blog *Not Another Music History Cliché!*)
- Charles Downey (writing for *Washington Post*, *Ionarts*, *Washington Classical Review*)
- Elizabeth Le Guin (performance)
- Robin James (blog *It's Her Factory* and online writing)
- Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr. (website Musiqology)
- Robert Greenberg (Great Courses)

[Due 2/26: Annotated bibliography]

Week 5: When it goes wrong (2/27)

What are the limits of public scholarship?

- Cottom, “Risks and Ethics in Public Scholarship”
<https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/university-venus/risk-and-ethics-public-scholarship>
- Cottom, “Who Do You Think You Are?” <http://adanewmedia.org/2015/04/issue7-mcmillancottom/>
- Cottom, “Everything But the Burden” <https://tressiemc.com/uncategorized/everything-but-the-burden-publics-public-scholarship-and-institutions/>
- Schalet, “Should Writing for the Public Count Toward Tenure?”
<http://theconversation.com/should-writing-for-the-public-count-toward-tenure-63983>
- Healy, “Public Sociology in the Age of Social Media”
<https://kieranhealy.org/files/papers/soc-social-media.pdf>
- Fish, “Don’t Try To Do Someone Else’s Job” (*Save the World on Your Own Time R*)
- Flaherty, “Professor Meets World”
<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/05/14/what-happens-when-scholars-discuss-potentially-controversial-ideas-outside-bubbles>

Assignment: Choose one of the following scholars whose work has been publicly controversial, investigate the different opinions and implications of the controversy, and provide a one-page bullet point summary of your findings.

- Stephen Salaita
- Alice Goffman
- Cornel West
- Melissa Click
- Stanley Fish
- George Ciccariello
- Saida Grundy
- Shannon Gibney

PART II: PRACTICES

Week 6: Writing for the public (3/6)

What's the difference between "academic" writing and "popular" writing?

- Rothman, "Why Is Academic Writing So Academic?"
<http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/why-is-academic-writing-so-academic>
- Pinker, "Why Academics Stink At Writing" <http://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-Academics-Writing-Stinks/148989/>
- Klein, "In Defense of Academic Writing" <https://judgmentalobserver.com/2015/01/08/in-defense-of-academic-writing/>
- Azari, "Public Scholars Have an Obligation to be Honest"
<http://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction/2016/12/22/14049936/public-scholars-research-honest>
- Warner, "Styles of Intellectual Publics" (*Publics and Counterpublics R*)
- Campbell, "Tricky Tropes: Styles of the Popular and the Pompous" **PDF**
- Browse the "Reviews" and "Essays" sections of *Los Angeles Review of Books* and read work written by academics <https://lareviewofbooks.org/>

Assignment: Select a journal article or book chapter of your choice and "review" it for the general public, in the style of a Los Angeles Review of Books essay/review. As you are reviewing an article, not a book, you should be brief: no more than 800 words. Your review should explain the significance and implications of the text, and it should be approachable and engaging for a non-academic reader who has no prior knowledge of the subject.

Week 7: The thinkpiece and cultural criticism (3/13)

What is a "thinkpiece"?

- Haglund, "Why 'Think Piece' Is Pejorative"
http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2014/05/07/thinkpiece_definition_and_history_roots_of_the_word_show_it_has_long_been.html
- Read various thinkpieces on Beyoncé's *Lemonade*
https://www.buzzfeed.com/hannahgiorgis/i-aint-sorry?utm_term=.icNmVXpM8#.xkrmdXDq
- Robin, "Colin Kaepernick and the Radical Uses of the 'Star-Spangled Banner'"
<http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/colin-kaepernick-and-the-radical-uses-of-the-star-spangled-banner>
- James, "Hello from the Same Side" <http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/hello-from-the-same-side/>

What is the purpose of online cultural criticism today?

- Goldstein, "The New Intellectuals" <http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-New-Intellectuals/238354>
- Seek out and read longform work by scholars, cultural critics, and/or music writers on some of the following websites:
 - The New Yorker Culture Desk <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk> (e.x. features by Jia Tolentino, Alex Ross, Amanda Petrusich)
 - Los Angeles Review of Books
 - Slate

- The New Inquiry
- Jacobin
- MTV News
- The Atlantic
- BuzzFeed (e.x. features by Anne Helen Peterson)
- NPR Music (e.x. features by Ann Powers)
- Pitchfork (e.x. features by Eric Harvey, Greil Marcus, Simon Reynolds)
- n+1

*Assignment: Pitch a “thinkpiece” aimed towards a specific mainstream publication: in fewer than 200 words, describe the article you want to write (“what’s it about?”), its significance and impact on a general reader (“why should we care?”), its fit within the mission of the platform (“why should we publish this?”), and its timeliness (“why should we publish this **now**?”).*

A few guides to “pitching”

- http://www.theopedproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=82
- <http://www.xojane.com/diy/how-to-pitch-an-editor>
- <https://www.themuse.com/advice/3-mistakes-that-make-editors-throw-your-pitch-in-the-trash>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/may/08/how-to-pitch-freelance-articles-to-editors>
- <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/08/how-not-to-pitch/279193/>

Week 8: Blogs and social media (3/27)

What’s blogging, and why blog?

- Shaver-Gleason, “Not Another Music History Blog!” <http://musicologynow.ams-net.org/2016/12/not-another-music-history-blog-public.html>
- Kaufman, “An Enthusiast’s View of Academic Blogs” <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2007/11/01/enthusiasts-view-academic-blogs>
- Maitzen, “Should Graduate Students Blog?” <http://www.openlettersmonthly.com/novelreadings/should-graduate-students-blog/>
- Konnikova, “Why grad schools should require students to blog” <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/literally-psyched/why-grad-schools-should-require-students-to-blog/>
- Tyers, “Five Reasons Why Graduate Students Should Blog” <https://thesocietypages.org/sociologylens/2015/04/23/graduate-advice-month-five-reasons-why-you-should-start-blogging/>
- Browse graduate student blogs from this list: <https://thesiswhisperer.com/read-some-phd-student-blogs/>
- Browse the blog of the Society for U.S. Intellectual History <http://s-usih.org/blog>
- Browse musicology blogs:
 - Trax on the Trail <http://www.traxonthetrail.com/>
 - Sounding Out! <https://soundstudiesblog.com/>
 - Dial M for Musicology <https://dialmformusicology.com/>

- Sound Matters <https://soundmattersthesemblog.wordpress.com/>
- Unanswered Question <http://www.artsjournal.com/uq/>
- Boulezian <http://boulezian.blogspot.com/>
- Protest Vibes <http://protestvibes.blogspot.com/?view=classic>
- Music I Used to Hate <https://musicusedtohate.wordpress.com/>
- Likely Impossibilities <http://likelyimpossibilities.com/>
- Musical Perceptions <http://musicalperceptions.blogspot.com/>
- Unsung Symphonies <http://unsungsymphonies.blogspot.com/>
- Musiqology <http://musiqology.com/blog/>
- Amusicology <https://amusicology.wordpress.com/>
- The Taruskin Challenge <https://taruskinchallenge.wordpress.com/>
- Musicology Now <http://musicologynow.ams-net.org/>
- When In Musicology <http://wheninmusicology.tumblr.com/>
- Musicology/Matters <http://musicologymatters.blogspot.co.uk/>
- Miscellaneous Mayhem <http://miscellaneousmayhem.blogspot.co.uk/>
- IASPM-US <http://iaspm-us.net/>
- It's Her Factory <http://www.its-her-factory.com/>

What's the deal with Twitter, anyway?

- Golliver, “10 Commandments of Twitter for Academics” <http://www.chronicle.com/article/10-Commandments-of-Twitter-for/131813/>
- Ramsey, “The Truth about Black Twitter” <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/04/the-truth-about-black-twitter/390120/>
- Browse your professor's Twitter: <http://twitter.com/seatedovation>
- Browse this list of music scholars on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/seatedovation/lists/music-scholars>

Assignment: Imagine that you have created a blog from your perspective as a scholar: what would it be called, what would its focus be, and what audience would you want to reach? Write a short “sample” blog post (500–700 words) for this blog, on a topic of your choice. Try to utilize links, multimedia, etc.

Week 9: Museums, grants, and cultural preservation (4/3)

Guest: Jennie Terman

What is the role of the (ethno)musicologist in cultural preservation?

- Schippers, “Applied Ethnomusicology and Intangible Cultural Heritage” (*Oxford Handbook R*)
- Titon, “Sustainability, Resilience, and Adaptive Management for Applied Ethnomusicology” (*Oxford Handbook R*)

What is the role of the (ethno)musicologist in the museum?

- Murphy, “The Applied Ethnomusicologist as Public Folklorist” (*Oxford Handbook R*)
- Portnow, “Musicology Everywhere” <https://musicologyeverywhere.wordpress.com/allison-portnow/>
- Hanley, “Musicology Everywhere” <https://musicologyeverywhere.wordpress.com/jason-hanley/>
- Additional readings TBD

[Due 4/8: Thinkpiece first draft]

Week 10: Local outreach and thinkpiece discussion 4/10)

What can (ethno)musicologists offer to communities?

- Usner, “United States Ethnomusicology and the Engaged University (*Applied Ethnomusicology* R)
- Summit, “Advocacy and the Ethnomusicologist” (*Oxford Handbook* R)
- Bok, “The University and the Local Community”
- Haskell, “The Role of Applied Ethnomusicology in Post-Conflict and Post-Catastrophe Communities” (*Oxford Handbook* R)
- Read about UMD’s Do Good initiative <http://dogood.umd.edu/>
- Browse website of Star-Spangled Music <http://starspangledmusic.org/>
- Rivers Ndaliko, excerpts from *Necessary Noise* (R)
- Browse website of Yole! Africa <https://yoleafrica.org/>

[Due 4/15: Final project proposal]

Week 11: Program notes, public lectures, and podcasts (4/17)

Guest: Patrick Warfield

How do you write about music for a general audience?

- Various authors, San Francisco Symphony notes <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Watch-Listen-Learn/Read-Program-Notes/Program-Notes.aspx>
- Keller, New York Philharmonic notes <http://nyphil.org/plan-your-visit/how-to-prepare/program-notes>
- Browse program notes in Steinberg, *The Symphony* and *The Concerto* R

How do you speak about music to a general audience?

- Browse excerpts from these lectures:
 - Greenberg on Shostakovich <https://youtu.be/0phr0GD0hXg>
 - Hershberger on *Lizzie Borden* <https://youtu.be/eePpOxPHXI0>
 - Stucky on *Come Out* <https://youtu.be/6dmltbwI9nw>
 - Reed on Stagger Lee <https://youtu.be/WTEU0rIR2yM>
 - Adolphe on Schubert <https://youtu.be/CULfYiee6MM>
 - Youens on *Winterreise* https://youtu.be/2_SMpSPfp6I
 - Beyond the Score on *The Rite of Spring* https://youtu.be/R3cJ_u9pTw8
- Explore these podcasts:
 - Meet the Composer <http://www.wqxr.org/#!/programs/meet-composer/>
 - All Songs Considered <http://www.npr.org/podcasts/510019/all-songs-considered>
 - Sounding Out <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/sounding-out%21/id435193796>
 - Switched on Pop <http://www.switchedonpop.com/>
 - Talking Musicology <https://talkingmusicology.wordpress.com/>

Assignment: Write a program note for a piece of your choice (approximately 500 words) in the style of the program notes written for The Clarice (e.x.

https://theclarice.umd.edu/sites/default/files/program-notes/clarice_112214_Calder.pdf

<https://theclarice.umd.edu/sites/default/files/program->

[notes/clarice_101014_MPadmore_JBiss.pdf](#)), and transform it into a short (approximately 5 minutes) excerpt from a preconcert lecture for that program. Be prepared to “perform” your preconcert lecture in class.

[Due 4/24: Thinkpiece final draft]

Week 12: Cultural diplomacy (4/24)

Skype guest: Mark Katz

What is the role of the musicologist in cultural diplomacy?

- Read about Next Level <https://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/next-level> and browse media <https://www.facebook.com/NextLevelUSA/>
- Salois, “The US Department of State’s Hip Hop Diplomacy in Morocco” A
- Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America’s Cold War Diplomacy* R

Assignment: First draft of your contribution to the course blog

Week 13: Activist scholarship (5/1)

Can public scholarship be political?

- Victor, “A political science call to action” <http://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction/2016/11/18/13673274/political-science-call-to-action>
- Bok, “Taking Political Positions” (*Beyond the Ivory Tower* R)
- Hale, “Activist Research v. Cultural Critique: Indigenous Land Rights and the Contradictions of Politically Engaged Anthropology” A
- Hale, “Introduction” (*Engaging Contradictions* R)
- Pulido, “FAQs: Frequently (Un)Asked Questions about Being a Scholar Activist” (*Engaging Contradictions* R)
- Fish, “Don’t Let Anyone Else Do Your Job” (*Save the World on Your Own Time* R)

How can public musicology be political?

- Cheng, *Just Vibrations* R
- Hofman, “Maintaining the Distance, Othering the Subaltern” (*Applied Ethnomusicology* R)
- Additional reading TBD

Assignment: Final draft of your contribution to the course blog

Week 14: Discussion of final projects (5/8)

[Due 5/15: Public project should be completed and reflection paper submitted]