

My American Story: Storytelling and Songwriting Projects for Social Change

Presenter: Dr. Ilah Raleigh (she/her)

Emphasis/Audience: Gr. 6-12; interactive, self-reflective, art

In recent years, some people in mainstream media and politics have attempted to redefine who is a "real" American and exclude, oppress, and harm those outside of that definition. Lin-Manuel Miranda's groundbreaking 2015 work, *Hamilton: An American Musical* tells an American story that is larger than the life of Alexander Hamilton. Using symbols associated with traditional American history, Miranda leveraged the power of hip-hop to speak to the contemporary U.S. immigrant experience.

Miranda's example of storytelling through song demonstrates how we can harness the power of the arts to effect social change. This two-part workshop asks participants to consider "What is *my* American story?" Participants will examine their unique American identity and cultural knowledge as they experiment with self-expression and storytelling through song.

This workshop is open to participants of all musical or creative writing skills, abilities, and previous experience.