

MUS 555, Topics in 20th Century Music – Music of the Carceral State

Instructor: Kevin Holt | Thursday, 9:30am – 12:20pm

As theorized by Michel Foucault, the contours of power and discipline within the carceral system (i.e., the system through which moral and legal standards are enforced through detention and/or incarceration) permeate all governing social structures, including those that are not directly implicated as branches of the judicial system. Given that music is frequently evoked to both comment on and co-create social structures, music offers a unique frame through which we might explore the notion of the carceral state. In this course, students will engage with the various ways that music manifests within, or is used to comment on, the carceral state. This includes, but is not limited to, music education, production, and performance within the prison system, the criminalization of certain musicians, genres, and sounds, the use of music as evidence within the judicial system, policing as a means of controlling how/when music is expressed, and the use of music/sound as punishment. Students will engage texts from ethnomusicology, sociology, philosophy, cultural studies, mad studies, and law.

Coursework includes weekly readings & postings, discussion leading, and a final project that reflects independent research with a formal presentation.

This course is primarily intended for MA and PhD students, and it fulfills the Elective Group 2 requirement for students in the MA or PhD Critical Studies track. With the permission of the instructor, interested MM or DMA students may enroll in the course, which fulfills the Elective Group 1 requirement.

3 credits