

Personal Blog Proposal

NOTE: Your proposal for a blog will determine the topic for your assignments for the rest of the term. The blog entries, social media “posts,” shooting script, and video will all be connected to the topic you choose for your blog.

Write a proposal for a personal, non-commercial blog on a topic of your choice. Your blog’s topic must include an element of analysis and/or reflection. It must also be culturally or socially significant. (See Module 2 for the definition of “culturally or socially significant.”) You must cite sources in-text and include them in a reference list at the end of your proposal.

What you cannot propose for a blog topic:

- Topics that are discriminatory or that contravene university guidelines.
- Blogs that blur the line between commercial and non-commercial, such as beauty blogs that consist of showing the use of products, or review/how-to blogs that focus on commercial products.
- Blogs about mental or physical health issues that aren’t based on medical or scientific research. You may certainly draw on your own experiences, but to ensure that you are spreading ACCURATE information, you must base any suggested strategies or treatments on research drawn from reliable, acknowledged medical journals, not other people’s blogs.
- Travel blogs that don’t contain elements of analysis. (That is, don’t propose merely to show us places you’ve travelled to. Your blog must contain analysis, thought and reflection.)
- Blogs about your daily life. Your blog must have a focus other than yourself. There’s a major difference between mining or exploring personal experience for ideas that extend beyond yourself and merely recording your daily life.

You will be creating a WordPress account and posting blog entries there. WordPress is PUBLIC, so you need to be comfortable writing posts for public viewing.

You must include the title of your proposed blog, a brief description of its proposed topic or content, how that topic/content is unique, why your proposed topic is culturally or socially significant, why the topic is sustainable over time, and who your audience will be (in detail, drawing on what you have learned about reading audience earlier in the course). You must also cite any sources you use in-text, plus include a required References list or Works Cited at the end. Write in an engaging, non-academic, non-argumentative style.

Write a continuous narrative without subheadings. Do NOT include the actual questions given below.

Your job is to convince us that:

- Your topic is engaging and interesting. (What is your blog's title? What is your topic? Why is it interesting?)
- Your topic or perspective or approach has an aspect, quality, or twist that is unique (What is unique or different from what's out there now? Show that you've done research into popular blogs on similar topics. This research is necessary to convince us that your topic, perspective, or approach will be unique.)
- Your topic is sustainable over time. (What examples of future posts can you give us to show its sustainability? What is the scope of your topic?)
- You know your expected audience. (Who do you expect will read your blog posts? What is your audience's profile? Draw on what you've learned about audience profiles in earlier modules. I am looking for more than "Anyone who likes chocolate" for a blog about cooking with chocolate, for instance.)
- You have thought about the cultural or social significance of your topic and can describe that significance.
- You have cited all sources in-text and have included a References or Works Cited list at the end. Your list must contain publication info, not just a URL.

Make us interested and enthusiastic about your blog.

Maximum length: 3 double-spaced pages in 12-point Times New Roman (or a similar font) with 1 inch margins, plus a References section. The maximum length does not include the References section.

References section: Use MLA, Chicago, or APA style guidelines. Information about them is available online. At a minimum, you must include the author/corporation name, title of specific blog entry or page, title of blog or page, and URL for online entries. For offline entries, see the specific style guidelines. You will lose marks if you merely include the URL without other identifying information.

Blog Posts Assignment

Create a WordPress blog account on the topic you proposed earlier this term, and post three blog entries during the scheduled modules. Please make sure you are posting the URL that readers would use, not the URL that leads to your editing account.

Each entry should:

- Be titled engagingly
- Contain thought and reflection and analysis
- Be written in a style appropriate for the subject and the expected audience
- Be illustrated with a relevant, captioned photograph or illustration. If you did not take the photo (or create the illustration) yourself, you must credit the photographer or creator and the site where you found it
- Include a link and a reference to another blog or article that's related to your topic. The link should be part of your blog post text, and you should name the author and/or title of the blog or article. Link via words in the text instead of dropping in a URL.
- Include credits or acknowledgements of any sources you used for research or ideas **IN YOUR TEXT**
- Include a Further Reading or References list that includes full information about any articles, blogs, or other sources you drew information or ideas from. You will lose marks for just posting the URLs without the publication information
- Be posted to WordPress on or before the due date unless you have approval for not publishing. (See Note 1 below.)

NOTES:

1. Because your work will be published, you need to choose a topic that you're comfortable sharing with the public. If you have a valid reason for not wanting to publish online, then please contact your instructor as soon as possible to explain your rationale and make arrangements for you to do the work without making it public.

2. Your entries must meet York University's non-discrimination policies and guidelines for student behaviour.

3. Your work must be new and previously unpublished.

Maximum length of EACH entry: 500 polished words.

Blog Proposal and Blog Posts: Fight Song

Blog Proposal: Fight Song

When we think of bedtime stories, we conjure up images of princesses and heroes and happily-ever-afters. For me, bedtime stories were tales of war, where princesses had to pick up arms, heroes were martyred, and the happy ever after was the brink of revolution. My childhood was consumed in listening to fight songs and poems of rebellion. My mother was 13 years old when she became a freedom fighter for the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. To be fair, these aren't footsteps one can easily follow. Sometimes, I feared I would live up to that, but in little ways, I had my moment. When the same war criminals from the 70s rose from the shadows and sought to unleash terror in 2013 ("Huge Bangladesh rally"), five activists stood hand in hand in protest, and by nightfall, Dhaka city was alight with might in its eyes, fight in its blood, and a hell of an uprising. Shahbag Square was engulfed in the voices of the people, in the tune of our ancestors, and they were heard. And there I was, 13 years old, chanting along with the rest of them.

You see, activism has never been a radical idea for me; when you grow up in a family with freedom fighters and revolutionaries who fought for the land you stand on and the language you speak, activism is an innate part of you. But it is never borne of contempt. It is solidarity and freedom. It is singing atop open-air pickup trucks and sitting on a field reciting poetry. It's George Harrison and Ravi Shankar at the Concert for Bangladesh in 1971 (Cosgrove). It's Bowie and Bob Dylan at Live Aid crying for Ethiopia (Goldberg). It's Diana Ross's "I'm Coming Out." It's every impressionist in 18th-century France who hoped for something better.

"Fight Song" is a celebration of art amidst a world of unrest: the power of music and song and literature at the core of every social and political movement. In a world riddled with violence and

hate – something to which humankind seems eternally bound – this blog reminds us of every flower that sprouts from every ruin. That revolution is not simply picking up arms and diving before tanks. It is a gathering, coming together with arms entwined and singing into the wind. A lot of the world has either been desensitized to its horrors or simply turns a blind eye. This blog is a reminder that revolution for the right causes with the right tools are something to be hopeful of. Concerts are concerts not because a singer sings on a platform, but because the masses around the stage are singing along.

In 2020, the news has little to deliver in terms of hope. India finds itself under the tyranny of an ultranationalist, the KKK seems to garner a great deal more support than one thought possible, and oppression has reared its ugly head for the *n*th time. Some might say that this period in time is the most peaceful we've ever been in (Powell), and they wouldn't be wrong. The problem with the 'Long Peace,' though, is that it's a relative term. People continue to face new horrors every day, and our will to protest is far from over. Especially protest awash with unbridled creativity or even setting out to the streets with the possibility of arrest. (Here's to you, Jane Fonda.)

"Fight Song" may find its audience among a niche bunch: those politically driven or wish to be, those socially aware or claim to be, and perhaps those wanting better verbal ammunition for the next drunken debate. But this blog extends itself to people who have dedicated their lives to activism and to learning about it, to art in its many forms, to a reading of protest unmarred with violence, or to all three. I see my mother reminiscing her younger days, recollecting the powerful "Bidrohi Kobita" (Poem of Rebellion) by Kazi Nazrul Islam. I see socialist activists no longer dispirited by the rise of right-wing politics. I see LGBTQ+ teens reading about the arduous history but also their icons telling them, "it's okay."

This blog is not unique in the broad context of its subject matter – revolution. However, it is unique in its details. When we enter the site, we leave our arms at the threshold and raise our voices. We pick up a paintbrush and draw a better world. We remember the power of art in the dark times and what it always brings us in the end – victory. Don't get me wrong; the fight isn't over, and we must continue to make changes at the policy-level, but we must also honor each grassroots movement in history immersed in music, poetry, dance, and theatre, each every bit a fight in its own right.

Works Cited

- “Huge Bangladesh rally seeks death penalty for war crimes.” BBC News, 8 Feb. 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-21383632>.
- Cosgrove, Ben. “Concert for Bangladesh: Photos From the First-Ever Rock 'n' Roll Benefit Show.” *Time*, 30 July 2013, <https://time.com/3877705/concert-for-bangladesh-photos-from-the-first-ever-benefit-rock-show/>.
- Goldberg, Michael. “Live Aid 1985: The Day the World Rocked.” *Rolling Stone*, 16 Aug. 1985, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/live-aid-1985-the-day-the-world-rocked-180152/>.
- Powell, Alan. “Pinker explains ‘The Long Peace.’” *The Harvard Gazette*, 30 Mar. 2012, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2012/03/pinker-explains-the-long-peace/>.

Fight Song: Blog Posts

NOTE: In the actual online blog posts, the links lead to the referenced articles, and any works referred to are also included in the Acknowledgements. Unfortunately, much of the formatting was lost in the transfer from online to Word.

Fight Song

the power of art in dark times

Featured

[Actions and Anthems: Songs of the Bangladesh Liberation War](#)



A group of Bangladeshi musicians singing *Muktir Gaan* in 1971. Photo Courtesy: Aditi Das Gupta/[The Daily Star](#)

“Bangla Desh, Bangla Desh

Where so many people are dying fast

And it sure looks like a mess

I've never seen such distress

Now won't you lend your hand

Try to understand

Relieve the people of Bangla Desh"

– [BANGLA DESH](#), GEORGE HARRISON

These are the words that Beatles lead guitarist George Harrison belted out in Madison Square Garden on August 1, 1971 at the [Concert for Bangladesh](#). Since declaring its independence from the tyrannical forces of West Pakistan on March 26th of the same year, Bangladesh (then-East Pakistan) was knee-deep in the blood of martyrs and the spirit of revolution. As shells came pouring down on Bangla soil, New York City lit up with support for the Bangla people -- people who didn't have much in the way of military training but had grit and gravel.

And they also had slogans and songs. George Harrison and Ravi Shankar put together a rock benefit show, the first of its kind, and amassed unreal support. On the other side of the world, men and women were picking up arms and marching towards battlefields. And some fights rose from song. Fingers pulled triggers and others floated across *harmonium* keys and bounced off the *tabla*. Voices serenaded crowds, in plight and in fight. They were the [Mukti Sangrami Shilpi Sangstha](#), or the Artistes' Association for Battle for Freedom (pictured above).

Freedom fighters' faces lit up when the open-air truck rolled in. Singers and dancers and musicians. Entertainers with a purpose: "*Joy bangla, banglar joy* – Victory for Bangladesh." The [Mukti Sangrami Shilpi Sangstha](#) were a traveling troupe and without them, the Bangladeshi freedom fighters would not have found their voices, their slogans, their war cries. You'd think, how can songs win a war? How can choruses around a campfire birth an independent nation? Then again, how many of us have willingly trained for guerilla warfare chanting the same mighty refrain? Have witnessed violence and drowned out the cannons with the sounds of the people? The sword, the pen, and the melody in solidarity.

When the band moved on to another camp, the anthems did not cease. Last summer, while I was writing for the newspaper *The Daily Star*, Bangladesh, I had the privilege of bearing witness to and transcribing and translating an [interview](#) by the famous musician Fakir Alamgir. A freedom fighter in his own right, he regaled us with tales of [Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra](#), or Free Bengal Radio Center. Hidden away in ditches and camouflaged in the woods at night, our revolutionaries would tune in to the radio to hear the same old songs.

The year is now 2020, but the songs from 1971 still play in our fields and in our homes. Certain lyrics jump out at me from time to time and I think: this land that gave me life would not have survived without these songs.

“Mora ekta phool ke bachabo bole juddho kori
We fight to keep alive one flower

Mora ekta mukher hashir jonno osthro dhori
We take up arms to ignite a smile

Mora notun ekta kobita likhte judhdho kori
We fight for one more poem unwritten

Mora notun ekta gaaner jonno judhdho kori
We fight for one more song unsung.”

I keep these words with me, often reflect on them, and salute the heroes who may not have fired guns but who lifted up a nation with merely the power of song.

Acknowledgements:

“Bangladesh – Bonus Track.” *YouTube*, uploaded by George Harrison, 31 July 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqaDRYDPU5s>.

Karim, Elita. “When music paves the way.” *The Daily Star*, 16 December 2018, <https://www.thedailystar.net/1971-the-battles-women-fought/news/when-music-paves-the-way-1674016>.

“Concert for Bangladesh.” *Liberation War Museum*, <http://www.liberationwarmuseumbd.org/concert-for-bangladesh/>.

“Remembering the choir of freedom.” *Dhaka Mirror*, 16 December 2013, <http://www.dhakamirror.com/art-culture/remembering-the-choir-of-freedom/>

“Through the Eyes: Fakir Alamgir.” *The Daily Star*, interviewed by Robiul Kalam, translated by the student who wrote the blog, 13 July 2019, <https://www.thedailystar.net/showbiz/news/fakir-alamgir-1770502>.

Raihan, Abu Naser. “Songs that won the war.” *Dhaka Tribune*, 25 March 2017, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/showtime/2017/03/25/songs-won-war>.

Further Reading:

Ali, Syed Ashraf. "Songs of Liberation." The Daily Star, 2 Dec. 2014, <https://www.thedailystar.net/songs-of-liberation-53036>.

Rock Talk: Green Day's Protest Song



Green Day in Winnipeg, Canada, May 17, 2005 | *GreenDayAuthority*

“Don’t wanna be an American idiot
Don’t want a nation under the new mania
Can you hear the sound of hysteria?
The subliminal mind-f*ck America.”

– *AMERICAN IDIOT*, GREEN DAY

In 2008, I was blasting this track on my MP3 player, shattering my eardrums, destroying my voice as I screamed along. It was 2008 and I was becoming increasingly aware of politics. I think that’s what a good rock song does: it pumps your blood with adrenaline, it makes you want to

yell, it gets you off the ground for a while and want to *fight* for something. This rock anthem was nothing if not startlingly, unabashedly, furiously blatant in its protest.

Green Day released their cri de cœur in 2004. The track “American Idiot” alongside their album of the same name is all outrage, helplessness entangled in every chord and key. Written during the Iraq War (which didn’t need to happen), Green Day’s political rock opera has been called “the most visible protest record” of that era. It was a time when the credibility of the war and its engineer George W. Bush were losing all credibility. It was a time when the media was feeding this misplaced fear and xenophobia among the people. It was a time when the world was grim and grey.

And here we are again. This song is just as relevant now as it was then. The American government is untrustworthy. The media is not our friend. As the US hangs on the brink of fascism, it is vital more than ever to be skeptical of media, of propaganda, of any agenda that calls for war on innocents, that breeds hate at exponential rates.

In 2018, when Donald Trump (cue the agitated sigh at hearing his name for the umpteenth time) made his visit to the UK, angry fans rallied to bring this song back to the UK charts and they did so successfully. There is nothing quite like the power of the collective. It was the only appropriate welcome that the American president deserved.

Billy Joel Armstrong, the lead vocalist, has been very vocal about his politics and his detestation of the man who sits on his throne built on despotism and Big Macs. He has gone so far as to tell his Trump-supporting fans to stop listening to their records. It’s always great to see successful musicians be true to their cause at the risk of losing record sales.

The reason I talk about this song now, 16 years since its release, is because the American elections are drawing nearer by the day. I’m a Bangladeshi citizen who lives in Canada, and I have no say in these elections. However, I believe that American politics has the whole world wrapped around its finger – it affects all of us. It’s imperative more than ever to remember the battle cry against tyrannical forces that horde nukes and begin wars like it’s a sport. Green Day gave us a raging, cathartic, kaleidoscopic number to bang out during these crucial times. When we listen to protest songs, let’s remind ourselves (and more importantly those who can take political action) what we are protesting and to do it right.

American Idiot – Official Music Video | *YouTube*

Acknowledgements:

“Green Day – American Idiot [OFFICIAL VIDEO].” *YouTube*, uploaded by Green Day, 21 August 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee_uujKuJMI.

“The Story Of Green Day’s American Idiot.” *Radio X*, 17 February

2019, <https://www.radiox.co.uk/artists/green-day/american-idiot-single-story-meaning-lyrics/>.
Schatz, Lake. "Campaign launched to get Green Day's "American Idiot" to No. 1 in time for Trump's UK visit." *Consequence of Sound*, 9 July

2018, <https://consequenceofsound.net/2018/07/green-day-american-idiot-no1-trump-visit/>
Britton, Luke Morgan. "Green Day's Billie Joe Armstrong lashes out at Trump-supporting fan." *NME*, 4 January 2018, <https://www.nme.com/news/music/billie-joe-armstrong-tells-trump-supporting-fan-to-stop-listening-to-green-day-2204587>.

Featured

[Proud and Loud: Songs of Forbidden Love](#)



Toronto Pride Parade on June 24, 2018 | Photo Courtesy: The student

In 2018, I attended a pride parade for the first time. It's one of those bucket-list things, you know. I stayed up the previous night, sewing into a plain white t-shirt the words "can't think straight," sectioning each letter to correspond to the colors of the pride flag. I woke up early to a bright and happy morning in Toronto and took the subway down to Yonge Station. There is nothing quite like seeing hordes of people bursting with color, complete strangers brushing elbows, rushing towards a single pursuit. You want to jump in and run with the crowds, but first ... you take a step back and you simply take it in.

The truth is, it isn't just one of those bucket-list things. The pride parade, now a spectacle, a celebration, a good time, hails from eons of persecution. When we think of LGBTQ+ pride, we are not simply waving a flag and fist-bumping the stranger wearing dope face paint. We think of [Stonewall](#), where it all began, when it wasn't all smiles, when there were lives on the line. It was – and, in many cases, still is – a war. Hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community have happened in the shadows and out in the open. In countries like [Russia](#) and [Iran](#), legislation protecting persecution of LGBTQ+ citizens continues to be a reality.

Yet, in the midst of it all there is strength. There is hope. There is fight. There is music.

“Who wants to be my lover?

Who wants to be my friend?

Who’s next to lie for loving?

Let’s dance all night for freedom!”

– [FREEDOM](#), RAINBOW RIOTS

Plucked from an upbeat, delightful celebration of pride, this refrain is one of many in the musical album [Rainbow Riots](#). An [endeavor helmed by Swedish artist Petter Wallenberg](#), people stepped out from hidden crevasses and flocked together to create an anthem. Who were they? LGBTQ+ artists from countries where it was dangerous for them to be so. Their fight song: [“Equal Rights.”](#)

There is unimaginable power in standing up in the face of hate – legislated, politicized hate – and to be completely one’s self. Stripped down, bare, true. *Rainbow Riots* features artists from Uganda, Jamaica, Malawi, and many other countries where it is illegal to be gay, trans and anything that threatens heteronormativity. We have been enthralled by the likes of Mercury, Bowie, Prince, whose ordeals were as great as their genius. Now, far from the spotlights of an arguably fairer world, there exist places where artists face an even more brutal reality. For each of them – [Mista Majah P, Brayo Bryans, Shivan, Kowa Tigs, and those who remain anonymous](#) – there will always be a shadow of possible danger. To spark a match in the face of it, to cast a light over it, is what this fight is all about.



Rainbow Riots short film via Youtube | *Dazed*

Not merely a celebration through music, *Rainbow Riots* is also a charity. With projects in countries where a peoples' existence is still debated, this endeavor has been making great strides for the LGBTQ+ communities for the lesser heard. So, next time, when the next pride parade comes around, let's remember the places where they cannot march and the people who cannot sing. Let's sing their songs, and let's sing them loud.

Acknowledgements:

Pruitt, Sarah. "What Happened at the Stonewall Riots? A Timeline of the 1969

Uprising." *History*, 28 June 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/stonewall-riots-timeline>.

Cooper, Tanya. "Dispatches: Jail Time for Being Gay in Russia." *Human Rights Watch*, 14 January 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/14/dispatches-jail-time-being-gay-russia>.

"Iraqi government 'likely complicit' in persecution of LGBT community." *The Guardian*, 19 November 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/19/militia-lgbt-iraq-report-gay-lesbian-persecution>.

"Rainbow Riots – Freedom." *YouTube*, uploaded by Rainbow Riots, 2 August 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O74rXFHnz8Y>.

Rainbow Riots. Rainbow Riots, *Spotify*,

2017, <https://open.spotify.com/album/6LjuhWZPb9w02PCRL5L5zB>.

Kasambala, Natty. "The LGBT artists making music where it's dangerous to be gay." *Dazed*, 27 June 2017, <https://www.dazeddigital.com/music/article/36518/1/lgbtq-artists-making-music-where-its-dangerous-to-be-gay>

"Rainbow Riots – Equal Rights." *YouTube*, uploaded by Rainbow Riots, 16 May 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuTU8dJF_cw.

Marie, J. "'Rainbow Riots' Album Features LGBT Artists From Countries Where Being Gay Is Illegal." *KitchMix*, 12 June 2017, <https://kitschmix.com/rainbow-riots-album-features-artists-countries-gay-illegal/>.

Rainbow Riots. Rainbow Riots. <http://rainbowriots.com/>

Further Reading:

Desti, Yohanna. "The Evolution of the Pride Parade, From Somber March to Celebration." *Mashable*, 10 June 2014, <https://mashable.com/2014/06/10/pride-parade-evolution/>.

Portwood, Jerry et al. "25 Essential LGBTQ Pride Songs." *The Rolling Stone*, 1 June 2019, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/25-essential-lgbtq-pride-songs-199348/sia-alive-2016-193704/>.