

The New Orleans Center for the Gulf South presents 'New Orleans: Music, Culture and Civil Rights'

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The New Orleans Center for the Gulf South is presenting the second session of “New Orleans: Music, Culture and Civil Rights.” The workshop focuses on studying New Orleans to learn how harsh social conditions and vast inequities can be the catalyst for beautiful cultural forms. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The New Orleans Center for the Gulf South (NOCGS) presented the second of two sessions of “New Orleans: Music, Culture and Civil Rights,” a weeklong Music Rising at Tulane workshop made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshops for School Teachers program.

During the workshop, which took place last week, 36 K-12 teachers from around the country studied New Orleans to learn how harsh social conditions and vast inequities can be the catalyst for beautiful cultural forms, how music in the city plays a pivotal role to those seeking social equity, and how its musical forms reflect and define the city's complex history. The previous session took place in June, also with 36 participants.

2019 marks the second year that NOCGS has received prestigious NEH funding for this program, which is co-directed by musician Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes and Sonya Robinson, NOCGS' director of educator engagement.

"Teachers are hungry to learn about ways of talking about and teaching our country's civil rights history, and we can't have deep conversations about civil rights without broaching the grounds of race-related experiences and analyzing the social constructs of race. The workshop is designed — through the profound teachings that New Orleans and our workshop team offer — to strengthen teachers' abilities to be intellectually and emotionally present for a variety of student experiences and discussions," said Rebecca Snedeker, James H. Clark Executive Director of the NOCGS.

The workshop challenges educators through inquiry-driven pedagogy, exposure to scholars, artists and civil rights leaders, and visits to citywide sites such as Congo Square, the Backstreet Cultural Museum and Preservation Hall, as well as the Hogan Jazz Archive and Louisiana Research Collection, both gems of Tulane's Special Collections.

Participants develop instructional plans to take back to their classrooms. Tulane faculty and staff presenting at the workshop include Lynn Abbott, Rosanne Adderley, Shannon Blady, Courtney Bryan, Denise Frazier, Brooke Grant, Leon Miller and Matt Sakakeeny.