

Music by Immoral Musicians

HNRS 2900

Spring 2024

LI 325 Tuesdays 1:30-2:30

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What is the purpose of this class?

This class will explore the issues surrounding music, musical artists, and morality. It is part of a suite of classes attempting to answer the question “Is it ok to enjoy the artworks of immoral artists?”. By taking on this question, we will find ourselves facing difficult truths not just about morality, music and musicians, but, just as importantly, about ourselves as music consumers and fans.

What will we do in the class?

The class is intended to be a discussion course, so most of the time we will have open, roundtable discussions about a given topic. Time is limited, so to make sure we’re all on the same page I’ll occasionally give you some reading to do in advance. The last few class meetings will be devoted to brief student presentations; I’ll provide more information on that later. I’ll also ask you to keep a weekly journal of your thoughts on the topics at hand.

Is there a textbook or do I need to buy anything for the class?

No. I’ll provide readings via Canvas.

Do I need to come to class?

Absolutely! Especially for discussion classes such as this, your presence and participation is crucial. We only meet once a week for an hour, so I expect everyone to be there. The class will literally not be the same without you.

How will I be graded?

For a course like this, having a bunch of quizzes and exams doesn’t really make sense. Instead, you’ll be graded on three things: (1) your attendance and participation, (2) your presentation, and (3) your journal.

A word about class content:

The course is about questionable morality, both in terms of song content and the behaviors of artists. We will likely encounter issues such as racism, homophobia, domestic violence, sexual abuse and assault, and substance abuse. We will address these issues honestly, truthfully, and openly, but also with sensitivity toward our fellow classmates. If you suspect this will be a problem for you, I respectfully ask that you drop the course before the drop deadline.

Additional important information can be found on our Canvas website.

CALENDAR OF TOPICS (subject to change)

Jan 9 : Housekeeping

Jan 16 : Can we separate art from the artist?

Jan 23 : Case Study — Michael Jackson

Jan 30 : What is the place of sleazy art in society?

Feb 6 : Case Study — R. Kelly

Feb 13 : What good is a boycott?

Feb 20 : Case Study — Richard Wagner

Feb 27 : Reflection upon Current Events (ft. P. Diddy)

Mar 5 : Spring Break

Mar 12 : Can music make good people do bad things?

Mar 19 : Case Study — the PMRC

Mar 29 : Student presentations/discussion

Apr 2 : Student presentations/discussion

Apr 9 : Student presentations/discussion

Apr 16 : Student presentations/discussion