

Music and Social Identity

Dartmouth College | Music 40

Spring 2015

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Course hours: 10A
Office location: 64 Hopkins

Course description and objectives

This course is about music's varied roles in our social lives. Music articulates and embodies numerous dimensions of our identities: gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, religiosity, age, class, disability, and more. Our aim is to explore how our musical engagements resonate with daily social, political, and creative activities. What can music do, how can it signify, and what might it reveal about who we are and how we live? Music alone does not make us human; humans are not the only beings that make music. Yet perhaps there are lessons in the ways music inflects our humanities (as well as *the* humanities—disciplines such as musicology, literary studies, disability studies, queer theory, critical race theory, philosophy, history, and visual arts). Each week, we will foster discussions

built around a small constellation of topics and case studies. Subjects range from Japanese dance to Eminem's whiteness; from one-handed pianism to songs expressed through sign language; from fieldwork of birdsongs to posthuman and postmortem echoes. Assignments include three short papers, a final presentation, a final paper, and the leading of discussions. My hope is that you will come away from this course with deep, even compassionate understandings of how music matters to you, to others, and to the workings of our cohabited world.

