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**Music**  
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The course that I had originally planned to teach as part of the Piedmont Workshop was “Ethnomusicology and the Cultural Soundscapes in Atlanta,” which focused primarily on ethnomusicological methodologies and their applications in the socio-musical communities of Atlanta. One of the themes that emerged from the Piedmont Workshop is the importance of understanding the influence of the environment on everyday life and vice versa. Thus, I intend to shift the focus of the course to study local knowledge and uses of the environment, and the dialectical relationship between physical environment and the social sensibilities of human communities, with an emphasis on music.

At the recent Oxford Institute for Environmental Education program, a participant noted: “It’s like music—the language of the environment is universal” [*Emory Report* 55(34), June 24, 2002]. This statement raises a fundamental question: Whose universe is being invoked in a statement like this? To be sure, the broad notion of understanding and protecting the environment is universal in the sense that it is a social responsibility that should be taken seriously worldwide. Yet, a particular tree in a certain place may have very different meanings from the same tree in another, in the same way that Wagner’s music simultaneously possesses heroic qualities in Germany and anti-Semitic meanings in Israel. Perhaps more importantly, that same tree (and music) may impact the everyday practices of different communities in varying ways. To adopt an uncritical notion of universality minimizes the meanings and values of these divergent social practices.

In this course, I hope to use several musical examples as case studies to enable students to understand the diverse uses, meanings, and values of the environment in different communities as manifested in their socio-musical practices (songs, dance, rituals, musical instruments, etc.) from the historical, social, and individual perspectives. Examples of musical case studies include the Australian Aborigines, the Temiar communities in the Malaysian rainforest, and the Kaluli communities in Papua New Guinea, to name a few. By understanding such local knowledge of music and the environment, students would then apply this knowledge to ethnographic case studies of communities in Atlanta.