

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Common Roots: Comparative Religion Through Musical Co-Creation and Service-Learning

A. Instructor and Course Information

Intersession	MAY 2024		
Instructor Name	Karen Smith, Brian Seilstad, and Isabel Eddouks		
Course Title	Common Roots: Comparative Religion through Musical Co-Creation and Service-Learning		
Course Code*	HUM 2306 and ART 1399 And Service-Learning	Credit	3 for course, 1 for service-learning, 4 total
Pre-requisites	None, but commitment to interfaith dialogue is essential along with some musical talent/interest		
Instructor Contact Information			
Phone Number	x2905	Email	Ka.smith@au.ma , b.seilstad@au.ma , i.eddouks@au.ma

*if matching an existing course in the catalog.

B. Course Description and Learning Outcomes

1. Course Description:

This is a course offered in collaboration with Mercer University in Macon, GA, USA. The course explores interreligious dialogue, particularly between Muslims and Christians, through comparative analysis of core religious texts, and, more specifically, musical styles and performances informed by pertinent academic scholarship. Students will also engage in a service-learning project with the Azrou Center in which students and professors from Mercer and AUI, along with professional musicians will work with beneficiaries of the Azrou Center's vocational programs on arrangements of a set of traditional and original musical pieces that will be performed publicly in a variety of venues, including AUI, the Eglise St. François d'Assise in Fès, Merzouga, and the Azrou Center. .

Daily off-campus travel to Azrou as part of the service-learning component of the course is required along with other travel (to Fès, Merzouga, etc.) for performance and encounter with interfaith actors on the ground.

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 inform musical expression.

3. Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify key commonalities 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 spiritual 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 are 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 course builds on May Intercessions 2022's and 2023's successful collaborations.

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.

Isabel Eddouks is Lecturer in the Arts in the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. She teaches Music Seminar and Arts & Cultural Management. She also directs the AUI Choir and is a classically trained flutist with a degree from the Folkwang

University of Arts (Essen/Germany). Isabel works with [“Reflexive Music”](#) composed and developed by the interdisciplinary artist Keren Rosenbaum.

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 component 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)

Program Learning Goals/Objectives	Course Intended Learning Outcome Metrics (What)	Course Assessment Metrics (How)
1.		
<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.
2.		
<i>Students will learn about traditional musical expressions inspired by the Islamic and Christian traditions and explore the intersectionality between music and spirituality in these expressions.</i>	Students will be able to identify key religious musical traditional expressions 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.
3.		
<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.
4.		

	<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.
5.			
	<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

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.

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

Yale response to a Common Word Letter:

<https://www.acommonword.com/lib/downloads/yale-response.pdf>

Abou Mrad, Nidaa. *Cantillation as a Convergence Point of the Musical Traditions of the Abrahamic Religions*.

Dastmalchian, Amir. *Taking Inspiration from A Common Word for a Musical Dialogue*.

Holton, Jared. *Performing toward Peace: Investigations into the Process of Peacebuilding through Shared Music in Libya*.

Kapchan, Deborah A. *The Promise of Sonic Translation: Performing the Festive Sacred in Morocco*.

King, Roberta R. and Tan, Sooi Ling. *Musical Pathways toward Peace and Reconciliation*.

King, Roberta R. *Pursuing Songs of Peace and Reconciliation*.

Illman, R. (2014) **Art and Belief**. 1st edn. Taylor and Francis. Available at: <https://www.perlego.com/book/1665845/art-and-belief-artists-engaged-in-interreligious-dialogue-pdf> (Accessed: 6 March 2024).

"**Jordi Savall Traces Jerusalem's History In Music.**" *NPR*, 3 May 2010, www.npr.org/2010/05/03/126390261/jordi-savall-traces-jeruselems-history-in-music. Accessed 6 Mar. 2024.

"**JERUSALÉN: La Ciudad De Las Dos Paces - Concierto De Jordi Savall.**" *YouTube*, uploaded by Belarmo, 2 Sept. 2011, youtu.be/1sLwoG6QQXg?si=-SDxw3sM11LpVp1G.

Rosenbaum, Keren. "**Reflexive Music Visual Score.**" *Reflexive Music*, 6 Mar. 2024, www.reflexivemusic.com/reflexive-music-visual-scores.

Selections of Traditional Music from the Islamic and Christian Canons

G. Teaching Method/Strategy

The class sessions at AUI will take place generally from 9:30 AMa-12:30 PM. 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.)

Assessment Task	Due date	Weight out of total score
Daily dialogue reflections with Mercer peers	Daily	30%

Final reflective project and/or artistic creation	End of program	30%
Academic analysis of texts assigned	Mid-program	10%
Attendance and active participation	Throughout	30%

I. Course Content

List of Topics	Contact Hours
A Common Word and other academic articles/content	12
Religious music from Christian and Islamic traditions	20
Musical co-creation and performance	20
Total	52

J. Proposed Course Schedule

A.

Day	Session		Topic	Assignment/ Assessment
Wed. May 22	9:30 – 12:30		Dialogue and encounter exercises, getting to know each other and our topic, Introduction to a Common Word and discussion (Karen Thomas Smith)	Read in Advance: A Common Word document, Yale response Assignment 1a: Recorded peer dialogues
	2-3:30 pm		Introduction and Discussion about Yale response Peer groups assigned	Assignment 1b: <i>Taking Inspiration from A Common Word for a Musical Dialogue</i> , Amir Dastmalchian -- Take notes and highlight

	4:00 PM	<p>Dialogue in motion: Hike to Zawia Sidi Abdeslam with AUI, Mercer, Evergreen, and Azrou students</p> <p>Dinner at Zawia Sidi Abdeslam</p>	<p>Assignment 1c: Illman, R. (2014) Art and Belief. 1st edn. Taylor and Francis. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/1665845/art-and-belief-artists-engaged-in-interreligious-dialogue-pdf (Accessed: 6 March 2024). Take notes and highlight</p> <p>Bonus: Video: Praising Allah in the Sanctuary: Loving Our Religious Neighbors in Musical Spaces, video of lecture by Roberta King, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5mITZQjHvW</p>
Th.M ay 23	9:30 AM -12:30 PM	<p>Discussion of articles, Introduction to Religious Music and Ethnomusicology – Sounding the Sacred: the Ubiquity of Sound (Nathan Myrick)</p> <p>Active Listening with Isabel Eddouks</p>	<p>Assignment 2a: Recorded peer dialogues. Assignment 2b: Read Roberta King, <i>Pursuing Songs of Peace and Reconciliation</i>. Take notes and highlight. Assignment 2c: Rosenbaum, Keren. "Reflexive Music Visual Score." <i>Reflexive Music</i>, 6 Mar. 2024, www.reflexivemusic.com/reflexive-music-visual-scores.</p>
	2:30 – 6:30 PM	<p>Azrou Center: First musical encounter: Learning session with Nouaman Lahlou</p>	<p><u>Service-learning: focus on getting to know, including, working with and valuing the contributions of Azrou women students</u></p> <p><u>Understanding essentials of Moroccan musical traditions</u></p>
Fri. May 24	9:30 – 12:30	<p>Discussion of Roberta King Article</p> <p>Abrahamic Religious traditions in dialogue (Shehnaz Haqqani)</p> <p>Dialogue with students from Al Mowafaqa</p>	<p><u>Assignment 3a: Read Jared Holton article, <i>Singing Towards Peace</i>. Take notes and highlight.</u></p> <p><u>Assignment 3b: Read Roberta King and Sooi Ling Tan article, <i>Musical Pathways toward Peace and Reconciliation</i>.</u></p>

	1:30 3:00 - 6:30 PM	Visit to the Mosque For Friday Prayer Azrou Center: Moroccan musical traditions with Nouaman Lahlou; Sharing and co- teaching selected spiritual music	Service learning: Continuing to work with Azrou Center students in musical co-creation. <u>Understanding essentials of Moroccan musical traditions</u>
Sat. May 25	9:30– 12:30 pm	Discussion of articles Practice in Auditorium 17	Assignment 4 a: Read Abou Mrad, <i>Cantillation</i> . Take notes and highlight. Assignment 4 b: Read Kapchan, <i>The Promise of Sonic Translation: Performing the Festive Sacred in Morocco</i> . Take notes and highlight.
	3:00 - 6:00 PM 8:00 PM	Practice in Auditorium 17 Concert at AUI	Service learning: Continuing to work with Azrou Center students in musical co-creation.
Sun. May 26	8:30 11:00- 12:30 PM 12:30 3:30 PM	Travel to Fes Visit to Church in Fès Lunch with Catholic Church members Concert at Catholic Church Free Evening in the Medina of Fès	Assignment 5a: Peer dialogue recordings: Reflections on music as concert performance and music as a part of worship Service learning: Translating for Azrou Center Students and assisting them to feel welcome and valued in this foreign environment.

				Service learning – focusing on including and valuing Azrou Center women in performance in new settings
Monday May 27	10:00		Discovery of the Medina in Fès with Christian Students from Fès, Meeting Tijanniya Tariqa and dinner with Little Sisters of Jesus	
				Assignment 6: Peer dialogues
Tues. May 28	9:30		Checkout from hotel	Assignment 7: Peer dialogues
	3:00 PM		Return to AUI stopping by Adghrar for Sheep Shearing in the morning Classroom: Processing the Academic articles in dialogue with the experience	Assignment 7b: Written analysis: What stands out to you about each article you read, your reaction, and your takeaway. How do these articles inform your perspective on music and Interfaith/Intercultural Dialogue and Peacebuilding?
Wed May 29	8:30		Departure from AUI	Assignment 8: Peer dialogues compare monastic Christian prayer with Muslim prayer
	10:30		Monastery Visit	Lunch at Kasbah Asmaa
	5:30		Arrival at l’Auberge Dunes d’Or, departure on camels for night in desert	
	10:00 12:00		Departure for Er-Rissani	Assignment 9: Peer Dialogues

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 the 2022 and 2023 May intercessions between Mercer and AUI. The 2022 courses 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.

The 2023 course built on the 2022 course and added musical co-creation and service-learning as key aspects of the program. This 2024 proposal will continue in this line and seek to provide a profound and transformative experience to all participants.