

Diversity Statement

One of my primary purposes as a teacher and mentor is to guide my students. I do my best to leave my predilections and biases at the proverbial (and literal) door. When I am engaged in a composition lesson with a student, it is my job is to help the student assess their goals and do my best to help them shape their musical intentions in the clearest way possible. In the classroom, I aim to present the material studied in such a way that it is historically accurate, and impose my opinions only when warranted and in such a way that never belittles or denigrates another person, group of persons, or culture. I remind my students that music is in itself a celebration of the uniqueness of each culture it represents, and all styles of music should be respected, even if one does not particular agree with or understand its aesthetic.

I am always cognizant of the fact that the right path of an individual is a matter of perspective, and can only be determined by the individual. I am always open to the viewpoints of others, and even include a statement in my course syllabi that specifically informs students that any discussions in class must be treated with the utmost respect for varying points of view, and with all due sensitivity. In order to build and maintain empathy, it is important to remind students that we all come from diverse backgrounds, and therefore, may see the same things in different lights.