Department of Music

Information and Departmental Plan of Study

The Department of Music aims to give students a broad foundation for making, performing, studying, and writing about music. As part of the major, students pursue work in two loosely defined areas: Culture and Criticism (C&C) and Materials and Making (M&M). M&M encompasses topics usually explored in hands-on, exploratory ways, such as composition, improvisation, theory, analysis, and electronic music. The C&C area focuses on the scholarly study of music, from historical and formalist analysis to cognitive science and ethnography. Whether our concentrators ultimately choose to make music, to research and write about it, or do both, they are encouraged to develop independent work that moves across traditional disciplinary or methodological boundaries.

Prerequisites

Students interested in the music concentration are required to gain exposure to coursework in both the Culture & Criticism and Materials & Making areas before entering the department. The prerequisites are satisfied through the completion of both semesters of “Music Theory through Performance and Composition” (MUS 105 and MUS 106) and a 200-level C&C course of the student’s choosing. Under special circumstances, students may be able to place out of MUS 105 by demonstrating equivalent knowledge in an exam given by the music faculty. Students who pass out of MUS 105 will be required to take an additional elective to meet the minimum requirement of 11 courses in the major.

Advanced Placement

The Department of Music does not grant advanced placement exam credit. First-year students who wish to enroll in a course where "any music course" is listed as a prerequisite must obtain the permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) or the course instructor.

Program of Study

Class of 2021:
Concentrators may elect either to fulfill the old requirements or to fulfill the requirements below, using the Junior Seminar from fall of 2019 in place of the new, credited Junior Seminar. Details of the previous requirements may be found in the archived Undergraduate Announcement.

Classes of 2022 and 2023:
Concentrators are strongly encouraged to complete the requirements below, and are required to take the credit-bearing Junior Seminar. Students should consult the archived Undergraduate Announcement for details of the previous requirements.
**Class of 2024 and beyond:**

Students majoring in music take a total of 11 courses in the major: three prerequisite courses (MUS 105 and 106, and a 200-level C&C); two courses in Culture & Criticism; two courses in Materials & Making; three additional electives, two of which should be at the 300-level or higher; and a credit-bearing Junior Seminar. Music majors in the Program in Music Performance certificate may use one performance course (such as MPP 213, 214, 215, 216, 219) as a departmental. Concentrators design their program of study in close consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

The two distribution areas, listed below, are meant to be broad and relatively inclusive, while also serving to encourage students to look at courses they might otherwise not be inclined to consider. Note that some courses are listed in both areas; such courses can only fill the requirement for one of the areas, at the student’s discretion.

**Culture and Criticism (C&C)**

203 The Great Conductors; the Canonic Repertory  
220 The Opera  
223 The Ballet  
230 Music in the Middle Ages  
232 Music in the Renaissance  
234 Music of the Baroque  
236 Music of the Classical Period  
238 Music of the Romantic Era  
240 Musical Modernism 1890-1945  
242 Music After Modernism, 1945 to the Present  
248 Music Cognition  
250 Musical Cultures of the World  
258 Music of Africa  
260 Music Traditions in North America  
262 Jazz History: Many Sounds, Many Voices  
264 Urban Blues and the Golden Age of Rock  
265 Global Popular Music  
270 Medieval and Renaissance Music from Original Notation  
325 Contemporary Opera and Music Theater  
334 Venice, Theater of the World  
343 Music through Fiction  
350 Studies in African Performance  
359 Sound Cultures  
434 Seminar in Ethnomusicology  
434 Music and Narrative

**Materials and Making (M&M)**

204 Musical Instruments, Sound, Perception, and Creativity  
205 Species Counterpoint  
206 Tonal Syntax  
209 Transformations in Engineering and the Arts  
210 Beginning Workshop in Musical Composition
Note that not all of these courses are offered every year, and some courses not listed here may be appropriate for one of these areas; consult with the Director of Undergraduate Studies as needed.

**Junior Seminar**

A fall-term Junior Seminar introduces students to some of the methodological, technical, creative, and disciplinary issues entailed in the study and making of music. Assignments may relate to, or inform, their independent work, but will be graded separately from the JIW. Students who are abroad during the fall of the junior year can complete the Junior Seminar during the fall term of the senior year.

**Independent Work**

Independent work in the Department of Music can take many forms, ranging from research and writing about a topic of interest to the student, to projects in composition (broadly conceived, in terms of aesthetic, genre, and process), to some combination of the two; indeed, hybrid projects that combine written work with compositional work are possible and encouraged. Students establish the specific horizons of the project in collaboration with their faculty advisor.

**Junior Independent Work**

Junior independent work begins in the fall, usually in the context of the Junior Seminar, and continues into the spring with a faculty adviser. The nature of this work can vary greatly, but for reference, it might consist of a research paper of approximately 30–40 pages, or an original composition of roughly 6–10 minutes (which would typically include a short paper detailing motivations and context for the composition). These are only guidelines, and the eventual scale of the work will depend on its nature. The specific goals for the project are worked out with a faculty advisor (identified during the fall semester), resulting in a proposal consisting of a
summary of the project aims and context, an outline, and references to related work (bibliography for research papers, associated repertoire for compositions, and other material as appropriate to the project); this proposal should be submitted to the advisor and DUS before the end of fall semester, though the grade for the proposal will be held and included in the final grade for the year-long project.

Senior Independent Work
The senior independent work consists of a year-long project devised by the student and approved by a faculty adviser. Again, for reference, it might consist of a research paper of approximately 60–80 pages, or an original composition of roughly 12–20 minutes (again including a short accompanying paper), but the specific topics can vary widely, as described above; as with the JIW, these are only guidelines, and the eventual scale of the work will depend on its nature. Ideally, a faculty advisor will be identified in the spring of the junior year to help the student develop an appropriate scope for the project. The JIW and SIW topics need not be related, but often are. The thesis grade is the average of the grades given by the faculty adviser and a second faculty reader.

Senior Departmental Examination
On a date arranged by the Department, senior concentrators must take a final departmental examination. This is conducted in the form of a public presentation of the student’s senior thesis, followed by an oral exam and defense.

Study Abroad
Music concentrators are encouraged to explore the many study abroad opportunities offered at Princeton. Among these is the unique collaboration Princeton maintains with the Royal College of Music in London (link is external), in which students have the opportunity to participate in a five-year double-degree program (A.B. and M.M.). Students spend the fall semester of the junior year in London. Interested current and prospective music majors should email the director of the Certificate Program in Music Performance for further details.

Additional Information
Ensembles, and Instrumental and Vocal Lessons
Concentrators are encouraged to take an active part in performing music. All concentrators have the opportunity to take vocal or instrumental lessons from world-class professionals on the performance faculty. For students majoring in music or pursuing a certificate in performance, the full cost of these lessons is paid for by the University (during the junior and senior years). Note that MPP 298-299, Independent Instruction in Voice or Instrument, can only be taken once. Students can also gain exposure to performance by participating in one of the Departmental Ensembles. For further information on lessons, ensembles, and performance opportunities, please contact department’s Program Manager.
Other Academic Preparation
Students planning graduate study in musicology or theory should achieve reading and speaking proficiency in at least one foreign language, depending upon their areas of interest. Students with interests in composition may want preparation in engineering and computer science. Majors should discuss this with the DUS.

Certificate Program in Music Performance
This certificate encompasses music performance of many varieties, and includes tracks for composition and electronic music. For certificate requirements, see the description under Program in Music Performance.