

IDH 2952 – (Un)Common Arts
“Talk About the Passion”: Bach, Hippies, & *Jesus Christ Superstar*

Section JC24
MUB 232
Period 8 (3:00-3:50 PM) W
Spring 2024

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Course Description

This course is part of the UF Honors Program’s (Un)Common Arts project, which offers a series of one-credit, discussion-oriented seminar courses centered on a performance or exhibit. This one is built around a performance of *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts on Wednesday, March 13, 2024.

From its inception as a concept album in 1970 through its Broadway debut and numerous revivals up to the present day, *Jesus Christ Superstar* has proved to be one of the most durable musicals of the late 20th century. At every step, the show has inspired both accolades and controversy. In this course, we will examine the historical and musical roots of this work as a venerable artistic form, as well as the evolving spiritual meanings attached to it over the centuries. We will look at the Counterculture movements of the 1960s that inspired *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and the roles that rock music played in both the movements and the musical. Finally, we will explore analogous religious/dramatic/musical expressions in other cultures and traditions.

Objectives

In order to discuss, analyze, and evaluate the central artifact(s), students will acquire and apply a vocabulary for discussing the arts.

By the conclusion of this course, students will be able to identify the ways in which *Jesus Christ Superstar* reflects, demonstrates, or contradicts the ideals of the Counterculture of the 1960-70s.

Students will be able to explain how *Jesus Christ Superstar* fits into the longstanding traditions of the Passion as a musical/artistic/theological form by comparing it to earlier manifestations such as J.S. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* as well as later incarnations such as Krzysztof Penderecki’s *Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to St Luke*.

After exploring Western/Christian antecedents to *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and experiencing the work in performance, students will examine for analogous fusions of organized religious teaching and popular musics/culture in other contexts, such as Bollywood retellings of Hindu tales or Shinto Kagura.

Each student will be able to articulate the ways in which *Jesus Christ Superstar* and the associated works covered relate to their contemporary experience and understanding of organized religion and individual spirituality.

Course Requirements

Since this course is a discussion-oriented seminar, there will not be any tests or exams. Instead, students will be evaluated on their participation, both during class meetings and in online discussions. The latter will be posted on the course Canvas site in E-Learning, as will select readings, video and audio excerpts relevant to the discussions.

In the second half of this course, Each student will prepare and present a 15-20 minute presentation exploring the role of Romanticism in the arts and/or popular culture of the late 20th/early 21st century. These presentations will include audiovisual examples and should help to illuminate the student's personal aesthetic preferences as well as those of the subject. Following each presentation, the class will have the opportunity to respond to each topic on the course website.

Grading

The grades for this course will be based on a 100-point system, in the following manner:

35 points = participation and discussions. Throughout the semester, discussion topics that enrich the class material will be introduced. Student's interactive discussions will take place primarily online, but may extend into the classroom.

10 points = a post-concert chronicle of the performance and the student's responses to it.

40 points = a 15-20 minute presentation to the class on an approved topic with a PowerPoint (or similar) show and script to be submitted at the time of presentation.

15 points = responses to three of your classmates' presentations, posted online.

All grades will be determined based on the following scale (corresponding grade points are listed in parentheses, consistent with the university grading regulations outlined at

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>):

92-100 points = A (4.00)	80-81 points = B- (2.67)	68-69 points = D+ (1.33)
90-91 points = A- (3.67)	78-79 points = C+ (2.33)	62-67 points = D (1.00)
88-89 points = B+ (3.33)	72-77 points = C (2.00)	60-61 points = D- (0.67)
82-87 points = B (3.00)	70-71 points = C- (1.67)	0-59 points = E (0)

PLEASE NOTE: If you perceive a grading error, you must address the issue within 72 hours of the grade posting, otherwise the grade is final and will not be discussed further. Specific grade questions and concerns will only be discussed with the student. Due to the 1974 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, I cannot and will not discuss your progress or grades with your parents. For more information on FERPA, please visit <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/ferpa.html>. Any correspondence received from your parents/guardians will be responded to with a link to the FERPA information site and nothing more.

Important Dates

January 8 – Classes Begin

January 12 – Drop/Add Ends at 11:59 PM

March 9-16 – Spring Break

March 13 – Live performance of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, 7:30 PM, PCPA

(Note: because this performance now takes place over UF's Spring Break, alternative video performances may be substituted)

March 20-April 17 – Student Presentations (we'll sign up for times and topics in class)

April 24 – Final meeting

Conduct

Students are expected to show respect for one another and for the instructor in all communication. This doesn't mean that we can't disagree or debate, only that we handle such disagreements with courtesy and that we allow each party to present their position without interruption.

One piece of respectful communication is that mobile devices must be turned off during classes to prevent interruption and distraction. Students should not use computers, tablets, etc. during class unless instructed to do so.

Attendance

Consistent and punctual attendance in every class is expected. Students are expected to arrive to class on time and stay for the full class period unless specific arrangements are made with the instructor prior to the class meeting.

Students are responsible for all assigned work, announcements made in class, and any material covered in class regardless of attendance or punctuality. Chronic absence and/or tardiness will be noted and can adversely affect the student's discussion/participation grade.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Assignments

Most assignments will be submitted online through the course website. Only in exceptional circumstances will it be possible to submit assignments after the closing deadline. In the event that late assignments are accepted/permitted, there will be a substantial grade penalty assessed. Please note that technical difficulties do arise, and will generally not be considered an excuse to miss a deadline (especially without documentation from the UF Computing Helpdesk) – it is in your best interest to complete your assignments early so that you have time to work through any unforeseeable problems. You are advised to read through the technical information posted on the LSS website (<http://lss.at.ufl.edu>) to minimize any potential technical issues.

For conflicts that may arise due to University-sponsored events or religious holidays, you are advised to plan your work in advance. The instructor recognizes and will comply with the University's attendance policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>); however, since no assignment requires that you log on the day of the deadline, you are responsible for planning ahead and taking care of work before a trip or holiday (including university holidays such as Homecoming). If a conflict seems unavoidable, you must contact the instructor at least one week prior to the date in question.

The instructor reserves the right to amend any portion of the course structure, including items listed on the *Due Dates*.

Special Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be

presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Technical Issues

Issues with the Canvas site, such as accessing media, submitting assignments, etc., should be addressed to: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>.

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center:

<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

<http://www.police.ufl.edu>

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://career.ufl.edu/>

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask> Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio, 2215 Turlington Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints On-Campus: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>