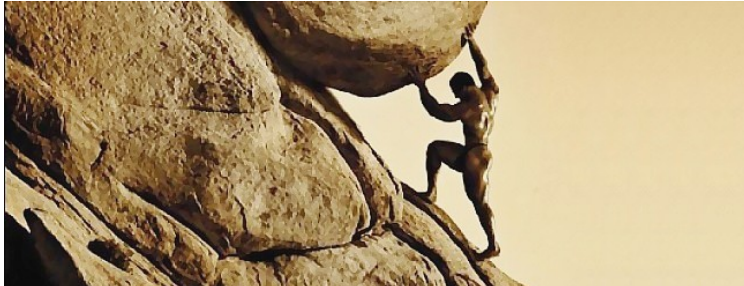


Module 1 Activity #1

Due Aug 28, on Canvas

Songs for Sisyphus



Background

Sisyphus (pronounced SIS-uh-fuss) is a tragic figure in Greek mythology and in general owns one of the worst fates the ancients could come up with: an eternal existence of “futile and hopeless labor.” Having angered the gods for several reasons, Sisyphus was cursed to spend all of eternity pushing a rock up to the top of a steep hill, only to have it roll back down each time.

Albert Camus, an existentialist philosopher writing in the early 1940s, intriguingly wrote that “we must imagine Sisyphus happy,” and that little thought-nugget formed the basis of our first day’s conversation: What gives a life meaning? What makes a life a “Good Life”? What does it mean to be “Happy”?

For this activity, imagine that you have the chance to make a “mixtape” (a playlist) for Sisyphus to listen to as he walks back down the hill to take up again his burden. What songs would you put on the mix? What kinds of messages do you think would help Sisyphus find resolve, value, and/or happiness in those moments? What kinds of emotions would be the right ones to tap into to, what would we want Sisyphus to give his attention to as he walked back down the hill?

Your task for this activity (the thing due for Tues, Aug 28):

- Identify **2-3 songs** that you think should go on the **Songs for Sisyphus mixtape**.
- **For each song, offer an explanation** of why you think that’s the song: for instance, you might consider these kinds of questions: How does your song-choice reflect your answer to the in-class conversation about what might give his life meaning, value, happiness? What are you trying to get him to feel, to attend to? (This explanation will be a paragraph under the song title).
- **Submit this “annotated list”** (aka “list with notes”) right here on Canvas, below these instructions (as soon as you submit your list, you will be able to see the lists that others created. Feel free to comment below on what you are seeing before our class meeting).
- **Be prepared to explain 1 or 2 of your favorite choices** in our next class meeting.

The Ultimate Goal (we’ll decide on this in class):

- **Let’s actually create a mixtape** of our collective efforts, for Sisyphus! ...Or For a friend/loved one who sometimes feels like Sisyphus. ...Or maybe for our own difficult days when we could use a bit of musical support.
