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Exploring our attachment to sentimental songs the focus of upcoming PUBLIC Professor Series presentation

We all have them, those emotional connections to pop songs from the soundtrack of our past. They invoke real feelings when you catch them on the radio or are featured in TV and movie productions. You might even feel a little guilty admitting they still tug at your emotions — why?

Dr. Emily Gale, an assistant professor of musicology/ethnomusicology in the University of Lethbridge's Department of Music, will examine these sentimental songs and why we should take our sounded feelings seriously in her PUBLIC Professor Series talk, *Sentimental Songs for Sentimental People*, **Thursday, Feb. 27, 7 p.m., at The Owl Acoustic Lounge (free event, cash bar, everyone welcome).**



"Feeling remains critical to how and why most listeners engage with popular song," says Gale. "However, these same songs might be ones you are embarrassed to admit liking or connecting with, a guilty pleasure if you will. Why do we have these ideas and where do these judgments come from?"

Gale's talk will look at the history of English language sentimental songs over the last 250 years, then focus on two examples of songs from the 1850s and 1960s and their unexpected political histories.

"What are the consequences of relegating sentimental songs to a denigrated status," she asks. "I'll then discuss why we should take these sounded feelings seriously."

Gale's book in progress, *Sentimental Songs for Sentimental People: An Unheard History of US Popular Music*, analyzes the politics of affect and sentimentality within US popular music from the late 18th century to the present. Chapters on love, youth, death, tears,

home and feels tune in to the counter public reverberations of a repertory long-considered trite, and even embarrassing, revealing unlikely entanglements. She has been broadcasting radio shows about this research since 2019 (on *SUB_1X31* and on UCC98.3FM) and her voice appears as a pop commentator on [NPR's All Things Considered](#) and in the [Los Angeles Times](#).

This is the fifth of six talks in the annual PUBlic Professor Series lectures which feature thought-provoking discussions on the most relevant topics of the day, bringing together a diverse group of experts and researchers from across the ULeithbridge campus and into the community. Every talk is free of charge, but registration is required. For those who cannot attend, the talk will be available on the [ULeithbridge YouTube](#) channel following the presentation.

See more at ulethbridge.ca/research/public-professor.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/exploring-our-attachment-sentimental-songs-focus-upcoming-public-professor-series>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.