

**LAH 4737:  
Music, Modernity, & Identity  
in Latin American History**

Instructor: Micah Oelze, PhD  
Meeting Time: TBA  
Office Hours: M/W 3-5 pm & by appt

**Course Description:**

Music today forms a fundamental part of our life. We quickly recognize its presence in our recreational activities: at the club, in the car, in our earphones while we work out. Listen carefully, and you notice music is not just about having a good time. Music is critical in the articulation of national identity, in political organization, and even in government projects of policing. We experience deep feelings toward our nation when we hear patriotic songs. Groups sing politically-conscious tunes as they take to the streets in a protest march. The US military employs megaphones to torture prisoners across the globe without leaving a mark on their bodies. These uses of music are not recent phenomena. They have been in development for years.

*Music, Modernity, and Identity in Latin America* is an upper-level readings course designed first to give a survey of the history of music as it related to Latin American & Caribbean projects of political and social organization. In discussions and course readings we will return repeatedly to the themes of **nationalism**, questions of **citizenship**, and the project of building the **modern state**.

But this is not a survey course. It is an upper-level readings and **Global Learning** course. Keeping this in mind as we read means recognizing that we are not just accountable for paying attention to a historical narrative, but also to larger course themes and to historical thinking concepts.

**Course Objectives:**

LAH 4737 aims to introduce (and accustom) you to higher-level engagement with history. It is not to move beyond simple narratives and single-meaning primary sources. So what will this look like? **First**, you will become familiar with reading social, political, and critical theory and then applying the concepts you learn about to specific historical cases. In this course we will focus on three such concepts: nationalism, state formation, and citizenship. Your essays will require you examine these carefully. **Second**, you must learn to strategies for primary sources allowing you to arrive at original conclusions regarding their meaning. In this course, we will focus on musical sources. But you do not have to play an instrument or sing to take the course. I provide you with all the training necessary to successfully navigate each assignment. **Third**, the course introduces you to *historical thinking practices*. Historians have certain practices that guide the questions they ask and the work they do. In this course you will work with three of them: change and continuity; reading primary sources; and historical perspective. We will explore their meaning in class discussions, and you will keep them in mind as you write your essays and construct your final project. Along the way, you will be listening to great tunes.

### **Global Learning Course Objectives:**

This is a discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts toward your Global Learning graduation requirement. The reading, writing, and creative assignments will encourage students to build evidence-based arguments regarding the historical role of Latin American & Caribbean societies in current processes of globalization.

Upon successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural approaches shaping Latin American economic, social and political development, and culture and, in turn, how central events in Latin American history have impacted historical developments beyond the region. (**Global Awareness**)
- Conduct a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems related to historical developments (economic, political, social, etc) as made manifest in music. (**Global Perspective**)
- Demonstrate willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving with regard to the issue of domestic violence. (**Global Engagement**).

### **Course Learning Outcomes:**

In light of these objectives, after completing this course, you should be able to:

- Define the terms nationalism, state formation, and citizenship. You must also be able to point to historical moments in twentieth-century Latin America in which these terms have been defined and debated.
- Demonstrate basic music literacy, being able to interpret ideas and narratives as they are communicated through musical form, style, instrumentation, and lyrics.
- Recognize cases in which diverse cultural production (eg from different nations) has played similar political and social roles. Having noted such sociopolitical processes, you should try to outline the distinct contours of these projects as they took form in different nation-states.
- Demonstrate competency in applying newly-gained reading strategies to primary documents, providing original interpretations that connect with theoretical and historical course readings.
- Point to language and explanations in primary sources to demonstrate that they recognize changing perspectives in notions such as “citizenship,” recognizing how such perspectives have developed differently across space and over time.
- Creatively engage with course themes while maintaining historical perspective.

## Assessment and Evaluation:

### Participation and Attendance (30%):

This class provides you, as students, with an enormous opportunity for deeply integrated learning. You will listen to top compositions and read quality scholarship produced in and about Latin America. To really benefit from this opportunity, however, you must read thoroughly, listen carefully, and come to class prepared to dialogue. For this reason, I expect all students to prepare for class by reading, reflecting, and taking careful notes on the reading. The participation grade will be based on the extent and quality of your participation in class discussions.

### Essays 1 & 2: “Concept Connection” Essays (15% each)

You will craft two essays (4pgs each, Times New Roman 12 pt font, double-spaced, Chicago citations) that connect theoretical readings on the concepts of **nationalism** and **state formation** with local cases of these events as they played out in twentieth-century Brazil and Jamaica.

Students will receive a high grade if they provide evidence that they have a clear understanding of the historical concepts and demonstrate that they can apply theoretical models to specific historic cases. Finally, I expect students to evaluate the role of music in furthering goals of the state and draw distinctions between the generic model and the specific historical case.

Essays must have a thesis, citations for all relevant information, and feature evidence that supports the argument. As an exercise in educational scaffolding, the first assignment allows students to choose whether they want to include analysis of a primary source; the second essay requires this.

### Essay 3: “Comparative Primary Source Essay” (15%)

Students’s third essay (still 4 pages, 12 pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, Chicago style citations) will offer an explanation for the ways in which the notion of **citizenship** has changed over the last half-century in Latin America and the Caribbean. (specifically in Cuba, Brazil, and Jamaica). The writing will feature evidence-based research from primary, secondary, and theoretical sources. The primary sources, in line with the subject of the course, will be music albums.

Your job is to analyze two historical albums and two contemporary albums (I will give you a list of options). Then you will write a comparative analysis of how the albums envision and debate the notion of citizenship.

### Final Group Assignment: “The Album Project” (15%)

In the last three weeks of the course, students will be divided into groups of 4 and charged with the assignment of synthesizing course themes into a creative musical assignment. Specifically, students will develop a “historic album” complete with a cover, liner notes, and a playlist.

Groups must choose the year (in history) that the album was “released”, and then imagine themselves as state or private employees producing all aspects of the album. The motivation for launching the album must align with one of our central course themes (nationalism, state formation, citizenship).

The album can thus take on tones of government propaganda, or it can be an anti-government protest in defense of human rights. This is the students’ choice. But each component aspect of the album must demonstrate coherence with this broader theme. Students must write imagining themselves as historic actors, and limiting themselves to words and concepts available in the time period.

This is as a group project. Students will be graded accordingly (likely in groups of four). They will be evaluated on their final product. You must demonstrate that you have spent time reflecting on the assignment and researching the diverse aspects of the album. I will expect coherence between the theme, the songs of the playlist, the album artwork and the liner notes.

### **Final Presentation (5%):**

Students will receive a grade for their final in-class presentation of their “Album Project.” This presentation should explain the selected theme, demonstrate coherence through the component parts of the album, and provide conclusions about the learning experience.

### **Visit to History Tutors (5%)**

FIU’s history department has an incredible tutoring program just for students taking history courses. Tutoring appointments are with graduate students or graduates of the history program. You take a draft of your paper to an appointment, and spend 50 minutes working with a tutor to improve your writing. Working with a tutor usually results in a grade improvement of at least an entire letter grade.

At some point during the semester, you must make an appointment with the tutors for one of your papers. This appointment will be 5% of your grade. (Write your name in the sign-in sheets at the tutoring office DM 397 and I will take note). From then on, you are welcome to visit as many times as you find helpful. To make the appointment, visit <https://history.fiu.edu/tutoring>. This website also contains valuable instructions for organizing an historical essay and editing your writing. I wrote those instructions, so they are absolutely valid and pertinent for our class.

### **Grading Scale:**

LETTER	RANGE (%)	LETTER	RANGE (%)	LETTER	RANGE (%)
	95 or above	B	83 - 86	C	70 - 76
A-	90 - 94	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	F	59 or less

### **Intellectual Honesty:**

In addition to the fact that FIU has strict rules and policies regarding academic misconduct (<http://undergrad.fiu.edu/academic-integrity/misconducts.html>), I believe that History as a discipline is best when considered an ethical pursuit. We work with the past to learn how to live well in the present. As such, I will hold our classroom to a high standard of academic honesty. For me as your professor, this means I must teach you about citations, quotations, and how historians recognize other scholars for their ideas. On your part, this means doing honest research and crediting those that helped you along the way. Anyone not willing to keep to this agreement will be sanctioned according to the university policies for academic misconduct.

### **Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities must contact the Disability Resource Center (305-348-3532 or [drc@fiu.edu](mailto:drc@fiu.edu)) in order to request special accommodations.

### **Readings:**

Classroom discussions will be guided by a number of scholarly articles and three different scholarly monographs. All of the articles are available for download on the classroom blackboard page. The three monographs can be purchased at the library bookstore or an online bookstore. They are also available for 2-hr loan at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor desk at the Green Library. I have included the titles and LOC call numbers here:

John Chasteen, *National Rhythms, African Beats: The Deep History of Latin American Popular Dance* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004).

Call Number: GV1626.C47

Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello, Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). Call number: ML3487.B7 M39

Colin Grant, *The Natural Mystics: Muley, Tosh, and Wailer* (New York: WW Norton, 2011). Call number: ML385.G78

Sample of PDF articles and book excerpts (available online):

- Andrade, "Social Evolution of Brazilian Music"
- Baker, "Resounding City"
- Duménil & Lévy, "Citizenship in Popular Music"
- Dunn, "Tom Zé and Citizen Android"
- Moore, *Music & Revolution: Culture Change in Socialist Cuba*
- Morse, *Nationalization of the Masses*
- Nelze, "Composer as Anthropologist"
- Turino, *Politics of Participation: Music as Social Life*

### Course Schedule:

All articles are available on our course website / LMS. In addition to the readings, you are responsible for the “listening assignments” posted online. I reserve the right to change or add a couple of the articles listed here, for the benefit of the class.

#### Week 1: “Introductions” and “Colonial Harmony”

First day of class: discuss syllabus, expectations, and assignments.  
Discussion: Music and Writing Fundamentals.

Readings & Multimedia:

- Baker, “The Resounding City”
- Knighton, “Music and Ritual in Urban Spaces”
- Jacob Collier, “Harmony” (video)

#### Week 2: “Independence: Brazil and Cuba”

Readings:

- Chasteen, select chapters

#### Week 3: “Nationalism is Political (Brazil)”

Readings:

- Mosse, *Nationalization of the Masses*
- McCann, select chapters

#### Week 4: “Musical Nationalism (Brazil)”

Readings:

- Turino, “Musical Nationalism in Latin America”
- Oelze, “Composer as Anthropologist”
- Canto Ombonico excerpt

#### Week 5: Reflection Week

Essay #1 is due. Use the concepts from the theoretical readings (Mosse; Turino) to provide a new perspective EITHER on two secondary sources (McCann, Chasteen, Oelze), or on one secondary source and one primary source (primary sources available on course website). Essay should be 4 complete pages, double spaced, 12 pt font, Times New Roman, footnote citations (Chicago style).

#### Week 6: “Island Independence (Jamaica)”

- Grant, *Natural Mystics*, Chapters 1-6

#### Week 7: “Politics of Participation”

- Turino, *Politics of Participation*, select chapters

#### Week 8: “Local Sounds, Global Repercussions (Jamaica)”

Readings:

- Grant, *Natural Mystics*, Chapter 7-14

**Week 9: Reflection Week**

Essay #2 is due. Use the concepts from the theoretical readings (Turino) to provide a new perspective on the Grant monograph AND one or two songs (available on course website). Essay should be 4 complete pages, double-spaced, 12 pt font, Times New Roman, footnote citations (Chicago style).

**Week 10: “Sounds of the Cuban Revolution”**

Readings:

- Moore, *Music & Revolution*, select chapters
- Brennan, “From Son to Surrealism” (optional)
- Fiol, “Grooves and Waves” (optional)

**Week 11: “Citizenship, Political and Cultural”**

Readings:

- Dunn and Avelar, “Introduction”
- Dunn, “Citizen Android”
- Lorenz, “Embodying the Favela”

**Week 12: “Cuban Trova and International Calls to Citizenship”**

Readings:

- Moore, *Music & Revolution*, select chapter
- Listening:
  - Violeta Parra
  - Milton Nascimento
  - Sylvio Rodríguez
  - Pablo Milanés

**Week 13: In-class workshop for final project. (Sources, Graphics, Playlists, Writing)**

Essay #3 is due. Choose one of the historic albums above and a contemporary album from Brazil, Cuba, or Jamaica (options listed on the course website). Open with a discussion of the historic context of the Cuban Revolution (roughly 1 page), then with an explanation of citizenship as explained by Dunn and Avelar (roughly ½ page). Use the remaining space (roughly 2 ½) pages to apply these notions of citizenship to the historic album and the contemporary one. Strong essays will explore how notions of citizenship have changed between the two periods and will consider ways in which these changes are sounded out in the music and discussed lyrically.

**Week 14: Group work, Final projects.**

**Week 15: Final Project Presentations**

**Week 16: Finals Week.**

Assignment Due: Final Project.