In July, 2011, the Sirridge Office of Medical Humanities, the UMKC Conservatory of Music and the Medical School in Graz, Austria collaborated to offer a course in Medicine and Music. Four students from the UMKC School of Medicine and one student from the Conservatory joined seven medical students from Graz in a course taught in English by Bill Everett from the conservatory and Lynda Payne and Stuart Munro from the School of Medicine.

The didactic curriculum examined music as therapy, medical issues portrayed through the medium of music and the impact of medical issues on composers and musicians. Students worked on and presented several projects throughout the course. The class also read together the lyrics from the Broadway musical “Next to Normal”, that portrays an array of issues facing a dysfunctional family.

In addition to classroom sessions, students participated in tours of medical and musical interest in Vienna and Graz. The American Institute for Musical Studies (AIMS), which trains and showcases students from around the world, is located in Graz each summer. The Medicine and Music class attended three AIMS concerts during July. Two voice instructors from AIMS presented a session on preserving the aging voice to the class.
The medical school in Graz was most accommodating, providing tours of several clinical departments and sessions with faculty members. Most accommodating of all were the medical students from Graz, who invited the UMKC students and faculty into their homes and provided enlightening tours of Graz and Vienna. With such a warm reception, the UMKC faculty eagerly anticipates a return to beautiful, musical Austria in July, 2013.