

**School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**A Common Refrain: Comparative Religion Through Musical Co-Creation and Service-Learning**

**A. Instructor and Course Information**

<b>Interession</b>	MAY 2023		
<b>Instructor Name</b>	Karen Smith and Brian Seilstad		
<b>Course Title</b>	A Common Refrain: Comparative Religion through Musical Co-Creation and Service-Learning		
<b>Course Code*</b>	HUM 2306 and ART 1399 And Service-Learning	<b>Credit</b>	3 for course, 1 for service-learning, 4 total
<b>Pre-requisites</b>	None, but some musical ability is needed		
<b>Instructor Contact Information</b>			
<b>Phone Number</b>	X2905	<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:Ka.smith@au.ma">Ka.smith@au.ma</a> , <a href="mailto:b.seilstad@au.ma">b.seilstad@au.ma</a>

\*if matching an existing course in the catalog.

**B. Course Description and Learning Outcomes**

**1. Course Description:**

This is a co-taught course with students from Mercer University. The course explores religious dialogue, particularly between Muslims and Christians, through comparative analysis of the core religious texts and, more specifically, musical styles and performances. Students will also engage in a service-learning project with the Azrou Center in which the Mercer, AUI, and Azrou Center students will collaborate on a set of traditional and original musical pieces that will be performed publicly in a variety of venues, including the Fes Sacred Music Festival.

Off-campus travel to Azrou as part of the service-learning component of the course is required and other local trips will be organized as part of this course.

**2. Course Main Objective:**

Students will explore through readings and music the deep connections between religious traditions, especially Christianity and Islam, and how religious convictions and beliefs are made manifest through music.

**3. Course Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

-Identify key aspects of alignment between Islam and Christianity.

- Engage in fruitful dialogue with peers of various religious and spiritual backgrounds
- Experience a range of spiritual and religious musical styles
- Learn a select set of traditional religious songs
- Co-create, compose, and perform original religious songs as a service-learning project with the Azrou Center

**C. Motivation for the course and Faculty expertise**

**1. Faculty motivation for offering the course:**

The AUI and Mercer faculty are collectively engaged in academic and professional work around religious dialogue, international engagement and dialogue, anthropology of religion, etc. The collaboration itself arises from a long-standing partnership between AUI and Mercer and a desire to deepen faculty and student collaboration beyond traditional student exchange programs.

**2. Course topic alignment with University, school and/or program mission:**

Religious engagement and dialogue is a key part of the royal dahir that established Al Akhawayn University, and AUI has long been known for its international and innovative approach to education. The Intersession program per se was in part created to enhance internationalization by attracting international faculty and students to participate. This a course builds on May Intercession 2022’s successful collaboration.

**3. Faculty expertise in the subject matter:**

Karen Smith is the Campus Chaplain with two graduate degrees in theology (MDiv from Emory University, Atlanta, and MA from St. John’s University in Collegeville Minnesota. She coordinates AUI’s interfaith activities, along with Imam Khaoua, and advises the Interfaith Alliance. She has also taught music classes at the Al Akhawayn School and directed musical theatre. She directs the AUI Christian Community Choir. Brian Seilstad is the Director of the Office of International Programs and holds a Ph.D. in Education and a desire to enhance international experiences for the AUI community.

**D. Course Appropriateness**

**1. Appropriateness for adapting to either undergraduate or masters’ audience or both.**

The course is well-suited for AUI undergraduates especially those seeking to fulfill General Education and/or service-learning requirements.

**2. Appropriateness of this course for an intensive session**

The course is well-adapted for intersession due to the need for extended and focused work, especially through the service project at the Azrou Center. In practical terms, AUI and Mercer students will spend several hours each day at AUI working on the academic content that is focused on aspects of comparative religion and music as a basis for interreligious dialogue. Then, several hours each day will be spent at the Azrou Center working with a select group there to engage in collaborative dialogue through musical exploration and co-creation.

**E. Course intended learning outcomes (CLO) mapping to the Program learning outcomes (PLO)**

<b>Program Learning Goals/Objectives</b>	<b>Course Intended Learning Outcome Metrics (What)</b>	<b>Course Assessment Metrics (How)</b>
<b>1.</b>		
<i>Students will read the document A Common Word and reflect on core themes in Muslim-Christian interreligious dialogue</i>	Students will be able to identify key aspects of consensus between Christianity and Islam.	Students will display their knowledge through reflective dialogue recordings with their Mercer peers and also written works of an analytical or creative nature.
<b>2.</b>		
<i>Students will learn about the role of traditional music in the Islamic and Christian traditions</i>	Students will be able to identify key religious musical genres in the Christian and Islamic traditions and reflect on them analytically and aesthetically.	Students will display their knowledge through reflective dialogue recordings with their Mercer peers and also written works of an analytical or creative nature.
<b>3.</b>		
<i>Students will learn and perform traditional Islamic and Christian music.</i>	Students will be successful in learning traditional Islamic and Christian music and performing it publicly in several venues.	Performances of music.
<b>4.</b>		
<i>Students will co-create, learn, and perform original music that combines elements of Christian and Islamic traditions</i>	Students will be successful in co-creating music and enhance their willingness to explore creative expression.	Performances of music.
<b>5.</b>		
<i>Students will gain an appreciation of the richness and complexity of religious music and how it can evolve and adapt through dialogue and co-creation.</i>	Students reflective work.	Students will display their knowledge through reflective dialogue recordings with their Mercer peers and also written works of an analytical or creative nature.

**F. Course Resources: (reading lists, e-textbooks, etc.)**

**1. Please indicate any required learning resources and facilities**

*A Common Word Between Us and You* (PDF). *Acommonword.com*. The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, January 2009.

[https://www.acommonword.com/downloads/CW-Booklet-Final-v6\\_8-1-09.pdf](https://www.acommonword.com/downloads/CW-Booklet-Final-v6_8-1-09.pdf)

Cornille, Catherine. "Conditions for Interreligious Dialogue." *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, John Wiley & Sons, 2013, pp. 20-33.

King, Roberta Rose, "Music, Peacebuilding, and Interfaith Dialogue: Transformative Bridges in Muslim-Christian Relations." *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, Volume 40:3, 2016, pp. 202-217.

**Selections of Traditional Music from the Islamic and Christian Canons**

**G. Teaching Method/Strategy**

The class sessions at AUI will take place generally from 10a-12p. These sessions will include an overview of the A Common Word text that sets the stage for interreligious dialogue and cooperation between Christians and Muslims. Then, the course will shift somewhat to an overview of Christian and Islamic musical traditions to (re)acquaint the students with the genres present in each area. In parallel, the course will shift to learning several traditional songs from the two religious traditions and experimentations in creative co-creation of musical works.

At the Azrou Center, the work of learning and performing the traditional songs will continue but be augmented by a project to co-create original religious or spiritual music.

**H. Assessment tasks: (Quizzes, Exams, Case Study, Assignments, Project, etc.)**

<b>Assessment Task</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Weight out of total score</b>
<b>Daily dialogue reflections with Mercer peers</b>	Daily	<b>25%</b>
<b>Final reflective paper or artistic creation</b>	End of program	<b>30%</b>
<b>Academic analysis of A Common Word</b>	Mid-program	<b>15%</b>

<b>document and other texts assigned</b>		
<b>Academic analysis of Islamic music</b>	Mid-program	<b>10%</b>
<b>Attendance and active participation</b>	Throughout	<b>20%</b>

### I. Course Content

<b>List of Topics</b>	<b>Contact Hours</b>
<b>A Common Word</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Religious music from Christian and Islamic traditions</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Musical creation and performance</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

### J. Proposed Course Schedule

<b>Day</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
1	10 am – 12 pm	Introduction to A Common Word	Reading
	2-4 pm (note that these times will likely be extended and later depending on Azrou Center activities)	Dialogue about A Common Word Peer groups with AUI-Mercer students	Recorded peer dialogues
2	10 am – 12 pm	Introduction to religious music	Readings or videos
	2-4 pm (note that these times will likely be extended and later depending on Azrou Center activities)	Azrou Center: Getting to know students and project. Initial musical experimentation	Recorded peer dialogues
3	10 am – 12 pm	Religious music from Christian tradition	Readings or videos

	2-4 pm (note that these times will likely be extended and later depending on Azrou Center activities)	Azrou Center: Continuing process of musical creation and experimentation	Recorded peer dialogues Reflective analytical essay about Christian music
4	10 am – 12 pm	Religious music from Islamic tradition	Readings or videos
	2-4 pm (note that these times will likely be extended and later depending on Azrou Center activities)	Azrou Center: Focusing on learning traditional Christian and Islamic music	Recorded peer dialogues Reflective analytical essay about Islamic music
5	10 am – 12 pm	Syncretic music	Readings or videos
	2-4 pm (note that these times will likely be extended and later depending on Azrou Center activities)	Azrou Center: Focusing on learning traditional Christian and Islamic music	Recorded peer dialogues
6	10 am – 12 pm	Modern religious music	Readings or videos
	2-4 pm (note that these times will likely be extended and later depending on Azrou Center activities)	Azrou Center: Focusing on co-creating original music	Recorded peer dialogues
7	10 am – 12 pm	Tensions in religious music	Readings or videos

	2-4 pm (note that these times will likely be extended and later depending on Azrou Center activities)	Azrou Center: Consolidating traditional music and continuing co-creation of original music.	Recorded peer dialogues
8	10 am – 12 pm	Notable religious musical groups and leaders from Islamic and Christian tradition	Readings or videos
	2-4 pm (note that these times will likely be extended and later depending on Azrou Center activities)	Azrou Center: Consolidating traditional music and continuing co-creation of original music.	Recorded peer dialogues
9	10 am – 12 pm	The importance of performance in religious music	Readings or videos
	2-4 pm (note that these times will likely be extended and later depending on Azrou Center activities)	Azrou Center: Consolidating traditional music and continuing co-creation of original music.	Recorded peer dialogues
10	10 am – 12 pm	Consolidating experiences and dialogue	Discussion groups
	2-4 pm (note that these times will likely be extended and later depending on	Broader Community: Performance of traditional and co-created original music	Final projects

	Azrou Center activities)		
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**K. Additional Information (optional) – examples might include: did students suggest this course? Is it a course adapted from AUI partner schools? Has a school Dean, coordinator or curricular committee been involved in developing or reviewing the proposal?**

This is a course that has grown out of last May 2022 intercession between Mercer and AUI. That course focused on interreligious dialogue and included trips to Fez and the South to meet with various religious leaders and groups such as the monks in Midelt, Sufi brothers in Fez and the South, and nuns in Fes. Students also experienced Christian worship at a Fez church and a Friday sermon at the Al Akhawayn Mosque. The goal of the program was to bring innovation and internationalization to the AUI intercession and to support Mercer’s faculty-led study abroad programs.