

MUS 536, Area Studies in Ethnomusicology – Music and Belief
Instructor: Margarethe Adams | Monday, 9:30am – 12:20pm

In this course we will interrogate our framings and assumptions of belief and secularity, examine the sonic dimensions of worshiping and of worship spaces, and explore the multifaceted performance of belief. An introductory ethnomusicology graduate seminar, it examines intersections of music and belief in major world religions, as well as older belief systems (animism, shamanism), and religion/philosophy complexes like Confucianism and Taoism. This iteration of Music and Belief will focus on the

U.S., Western Asia, and West and Northern Africa. Topics include: popular music and American evangelical worship; Blues, gospel and forms of “sonic black womanhood” (Daphne Brooks 2011); and the cultural and musical traditions of Mali and the Sahara. Our study will take both anthropological and musicological approaches to these topics and students will gain an introductory look at important scholarship in ethnomusicological social theory along the way. Requirements include weekly readings, weekly written assignments, article presentations, and a final paper. Attendance and active participation in seminar discussion are mandatory.

This course is suitable for all graduate students. For MM and DMA students, this course fulfills the Elective Group I requirement. For students in the MA or PhD track in Critical Music Studies, it fulfills the Elective Group I requirement. MM and DMA students must check with their large ensemble instructor to see if this course would conflict with the ensemble’s rehearsal schedule. If it will conflict, the student must check with the course instructor to see if absences for this reason would be permitted.

3 credits