

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, ANTHROPOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

THE POLITICS OF PERFORMANCE: FROM NEGOTIATION TO DISPLAY

2020-2021



ESA3002, SEMESTER 1

Lectures: Mondays 2-3.15pm online

Workshops: Fridays 9-10.45 am online

MODULE CONVENOR: PROFESSOR FIONA MAGOWAN

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**Workshops for this module are run in collaboration with BEYOND SKIN, BELFAST
and SOKA UNIVERSITY, JAPAN**

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

In recent times, we have seen global unrest intensifying around the world, whether expressed in sonic and artistic protests about climate change or by crowds railing against historical atrocities, as resentment is meted out on monuments to troubled pasts and Indigenous communities garner solidarity with the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement in vocal and performative condemnation of racial injustice.

Considering such flashpoints, this module asks, how do we come to positions of performative knowledge and what types of political effect do different knowledges have? We will explore performative practices of knowledge creation by analysing the political, social and environmental relations of performance in conflict and peacebuilding in comparative perspective. Drawing upon intercultural examples of music and the performing arts from around the globe, we will consider how sounds, images and movements shape ‘atmospheres’ (Eisenlohr 2018) of negotiation and contestation, and how they can be used to move towards peacebuilding. The module brings to the fore ways in which music, dance and the arts are tools of conflict transformation and peacebuilding, as they variously give rise to cultural expressions of resistance, resilience and resourcefulness.

Our approach to understanding performative politics combines four broadly interlinked areas i). an analysis of Indigenous protest and empowerment stemming from the politics of song and dance, including globally interconnected online platforms of popular performance; ii). socially engaged arts practices as heritage, rights and activism, variously foregrounding identity politics and contemporary counter claims that impact upon policy agendas; iii). the politics of sound and imagery in shaping sonic and political imaginaries and their effects on place, belonging and creativity, such as music-making in refugee detention centres; and iv). the role of the arts in performative practice as an ambivalent force that entices spectacle, invites dialogue and moves individuals into new spaces of engagement for healing and reconciliation.

Throughout this participatory and interactive module, we will take into account the ongoing effects of Covid19 as artists and performers reposition their voices in a digitally interconnected world. We will examine how some musicians and artists are expanding technologies to transform the power of performance, thereby reshaping how processes of creativity are politically motivated and communicated. In sum, the module aims to offer critical perspectives on the political effects of sound, language, voice, positionality and performativity around the globe.

CONTEXT

This is a new module, taught for the first time in Semester 1 2020-2021. It will consist of a series of weekly lectures and discussions followed by two-hour online workshops with practitioners. The module is research-led and designed to dovetail its teaching and research outcomes with the five-year Sounding Conflict: From Resistance to Reconciliation PaCCS funded project (ending Nov. 2021). The themes of the module follow the themes of the grant - resistance, resilience and reconciliation - examining these concepts through creative practice in different conflict/post-conflict settings. Module collaboration is in conjunction with the Belfast-based organisation Beyond Skin who have arranged the set of topics and facilitators attached below in discussion with the convenor. Students will also connect with participants of the course on Music and Peacebuilding from Soka University, Japan. Each week offers a unique opportunity for students to hear from arts practitioners working in a variety of creative practices and who are dealing

with different approaches to the arts in relation to violence, trauma and healing in specific regions around the globe.

LECTURE SERIES AT A GLANCE

Week 1 Introducing Theories of Resistance, Resilience and Reconciliation in the Arts	(21 Sept)
Week 2 Acoustemologies of Peacebuilding	(28 Sept)
Week 3: ' <i>Dark Emu</i> ': Environmental Conflicts and the Politics of Dance	(5 Oct.)
Week 4: Pulsing Rhythms of Place: Different Drums of Ireland	(12 Oct)
Week 5: Contestation and Cooperation in African Rhythms	(19 Oct)
Week 7: 'Black Lives Matter': Decolonising the Intercultural Politics of Performance	(26 Oct)
Week 8: Playing for Peace: Orchestral Dialogues of Resilience	(2 Nov)
Week 9: Arts as Empathy and Activism	(9 Nov)
Week 10: Sound Borders: Musicians Without Borders	(16 Nov)

WORKSHOP SERIES AT A GLANCE

Week 2: Inner Peace Music and mindfulness. By Mark Smullian.	(2 Oct)
Week 3: Music filling the power vacuum in Colombia by Edwar Caldéron	(9 Oct)
Week 4: Protestant Marching Bands & Mental Health by Glenn Millar	(16 Oct)
Week 5: They will Have to Kill Us First. Malian Music in Exile by Andy Morgan	(23 Oct)
Week 7: Black youth music culture: Voice of Grime, Rap & Trap by Raphael Frank	(6 Nov)
Week 8: The art of Youth, Peace & Security. UN Resolution 2250. Afghan music orchestra by #youth4peace artists	(13 Nov)
Week 9: Arts and Music Therapy – Music-Making Workshop by Janelle Junkin (Philadelphia). (20 Nov)	
Week 10: Final Showcase	(27 Nov)

AIMS

- Appreciate a range of cultural perspectives and theoretical developments in the anthropology of performance, music, movement and the body
- To develop a knowledge of core ethnographic case studies in intercultural contexts around the world
- To examine a range of performance genres in indigenous and non-indigenous societies and understand their relevance for politics, nationalism and globalisation
- To analyse ethnographic material critically through comparative ethnomusicological frameworks that deal with the arts in conflict and peacebuilding
- To offer some basic practical experience of music making, dance or arts/creative practice.
- To explore cultural rhythms and consider how different rhythms shape a sense of self and others in playing together.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

We will be using informal self and group assessment methods during the module to monitor learning outcomes and to reflect on the development of conceptual skills of the following:

- Ability to analyse performance issues through relevant anthropological, ethnomusicological and peacebuilding frameworks
- Ability to engage with and interpret layers of meaning within primary sources
- Ability to think independently and imaginatively

- Understand the role of expressive culture in politics, nationalism and globalisation.
- Be able to apply theories of performance to contemporary contexts and develop a project in relation to a key issue
- Critically analyse the relationship between different kinds of performance e.g. music, theatre, dance or ritual.

SKILLS

- Ability to research and critically analyse a range of sources effectively
- Ability to express anthropological ideas clearly and logically in both formal and informal contexts
- Present high-quality analysis cogently and succinctly in creative practice
- Ability to listen, engage in sustained debate, defend arguments and amend views in light of evidence of argument
- Acquire some experience in musical/artistic participation and reflection
- Work effectively and creatively both independently and in a team setting
- Prepare materials for online and performative work in relation to analytic issues raised in the module. Be able to present them critically and in correctly referenced assessed work