

Music Theory Program Goals

The music theory department prepares its majors to be well-rounded practical musicians who are able to apply skills and knowledge to performance, composition, teaching, research, or therapy. Emphasis in the undergraduate program is toward the mastery of the tonal system – aurally and visually – through acquiring a compositional facility in various styles, and the ability to analyze tonal music.

To this end, students learn the underlying principles, basic materials, and essential skills of the musical art; sharpen their listening and performance abilities through the study of harmony, keyboard, counterpoint, ear training, orchestration, analysis; and develop and improve their ability to ask and answer questions about music.

The graduate program is organized into a series of small seminars with an emphasis on the application of music theory in the academic environment, and in learning current analytical techniques. Students entering the master's program should have a reading knowledge of a foreign language, and a well-rounded background in music history and theory, and should be able to write clearly and correctly in English. A master's written project is the culmination of this program.

Students who have earned the M.M. in Music Theory are currently teaching in colleges and universities, are currently employed in related fields, or have successfully pursued doctoral degrees.

Degrees Offered

- Bachelor of Music in Music Theory
- Master of Music in Music Theory

I. Goals: 4-semester course sequence in Music Theory (all undergraduate music majors)

Students who successfully complete the 4-semester course sequence in music theory will be able to:

- A. Performance:
 1. Sing prepared melodies by memory in tonal and atonal idioms
 2. Sing melodies at sight in tonal and atonal idioms
 3. Sing diatonic modes, and contemporary scales (octatonic, hexatonic, etc)
 4. Perform prepared rhythms in one and two parts

- B. Dictation:
 1. Notate heard melodies in 1 or 2 parts in tonal and atonal idioms
 2. Notate harmonic progressions (outer voices) in tonal idioms
 3. Notate and identify triads in contemporary idioms

- C. Written Work:
 1. Write/identify musical fundamentals (scales, harmonies, etc.)

2. Write harmonic progressions following common-practice procedures
3. Realize a figured bass
4. Harmonize tonal melodies in 4 parts
5. Compose short pieces in styles ranging from the classical period to the present

D. Analysis

1. Perform harmonic analysis of tonal music
2. Perform set-class analysis of contemporary music
3. Perform analysis of phrase and cadence structures
4. Perform analysis of larger harmonic/formal structures

II. Goals: Bachelor of Music in Music Theory

In addition to skills and competencies achieved during the 4-semester undergraduate theory course sequence, Music Theory majors must show competency in the following areas:

- A. Composition – demonstrate an ability to write small-scale works modeling the style of individual composers.
- B. Orchestration – orchestrate small-scale works
- C. Keyboard Harmony – demonstrate ability to harmonize melodies at the keyboard, perform harmonic progressions, read music from a score
- D. Analysis – demonstrate an ability to analyze large-scale forms and musical works
- E. Writing – demonstrate an ability to write essays on music analysis and contemporary music-theory

III. Goals: Master of Music in Music Theory

Students who successfully complete the Master of Music in Music Theory program will be able to:

- A. Analysis - analyze complete pieces and movements from larger works, using Schenkerian and other related analytical techniques for tonal works and pitch-class set and related techniques for atonal works
- B. Writing - demonstrate mastery of expository writing for music theory, including the use of proper academic style and technical vocabulary, and the creation and incorporation of graphs and musical examples
- C. Research - demonstrate the ability to conduct independent research, including the identification of new research topics, use of databases and libraries, and preparation of results for professional presentation

- D. Teaching - display the potential to become a competent classroom teacher of music theory, including classroom management, use of technology, and ability to inspire and motivate students

- E. Musicianship - prove competent mastery of keyboard and aural skills, sufficient for use in a music theory classroom, including the harmonization and performance of basic melodic and harmonic phrases