

**UUA Music Leadership Credentialing Course**  
Rhythm, Pitch, and Timbre:  
The Elements of Multicultural Competence for Musicians

Monday, July 27, 2009, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Portland, Oregon

Co-facilitators: Dr. Mark A. Hicks and Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

**Course Title:**

Rhythm, Pitch, and Timbre:  
The Elements of Multicultural Competence for Musicians

**Description:**

Using music as a bridge and a guide, this course introduces musicians to the basic elements necessary to uplift and sustain multiracial, multicultural congregations and communities. Through experiential-learning techniques, participants will consider their role in helping to create Unitarian Universalist communities of love and justice. The course facilitators will model pedagogical practices that can be used in participants' congregations and communities.

**Goals of the Course:**

Participants will come away from this course with:

1. A lived experience of the rewards and challenges inherent in an intentionally multiracial, multicultural spiritual community
2. Increased self-understanding and knowledge of the skills and habits of mind that are necessary to support a multiracial, multicultural congregation/community
3. A naming and claiming of the unique role that musicians can play in transforming their congregations and communities into multiracial, multicultural settings
4. A grounding in multicultural ways of knowing and communication patterns
5. A plan of action for exploring next steps in this realm where music, anti-racism, and multiculturalism meet
6. Resources for assessing their congregation's multicultural competencies and for addressing resistance to the work

7. A “community of accountability and encouragement” within which to continue exploring, growing, and applying what they learn

### **Pre-Course Reading and Assignments:**

1. **Read** Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” available at <http://www.amptoons.com/blog/files/mcintosh.html>. Considered a classic by anti-racism educators, this article offers a good introduction to the concept of “unearned privilege.” McIntosh, who is white, describes her own unfolding recognition of the unearned skin privilege that she enjoys, of the ways she has been taught to remain oblivious to it, and of the questions and callings her new awareness presents.

**Questions to ponder** (We suggest you journal or take notes on these questions, but please use whatever learning method best suits you):

- a. What experiences would you add to McIntosh’s list of the “daily effects of white privilege”?
- b. How does thinking about “unearned *privileges*” for one group—rather than focusing on “*disadvantages*” for some groups—change the way you think and feel about systemic oppressions like racism, heterosexism, sexism, ableism, ageism, classism, and more?

2. **Read and/or view** Barack Obama’s speech on race in the United States, 18 March 2008, available at [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/03/18/us/politics/20080318\\_OBAMA\\_GRAPHIC.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/03/18/us/politics/20080318_OBAMA_GRAPHIC.html)  
Then-candidate Obama addresses concerns raised by his former pastor Rev. Jeremiah Wright’s comments; he offers historical, personal, and political reflections on how issues of “race” and ethnicity impact the daily lives of everyone in this country.

### **Questions to ponder:**

- a. How do different but parallel issues of racism shape our ability to understand individual difference?
- b. Look at your congregation through the lens of “racial history.” How did decisions in the past influence your congregation’s development? (Did your

congregation confront racism, for instance? Is it a white-flight congregation? and so on). What's in your congregation's racial "closet"?

3. **Read** chapters 2 and 4 from Diane Goodman's, *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups* (Sage Publications: 2001)

Chapter 2, "About Privileged Groups," provides an excellent overview of the concept of privilege, how and why it works as it does, how it impacts various cultural identities, groups, and why we resist acknowledging the benefits that privilege bestows on us. Chapter 4, "Understanding Resistance," provides an accessible overview of why we fail to be open to alternative perspectives from the standpoint of psychology, emotions, and cognition.

While these two chapters frame the assumptions we will rely on during the course, we strongly suggest that you purchase this text; it is a resource that not only will provide you with the background to understand your own experiences but that can also help you create more effective learning experiences for others interested in doing anti-racist/anti-oppression work.

### **Questions to ponder:**

- a. Where and how does privilege appear in your daily exchanges with family, at the workplace, or in encounters with ordinary people?
- b. When do you find yourself more able to change? What factors lead to that kind of growth and development?

4. **Review** the document, "Suggested Norms for Cross-Cultural Conversation."

### **Question to Ponder:**

Thinking about your experiences in a group, reflect on the conditions and/or qualities that have allowed you to do your best work. Be ready to share your responses at the outset of the course. We will use these collective insights to frame the norms that shape our time together.

5. **Review** "Multicultural Communication Competencies" (Mark A. Hicks, 2008) and Multicultural Competencies (Paula Cole Jones, 2009).

### **Questions to ponder:**

- a. What aspects of these competencies are easy for you to incorporate? What aspects may prove challenging?
- b. What clarifying questions do you have about the Multicultural Competencies? Which competencies most spark your interest and curiosity?

6. **Write** a brief journal entry to bring to the course describing each of the following:

- a. Name a time when you were the “student” and someone was trying to teach you something that was important to them and that you were not able to grasp or take in. Focus your journal entry on why you resisted, your emotional response, and your behavior during and after the failed lesson.
- b. Name a time when you were the “teacher” and you were trying to teach someone something that was important to you and that she or he did not want to learn or that she or he was not able to grasp or take in. Focus your journal entry on why the student may have resisted, your emotional response, and your behavior during and after the failed lesson.

### **Bring to Class:**

1. Your responses to each of the writing assignments
2. Your copy of each of the articles and handouts
3. Your personal calendar in order to set appointments to meet your Support Team
4. An open mind and heart tuned for exploration, honest engagement, being curious, and a disposition for forming a community to discern these complicated issues

### **Post-Course Assignments:**

1. **Form a “Support Team.”** During the class, you will **connect** with a partner or partners (up to three in a team) with whom you will **pledge** to encourage each other and hold each other accountable. You and your partner or partners will set no fewer than two times for telephone or in-person conversations as you continue to explore, practice, “bridge,” “translate,” and grow in your own multicultural

competencies, and as you help your congregation to grow in its competencies, too. As this work will become more complex over time, we encourage your Support Team to stay active at least until the UUMN Conference in summer 2010.

2. Writing and Reflection Exercise. **Write** a one- to two-page reflection paper or journal entry in response to your learnings in this course (or the whole conference). For example, what influenced your thoughts and feelings on the use on music in a multicultural, multiracial context? What did you notice about yourself and others as you moved through the week? Where were you enthused? Frustrated? What are you confused about? What next steps do you feel called to explore? How will you be accountable for exploring those next steps? Be prepared to share your writing with members of your Support Team.
3. Conversation with Support Team: **Review** your essay/journal entry and **hold** an hour-long conference call with your Support Team to **share** your reflection paper and to **begin to create** a mini-action plan based on the next steps you have identified.
4. Create a Mini-Action Plan: Based on your journaling during the course, the reflection paper that you have written, and your telephone conversation with your Support Team, **identify** the area that you want to explore next, and **use** the Musical Exercise below to take you to this next step.
5. Musical Exercise: **Pick** a piece of music from a cultural group with which you are *not* very familiar but which interests you. Plan to **include** this piece of music in a Unitarian Universalist worship service. For this assignment, your project **must include** the following components (for an example, see the handout on “Lift Every Voice and Sing” that you will have received in our class):
  - a. Identify two or three Unitarian Universalist principles that the song addresses.
  - b. Identify the cultural group(s) from which the song springs, including the song’s history and the cultural values that you think are at work in the music, the lyrics, or the composer’s and lyricist’s “narrative.”

- c. Write a paragraph that will be printed in the order of service in the style of “liner notes.” Your liner notes should include: the context for the song, and its use and meaning in its culture of origin. Explain (briefly) your interpretations of the cross-cultural connections, and how Unitarian Universalist principles and universal themes connect.
- d. A performance of the music you selected
- e. After the performance, identify three people in your congregation who represent different points of view about the styles of music they like to have included in worship, and have three- to five-minute conversations with each person. Get their reactions to the music that was performed. How did they respond to the liner notes and/or your introduction of the piece? What Unitarian Universalist principles did they recognize in the piece? How, if at all, were their boundaries stretched? Were there other observations that you found to be representative of the approach that you need to take in order to promote a more inclusive orientation toward diverse musical styles?
- f. Record your notes from these conversations as part of your assignment.
- g. Record your response to this question: Is there anything you would change the next time you offer this experience to the congregation?

**FINAL PROJECT DUE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2009**

*Details about where and how to send these documents  
will be shared during class on July 27.*

**The Final Project**

1. Prepare a packet that includes:
  - a. names of the members of your Support Team and the dates this autumn on which your Support Team has held its conference calls or meetings (one-half page);
  - b. the Reflection Paper that you wrote and shared with colleagues following the UUMN Conference 2009;
  - c. a summary of your Musical Exercise. List and describe the UU Principles you chose, the cultural group you focused on, your liner notes, and a summary of the feedback you received from your three interview subjects (no more than two pages);
  - d. and finally, write a one- to two-page Cover Letter, addressed to Mark and Nancy, that reflects the whole of your experience,

and your plan for continued learning and growth in this realm  
where music, anti-racism, and multiculturalism meet.