

SOC 321: SOCIAL CHANGE AND MUSIC

HABILIDADES (SKILLS)

- Explore artistic expression related to course themes
- Connect cultural expression through music to social movements and revolutions
- Creative thinking

TAREA (ASSIGNMENT)

For as long as humans have been around, music has been a form of cultural reflection as well as an agent for social change. In fact, some of the most expressive work regarding social change and revolutions comes in the form of music.

For this assignment, we will explore the lyrics of revolutionary music in order to get a better sense of the importance of music in driving change in society. Students will form pairs and will be tasked with finding a song that discusses in some way, shape, or form the fusion of social change with music. Student pairs will be tasked with playing their selection for the class. Following the song, each team needs to discuss their interpretation of the relationship between the song's lyrics and social change.

For example, one of my favorite song writers is Chilean artist, Victor Jara, who was brutally tortured and killed in 1973 by then-dictator, Augusto Pinochet. Jara's songs were so powerful that the dictator's henchmen felt the need to cut off his hands and rip out his tongue prior to shooting him and abandoning his body in a nearby shantytown in the capital city of Santiago. Still, while Pinochet's regime got rid of Jara in body, they were never able to silence his voice, which has lived on through other musicians and artists. Since Victor's assassination in 1973, his song *Juan Sin Tierra* has become symbolic with landless peasant movements across Americas. For example, here is a video of Victor's song, *Juan Sin Tierra*, set against images from the Zapatista movement that began in southern Mexico in the early 1990s and continues through the present:

[Juan Sin Tierra: Zapatista Movement](#)

Songs of struggle in Latin America have also influenced pan-ethnic movements in the United States. Take, for example, *El Corrido de Córdoba y Canales*, which was written about the mysterious disappearance of two activists in New Mexico in the 1960s. The history is detailed here:

[El Corrido de Córdoba y Canales](#)

Obviously, these are mere examples but they do a good job of illustrating the type of music that I hope you'll draw from for this assignment.

Each student pair will have 5 minutes to play their song for the class and then 5 minutes to discuss how social change relates to the lyrics. Each group should print out the lyrics for the class. You can pick from any music genre: Rock, Hip-Hop, Punk, R&B, Country, Opera, etc. Of course, you can choose songs from the Billboard Top 100, but don't limit yourself to mainstream genres. In fact, given the fact that all revolutions begin underground, I would encourage

you to cover a song that has a more subtle approach; e.g., a song that pushes us to think about social change or revolution but isn't from a million dollar record deal.

Finally, you may select music in other languages, in which case you should provide an English version of the lyrics for the class.

Keep these points in mind when discussing your song:

- What type of movement does the song focus on or advocate for?
- Is the song a call to progressive action or conservative renewal?
- In your opinion, was the song effective in promoting change? How do you know?

Finally, each group needs to upload a 1-page (single-spaced, 12-point font) reflection to Canvas that discusses the aforementioned points as well as:

- The historic context in which the song was released
- The relationship between the artist(s) and the music
- The way in which the song has transformed overtime; i.e., does the song still have the same meaning? Has the meaning been transformed? Has the song been commodified? Etc.

EVALUACIÓN) ASSESSMENT

- Thoughtful selection: 20%
- Well prepared presentation: 40%
- Reflection: 40%