

CHANGING THE WORLD WITH MUSIC

dartmouth college | music 45

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Course hours: 2A
Office: 64 Hopkins

No prerequisites
Fulfills distrib: Art

Course description and objectives

This course asks what we can do for music and what music can do for others. Our research and discussions lead us not simply toward demonstrable examples of music functioning as an agent of change, but furthermore toward contested notions of what it even means to claim that something—the world, art, people, culture, values—has undergone consequential transformation. How do we think and talk about change via discourses of reform, revolution, rehabilitation, activism, innovation, progress, labor, and capital? What are some distinguishing features (if any) of music and sound that enable them to serve as flashpoints or vehicles for change? How might you—in this class and beyond—engage with music and its technologies to fulfill causes most meaningful to you?



As much as we talk about how musical pieces and practices can reshape the world, we will contemplate just as seriously music's potential limitations with regard to private experience as well as the public sphere. In other words, we will scrutinize common romanticized portraits of music—music as edifying vessel, as force for social change, as therapeutic agent, as spiritual aid—and recognize what aspects of the world and of our world-making might *not* be so easily shaped by music and musicians. In doing so, we may gain a clearer sense of how music changes with worldly developments, and how the world changes (or not) through musical resonances.