

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

July 2012  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
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:**

The goal of this class is to grow your capacities as a multiculturally competent teacher-musician within the congregational setting. To prepare, please *write and bring to the course a journal entry (or entries)* 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 him or her 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.
- c. Before you begin the readings below, write about your expectations for this course. What are your hopes and dreams for a multi-racial, multicultural, theologically diverse congregation? What questions or situations perplex you?

### **Pre-Course Readings**

After you read each of the following, write a response in your journal. Once you have finished all the readings, write about the thoughts, feelings, and questions that capture your attention. How, if at all, have your perspectives or assumptions changed through this pre-course work?

**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.*

### Reflection Questions

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

1. What experiences would you add to McIntosh's list of the "daily effects of white privilege"?
2. 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?

### **Diane Goodman: 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 or 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.

### Reflection questions:

1. Where and how does privilege appear in your daily exchanges with family, at the workplace, or in encounters with ordinary people?

2. When do you find yourself more able to change? What factors lead to that kind of growth and development?

**Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo “Shadows,” in *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton University Press, 2006).**

Emerson describes the dynamics that commonly crop up in congregations as they negotiate the cultural traditions of multiple cultures at the same time.

**Reflection questions:**

1. As a musician reading this text, what role do you see your music program playing to support the anxiety associated with “shifting cultural change”? Think about the way in which music both “holds emotions” and also serves as a bridge to new places (for example, how it represents coming home and also going forth!).
2. Look at the list of “misuses of power” on p. 148 of the article. Which items are familiar to you? Make a note of similar stories from your own experience.

**Document: Suggested Norms for Cross-Cultural Conversation**

**Reflection Question**

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.

**Multicultural Competencies** (Paula Cole Jones, 2009).Reflection Questions:

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

**Bring to Class in Tulsa:**

- Your responses to each of the writing assignments
- Your copy of each of the articles and handouts
- Your personal calendar in order to set appointments to meet your Support Team
- An open mind and heart tuned for exploration, for honest engagement, for curiosity, and for the creation of a community with whom to work on these complicated issues.

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### **Post-Course Assignment**

#### **I. Support Team**

During the class, you will connect with a small group (no more than three persons) with whom you will pledge to encourage each other and hold each other accountable. You and your partners will meet twice, likely over the phone, to explore, practice, bridge, translate and grow your own and your congregation's competency as a multi-racial, multicultural community. We hope your team makes a strong connection, perhaps even checking-in with each other at the 2014 UUMN conference.

During the first meeting of your Support Team:

Reflect on your learning so far. Review the journal entries that formed part of your pre-course assignment. Include insights you gained from the course and, perhaps, the conference. Think about:

- What surprised or moved you in the course exercises and conversations?
- What insights did you gain about how music creates/supports a multi-racial, multicultural, theologically diverse context?
- Where were you enthused? Frustrated?
- What did you notice about yourself, others, and music as you moved through the week? What did you find puzzling?
- What next steps do you feel called to explore?

Help each other begin to brainstorm how to complete the Post-Course assignment, "Music for Moving Dreams."

#### **II. Activate the "Music for Moving Dreams" Initiative**

Those who study religion and sociology have found that music is a key factor that both attracts and sustains the inherent tensions that emerge in a diverse congregation. As with any art form, music can be a connective tissue that harkens the past while stretching us toward something new. Thus, in the

work of developing a multicultural multiracial theologically diverse congregation, music is one of the more encouraging strategies to welcome the stranger AND keep her at the table. This project asks you to develop a small learning community that can, over time, become the guiding force to support the work of building a Beloved Community. We are asking you to use music as a vehicle for moving dreams from the realm of a “lofty vision” toward behavioral practices that shift paradigms.

**Process:**

Based on your journaling/reflections before and after the July conference and your telephone conversation with your Support Team, identify a small group of people (no more than 7 to 8 people) who have an interest in developing a multi-racial, multicultural, theologically diverse congregation. Explain to participants that they will attend a two-hour meeting, followed by another short meeting to provide oral feedback on a musical experience presented during Sunday worship.

**Part One: Create a Small Learning Community**

1. Using the four versions of the “Star-Spangled Banner” modeled during the class (feel free to swap out a version if you find it useful), research the cultural background for each of these versions, and write liner notes for each version (feel free to use the liner notes from class as a launching point):
  - Who was the artist? What was the social context of the version? How did that version “speak” to its era? How does the version speak to the values of Unitarian Universalism?
2. Identify a small group from your congregation to experience the exercise and have a conversation about its meaning and implications. The purpose of this particular exercise is to model how to create a community of consciousness about how cultural traditions – lived experiences – shape values, emotions, social commitments, and so forth. The group members might come from groups such as your music committee, church board, worship associates, the church growth committee or the diversity task force. Allow two hours for the exercise and conversation. After the experience itself, engage your group in a dialogue about the joys and challenges that emerge when multiple visions of history, competing values, and strong emotional ties occupy the same space.

Learning goals include:

- raising people’s consciousness about the power of music as a tool for creating a supportive space to engage difference;
- demonstrating how to create and support the spiritual practice of both welcoming and sitting with difference and ambiguity;
- and, finally, using of music as a community-building strategy that welcomes people from different cultural groups.

### **Part Two: Musical Exercise with the Congregation**

Identify a piece of music that speaks to a cultural tradition not often voiced in your congregation.

1. As part of your own process, 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.” Identify two or three Unitarian Universalist principles that the song addresses.
2. Write a paragraph that will be printed in the order of service in the style of “liner notes.” **(Please see the sample on “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” prepared by Dr. Mark Hicks, at the end of this document.)** 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. Consider consulting with the Learning Community you have created in Part One about how best to balance oral and written learning styles within the audience; how much should be said out loud in an introduction, how much should be covered in the liner notes? The goal is for a large percentage of the congregation to engage with the music.
3. Perform the piece during a worship service. Following the performance (quite soon!), invite representatives from the Learning Community to process the impact of the music, paying special attention to the emotional terrain of the experience (connections, disconnections, lingering questions, curiosities, inspirations, and so forth). In a spirit of continuous improvement (as opposed to critique!), check in with group members on topics such as:
  - How was the music was received by the wider congregation?
  - To what degree did the music invite new connections?

- How did the overall process expand new ways of thinking, feeling, being, doing?
- As individuals and a collective, how did the process mitigate fears or anxieties you and they may have had about working with music and presenting it in this way?
- What feedback does the group have for you in your role as teacher-musician?

**III. Write up what happened.** In approximately two pages, describe briefly but vividly your experiences with the “Star-Spangled Banner” Small-Group Exercise and with the Musical Exercise for the Congregation. Think about these questions:

- Did your “students” experience resistance or frustration with the “Star-Spangled Banner” exercise or the material? If so, how did the group work with those emotions?
- Did you and your students experience “aha” moments or breakthroughs?
- What learning goals did you achieve?
- For the Musical Exercise, describe the cultural group you focused on, the UU Principles you chose, and the ways in which you engaged the musicians and congregants in their encounter with this music.
- Summarize the conversation you had with members of your Learning Community following the performance.
- How do the pre-course readings help you to understand your experiences?
- Is there anything you would change the next time you offer these experiences?

#### **IV. Write a Cover Letter to Mark and Nancy**

Write a one- to two-page Cover Letter that reflects the whole of your experience with this class. This is where you get to share your personal journey through this course.

- Where did you travel as a result of leading a group of congregants on this journey?
- What new perspectives, approaches, and goals do you now hold?

- How does this experience relate to Unitarian Universalism and its future?
- What did you learn about the musician's leadership role in creating/supporting the development of multi-racial, multicultural, and theologically diverse congregations?
- What's next for you in this work?

### **Send Your Final Packet**

Prepare a packet that includes:

1. 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)
2. Two-page Reflection Paper on the "Star-Spangled Banner" Small-Group Exercise and the Musical Exercise for the Congregation
3. Your liner notes for the "Star-Spangled Banner" versions and for the Musical Exercise for the Congregation
4. Your Cover Letter to Mark and Nancy about your overall journey through this course and your plans for continued learning.

**FINAL PROJECT DUE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2012**

*Please e-mail your completed packet to: [jgartner@uua.org](mailto:jgartner@uua.org)*

**SAMPLE: MUSICAL EXERCISE – LINER NOTES**  
**“Lift Every Voice and Sing”**

**Words: James Weldon Johnson, 1871-1938**

**Music: J. Rosamond Johnson, 1873-1954**

**Principles:** Inherent worth, search for truth, interconnectedness

**Cultural values at work:**

1. Coming to voice – to name and validate one’s own story
2. Recognition of a common struggle to be seen and respected as human
3. Ritual of affirmation

**Liner notes:**

“Lift Every Voice and Sing” (now also known as “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing”) was first performed publicly as a poem as part of a celebration of Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday on February 12, 1900, by 500 schoolchildren at the segregated Stanton School. Its principal, James Weldon Johnson, wrote the words to introduce its honored guest, Booker T. Washington.

The poem was later set to music by Mr. Johnson’s brother, John, in 1905. Singing this song quickly became a way for African Americans to demonstrate their patriotism and hope for the future. In calling for earth and heaven to “ring with the harmonies of Liberty,” they could speak out subtly against racism and Jim Crow laws—and especially against the huge number of lynchings that accompanied the rise of the Ku Klux Klan at the turn of the century. In 1919, the NAACP adopted the song as the “Negro National Anthem.” By the 1920s, copies of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” could be found in black churches across the country, often pasted into the hymnals. In many civic settings in the Black community, the hymn is sung immediately after the “Star-Spangled Banner.”