

## MUS 503 - Social Issues In Popular Music

Instructor: Peter Johnston

### Podcast Assignment

Format: MP3 (128 kbps)

Length: 5-8 minutes

Evaluation: 15%

**Late penalty:** 10% per day late, counted from 11:59 pm each day.

**Submission:** online, through Brightspace

**Assignment Details:** The purpose of this assignment is to summarize and analyze the topics and arguments presented in a music-related podcast, and then to apply the ideas explored in that podcast to a musical example of your choosing. The submission format is an MP3 "response" podcast, so you are expected to use basic sound-editing software to create an audio document - links to tutorials for making podcasts on Mac and PC are attached below. Like the podcasts you are analyzing, your response podcast should have a mixture of talking and relevant musical examples, and you should compose a "script" in advance based on notes taken while listening to the podcast you are reviewing.

This assignment is intended to help you develop skills in digital audio editing and digital content generation. You are not expected to have any previous digital audio experience; there are plenty of resources online to help you create a professional-sounding document. The primary evaluative criteria will be the quality of the ideas and analysis you present, but you will also be rewarded for the creativity and imagination displayed in your work.

Your response podcast should be structured as two basic sections:

**Section I:** Summarize the content of your chosen podcast, addressing questions such as:

- What are the main themes and issues raised in this podcast?
- What are the opinions expressed by the host and/or guest, and how do they support these opinions?
- How is the podcast structured? Is it mostly talking? Is there music integrated into the content? Are there guests or interview subjects? In other words, how did the producers tell their story?
- How do the music and ideas in the podcast connect to the themes of the course?
- Did the podcast make you think differently about a particular kind of music, or the role of music in society?
- Is there anything missing that you would have liked to see addressed, or did you disagree in any way with the content?

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**Section II:** choose an artist/song/video/genre that connects to the basic themes of the podcast, and develop a brief analysis of your choice using themes and ideas derived from the podcast. For example, if the podcast is about product placement, present an example of product placement by an artist that you have noticed, and describe how it relates to the themes and ideas developed in the podcast. Or if the podcast is about feminism in pop music, present an analysis of an artist of your choice who has a connection to feminism. Support your analysis with brief musical examples and descriptions of relevant videos/performances. Do not play full songs, only relevant excerpts - the main content needs to be talking, with music as support to the argument.

Please begin your response podcast by stating your name, something like: "My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and this podcast is a response to the *Between The Liner Notes* podcast episode titled "I Want My MTV".

**Example Podcasts:** Choose one of the following podcasts to analyze and respond to (Dropbox link to podcasts posted on Brightspace):

1. *Between The Liner Notes* - "I Want My MTV" (The history of music videos)
2. *Switched on Pop* - "All About Those Baseline Assumptions about Feminism in Pop"
3. *New York Times Podcast* - "Blurred Legal Lines: Robin Thicke and Plagiarism in Pop Music" (The story of the copyright case involving "Blurred Lines")
4. *Pitch* - "Take A Little Ride With Coors Light" (Product placement in pop music)
5. *Radiolab* - "Nicki Minaj and the Crisis of Modern Hip Hop" (Race and gender issues in modern hip hop)
6. *Between The Liner Notes* - "Jingle Brains" (The story of advertising jingles and how popular music is used to sell us things)
7. *Sound Opinions* - "Riot Grrrl at 25" (The story of the queer, punk rock feminist movement in the 1990s)
8. *Sound Opinions* - "Television and Popular Music" (Discussion about how popular music has been used in television shows)

Your response podcast will be shorter than the above professional podcasts, but you are encouraged to take this opportunity to use your imagination to create a compelling audio document within the time limit of this assignment. For example, if you know an artist who deals with the issues presented in your chosen podcast, you could interview that artist for Section II. Or you could include recordings of live concerts you have attended. There are lots of possibilities - using the example podcasts as models, be creative and have fun with it.

**Please strive for a professional tone in your delivery, as if you were creating content for a general audience, like the above models.**

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**Evaluation criteria:** content quality, demonstration of comprehension of issues, use of terms and concepts from the podcast and course materials, structure (concise and coherent flow of ideas), content delivery, and production value (sound quality, musical examples, general listenability). The rubric that will be used to evaluate your work is attached below.

**Technical Requirements:** Podcasts can be created using free audio software on Mac and PC, and there are plenty of YouTube tutorials on podcast creation and editing. Mac and iOS users can use the built-in software Garageband, and PC users can use the freeware Audacity (but any software that can do the job is acceptable - you will only submit the final product, so the software used to create the podcast doesn't matter).

Many tutorials suggest that you need a microphone to do a podcast - while microphones generate higher-quality audio, you can use a computer's built-in microphone to record your voice if you don't have a microphone. Just be sure to monitor the sound through headphones to avoid feedback while recording.

Example YouTube podcast tutorials:

Garageband: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBAbl-kU3mc>

Audacity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piuMLXF2rZY>

There are many more available, so you should be able to find one that works for your computer system.

Once created, your podcast must be compressed to MP3, exported as 128 kbps, and uploaded through the "Assignment" window in Brightspace. Both Garageband and Audacity have built-in ways to render your project to MP3.

**Please name your file with your first and last name, as in: DukeAlyward503Podcast.mp3**

### SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

	Did you compress your MP3 file to 128kbps?
	Did you use your name in the filename for the MP3? (DukeAylward503podcast.mp3)
	Did you follow the basic structure outlined above?
	Did you strive for the best sound quality you could with the equipment you have?
	Did you listen back for mistakes, and play it for someone else for their feedback?

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**Podcast Assignment Grading Rubric**

Criteria	Highly Proficient 4 points	Proficient 3 points	Limited Proficiency 2 points	Needs Work 1 point	Unacceptable 0 points
Content and Organization	Content is accurate, focused, and consistent; presented in a coherent way with a clear argument and narrative	Content is somewhat accurate and fairly clear; offers solid but less accurate reasoning; minor problems in narrative structure	Content is vague OR only loosely related to the writing task; limited support for argument; narrative difficult to follow	Content unclear; lapses in coherence or no relation to writing task; offers simplistic, undeveloped support for ideas	Work does not meet the standards of a course at this level.
Critical Thinking and Use of Course Terminology	Skillful use of relevant terminology, demonstrates clear understanding of course concepts and makes insightful connections	Adequately demonstrates reasonable relationships among ideas, demonstrates basic understanding of core concepts	Simplistic analysis of complex issue, demonstrates awareness of terms but lacks comprehension of their meanings	Insufficient reasoning and lacks complexity of thought; inadequate use of terminology learned in class	Work does not meet the standards of a course at this level.
Creativity	Podcast demonstrates significant thought and creativity	Podcast demonstrates sufficient thought and creativity	Podcast demonstrates a minimal level of thought and creativity	Podcast fails to demonstrate creativity thought, sounds unprofessional	Work does not meet the standards of a course at this level.
Language and Presentation	Delivery was clear, coherent, and professional-sounding	Delivery was coherent, but lacked polish	Delivery was overly casual, with inappropriate word choices	Delivery was difficult to follow, problematic tone throughout	Work does not meet the standards of a course at this level.
Production Values	Sound quality and editing are at a near- professional level	Minor problems in editing and sound quality	Consistent issues in editing and poor sound quality make your work a challenge to listen to	Significant issues in sound quality and editing make your work very difficult to listen to.	Work does not meet the standards of a course at this level.
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>Level 5 16 or more</b>	<b>Level 4 12 or more</b>	<b>Level 3 8 or more</b>	<b>Level 2 0 or more</b>	