

Assessment Meetings: May 9 & May 31, 2023

Participants: Morgan (chair), Krebs

### **Overview**

This year, the Music Department is assessing LG2, which states that students will “Acquire knowledge of the history of Western art music and the traditions practiced in other global cultures, including an understanding of the evolution of specific genres, styles, and musical philosophies.” Along with LG1 (which primarily addresses the development of a theoretical understanding of music), LG2 constitutes a central facet of studying music in a liberal arts setting, one that is largely absent in conservatory settings, where students’ focus is exclusively on the development of performance technique and interpretive skills. Our major is designed to help students develop an understanding of the importance of music’s cultural context, and the ways that musical styles develop and change over time.

Our direct evidence for this assessment report includes the evaluation of three senior capstones from this year, along with a variety of assignments and exams from the following courses offered this year:

- MUSI 150 - *Intro to Western Classical Music*
- MUSI 270 - *World Musics*
- MUSI 311 - *Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque Music*
- MUSI 312 - *Classical, Romantic, and Modern Music*

For our indirect evidence, we distributed a survey to all our music majors, which included a Likert scale question and an opportunity for students to provide comments regarding their experiences in studying music history at Hendrix.

### **Direct Evidence**

#### Senior Capstones

This year, we had seniors completing both of our capstone options. The first of these options is a research paper & accompanying lecture for which students investigate a research topic pertaining to music history or theory. Because our music theory curriculum does not venture into advanced theoretical analysis, students pursuing this capstone option almost exclusively select topics that are oriented around the historical study of music.

The second and more common capstone option is a lecture recital, for which students perform a 25-minute recital of music for their primary instrument. The recital is paired with a research

presentation of similar length (the two are treated as a single event) in which students demonstrate their understanding of the music they performed through an academic lens, informed by the knowledge they have gained in music theory and history courses.

Both capstone options are evaluated with two rubrics. For the research paper option, we have included both rubrics: one for the research paper, and one for the presentation. One of the two rubrics used for the lecture-recital pertains to performance issues only, and is not included in this report.

## Paper/Lecture Capstone

- Written Paper Rubric (the gap in the rubric below is due to the fact that it is a 2-page image)

	Excellent (A=3.6-4.0)	Good (B=3.2-3.5)	Average (C=2.8-3.1)	Poor (D=2.4-2.7 and below)
<b>Thesis</b> (20%)	This paper makes a central claim that is substantive and articulately stated. The goal of this paper is very clear.	This paper makes a central claim, but it could be more substantive, or better stated. The goal of the paper is hinted at but not clear.	The paper has a claim, but it is a very weak or uninteresting one. The goal of the paper is ambiguous or contradictory.	This paper makes no central claim or one that is irrelevant, unclear, or self-evident. The goal for this paper is missing or vague.
<b>Development of Thesis</b> (10%)	The thesis is supported by logical, sequenced arguments with clear transitions between paragraphs and ideas. Evidence, analogies, or examples are provided.	The thesis is supported by arguments, but not consistently, and/or the arrangement manifests minor lapses in logic and sequencing. Transitions between paragraphs and ideas exist, but could be stronger. Some evidence, analogies, or examples are provided.	The thesis is supported haphazardly. Transitions are mostly absent. Very little supporting evidence is provided.	The thesis is not supported by arguments, or the arrangement of the arguments manifests flaws in logic and sequencing. Transitions are absent. No supporting evidence.
<b>Quality of Research</b> (10%)	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of historiographical or theoretical approaches to the topic and situates own work in the field.	Demonstrates good understanding of/engagement with secondary literature on topic; attempts to explain the relevance and significance of own work in the field.	Demonstrates some understanding of/engagement with secondary literature on topic; little done to explain the relevance and significance of own work in the field.	Does not engage secondary literature or make an effort to explain the significance of own work in the field.
<b>Use of Sources</b> (20%)	Demonstrates skillful use of high quality, credible, relevant sources to support the argument of the paper.	Evidence is deployed in good support of argument, and it is mostly supportive of claims, of mostly good quality, and/or is somewhat related to the overall argument of the paper.	Evidence is deployed in some support of argument, though it may not fully support claims, may be of limited quality, and/or may not clearly relate to the overall argument of the paper.	Evidence is clearly insufficient, of poor quality, and/or not relevant to the topic of the paper.
<b>Organization</b> (20%)	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is excellent, clearly and consistently observable, and contributes to the logical development of the argument of the paper.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is evident, with good clarity and consistency and good contribution to the logical development of the argument.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is evident, though it may not be entirely clear or consistent, and/or may not clearly contribute to the logical development of the argument.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not clear; paper lacks coherence, logical flow, and integrity.
<b>Grammar and Mechanics</b> (10%)	The essay is free or nearly free of errors in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. The writer's voice is engaging and the prose fluent.	The essay manifests minor, occasional errors in grammar, punctuation, or mechanics. The writer's voice is appropriate and the prose competent.	The essay has frequent errors in grammar, punctuation, or mechanics. The writer's voice is not always appropriate. The prose is average at best.	The essay contains major, persistent errors in grammar, punctuation, or mechanics. The writer's voice is inappropriate or inconsistent, and the prose is substandard.
<b>Required Length</b> (10%)	The paper meets or exceeds 8,000 words.	The paper has between 6,000-8,000 words.	The paper has between 4,000-6,000 words.	The paper has fewer than 4,000 words.

- Presentation Rubric

	Excellent (A=3.6-4.0)	Good (B=3.2-3.5)	Average (C=2.8-3.1)	Poor (D=2.4-2.7 and below)
<b>Argument</b> (20%)	Provides a clear, strong argument, using appropriate signposts or other cues.	Provides a good argument that is indicated by some cues.	Argument is unclear and lacking cues.	No clear argument.
<b>Scholarship</b> (20%)	Argument is articulated in relation to the larger scholarship on the issue.	Argument is placed within larger scholarship, though this relationship could be made clearer.	Relationship between argument and larger scholarship is not articulated.	No interaction with secondary literature.
<b>Evidence</b> (20%)	Argument is supported by specific evidence that is directly tied to the overarching claims of the presentation.	Argument is supported by some evidence, but evidence is vague or not clearly tied to the overarching claims of the presentation.	Argument is supported by limited, vague, or misunderstood evidence with no clear ties to the overarching claims of the presentation.	No clear evidence to support claims.
<b>Organization</b> (20%)	Demonstrates understanding of the audience with accessible language, development of thought, and clear organizational structure.	Has a natural progression of ideas with awareness of the audience and clear transitions.	Vaguely connects ideas with a generic use of language for the intended audience. Needs more transitions.	Uses unsuitable language and unconnected ideas.
<b>Engaging Presentation</b> (10%)	An engaging presentation with an excellent hook; holds audience attention throughout.	An engaging presentation with a good hook; holds audience attention through most of the presentation.	Somewhat difficult to gain and maintain audience attention.	Hard for audience to concentrate on the subject at hand.
<b>Presentation Style</b> (10%)	Appropriate tone, body language, eye contact, and varied vocal presentation. If applicable, PowerPoint used effectively to add value to the presentation.	Good tone, body language, eye contact, and vocal presentation. If applicable, PowerPoint used well to supplement the presentation.	Some issues with tone, body language, eye contact, and/or vocal presentation. If applicable, PowerPoint could use editing to better communicate ideas.	Major issues with tone, body language, eye contact, and/or vocal presentation that detract from the content. If applicable, PowerPoint does not aid in comprehension.

## Lecture-Recital Capstone

- As noted earlier, we are only including the capstone for the lecture portion of the capstone, since the evaluation of the performance examines musical issues such as technique, tone quality, interpretation, etc., is not germane to this report.

	Excellent (A=3.6-4.0)	Good (B=3.2-3.5)	Average (C=2.8-3.1)	Poor (D=2.4-2.7 and below)
<b>Argument</b> (20%)	Provides a clear, strong argument, using appropriate signposts or other cues.	Provides a good argument that is indicated by some cues.	Argument is unclear and lacking cues.	No clear argument.
<b>Scholarship</b> (20%)	Argument is articulated in relation to the larger scholarship on the issue.	Argument is placed within larger scholarship, though this relationship could be made clearer.	Relationship between argument and larger scholarship is not articulated.	No interaction with secondary literature.
<b>Evidence</b> (20%)	Argument is supported by specific evidence that is directly tied to the overarching claims of the presentation.	Argument is supported by some evidence, but evidence is vague or not clearly tied to the overarching claims of the presentation.	Argument is supported by limited, vague, or misunderstood evidence with no clear ties to the overarching claims of the presentation.	No clear evidence to support claims.
<b>Organization</b> (20%)	Demonstrates understanding of the audience with accessible language, development of thought, and clear organizational structure.	Has a natural progression of ideas with awareness of the audience and clear transitions.	Vaguely connects ideas with a generic use of language for the intended audience. Needs more transitions.	Uses unsuitable language and unconnected ideas.
<b>Engaging Presentation</b> (10%)	An engaging presentation with an excellent hook; holds audience attention throughout.	An engaging presentation with a good hook; holds audience attention through most of the presentation.	Somewhat difficult to gain and maintain audience attention.	Hard for audience to concentrate on the subject at hand.
<b>Presentation Style</b> (10%)	Appropriate tone, body language, eye contact, and varied vocal presentation. If applicable, PowerPoint used effectively to add value to the presentation.	Good tone, body language, eye contact, and vocal presentation. If applicable, PowerPoint used well to supplement the presentation.	Some issues with tone, body language, eye contact, and/or vocal presentation. If applicable, PowerPoint could use editing to better communicate ideas.	Major issues with tone, body language, eye contact, and/or vocal presentation that detract from the content. If applicable, PowerPoint does not aid in comprehension.

This spring, we evaluated three senior capstones. Quinn Gitchel completed a research paper & lecture on the study of video game music, a growing subdiscipline in musicology. His capstone was evaluated as follows:

- Paper evaluation

Categories	AM Grade	JK Grade	GRJ Grade	Average	Category %	Total
Thesis	3.5	3.8		3.65	20%	0.73
Development of Thesis	3.6	3.8		3.7	10%	0.37
Quality of Research	3.6	3.8		3.7	10%	0.37
Use of Sources	3.5	3.8		3.65	20%	0.73
Organization	3.6	3.8		3.7	20%	0.74
Grammar and Mechanics	3.5	3.7		3.6	10%	0.36
Required Length	4	4		4	10%	0.4
				<b>PAPER GRADE</b>		<b>3.7</b>

- Presentation evaluation

Categories	AM Grade	JK Grade	GRJ Grade	Average	Category %	Total
Argument	3.8	3.7		3.75	20%	0.75
Scholarship	3.6	3.8		3.7	20%	0.74
Evidence	3.4	3.6		3.5	20%	0.7
Organization	3.5	3.8		3.65	20%	0.73
Engaging Presentation	3.9	3.8		3.85	10%	0.385
Presentation Style	3.7	3.7		3.7	10%	0.37
				<b>LECTURE GRADE</b>		<b>3.675</b>

- Combined evaluation

Capstone Components	Component Grade	Component %	Total
Paper	3.7	60%	2.22
Lecture	3.675	40%	1.47
	<b>OVERALL CAPSTONE GRADE</b>		<b>3.69</b>

Lecture-recitals were completed by William Nagel and Lance Smith.

- William Nagel, lecture evaluation

Categories	AM Grade	JK Grade	GRJ Grade	Average	Category %	Total
Argument	3.4	3.7		3.55	20%	0.71
Scholarship	3.3	3.4		3.35	20%	0.67
Evidence	3.2	3.7		3.45	20%	0.69
Organization	3.3	3.2		3.25	20%	0.65
Engaging Presentation	3.4	3.3		3.35	10%	0.335
Presentation Style	3.5	3.8		3.65	10%	0.365
				<b>LECTURE GRADE</b>		<b>3.42</b>

- Lance Smith, lecture evaluation

Categories	AM Grade	JK Grade	GRJ Grade	Average	Category %	Total
Argument	2.8	3.4		3.1	20%	0.62
Scholarship	2.5	3.3		2.9	20%	0.58
Evidence	2.7	3.2		2.95	20%	0.59
Organization	3	3.3		3.15	20%	0.63
Engaging Presentation	2.9	3.4		3.15	10%	0.315
Presentation Style	3.1	3.6		3.35	10%	0.335
				<b>LECTURE GRADE</b>		<b>3.07</b>

## MUSI Assignments & Exams

### **MUSI 150**

We have provided two examples of final exams completed by music majors in MUSI 150 in Spring 2023 (Ashley Warrick & Lance Smith). Their exams may be viewed below:

- Smith, 140/200:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jn89ZMaR8q28ZeIM\\_mHzZbaB\\_zR70EOq/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jn89ZMaR8q28ZeIM_mHzZbaB_zR70EOq/view?usp=drive_link)
- Warrick, 166/200:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zcfW-2pDSHfKnC0g7OxayhdQf9P11\\_o5/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zcfW-2pDSHfKnC0g7OxayhdQf9P11_o5/view?usp=drive_link)

It should be noted that neither student did very well on these exams. This relates to a broader issue with our music majors: many of them lack an extensive background in classical music. Even 100-level survey courses (largely taken by non-majors) present a breadth of information that goes well beyond their own previous knowledge. Additionally, their musical interests tend to lie outside of classical music, which is the sole focus of MUSI 150.

### **MUSI 270 - *World Musics***

*World Musics* became a required course for music majors in 2019-2020, and plays an important role in providing students with knowledge of diverse musical traditions from a wide range of cultural groups and ethnicities. Students complete a field work assignment in MUSI 270, aimed at . We have provided an example, completed by music major Jessi Lasley (Fall 2022), along with the prompt for the assignment. Jessi received a 95% for this assignment.

- Lasley assignment:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ncC5p3Di9tYo\\_Qjt3f5J8Jy109q7UpgM/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104022120413921522845&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ncC5p3Di9tYo_Qjt3f5J8Jy109q7UpgM/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104022120413921522845&rtpof=true&sd=true)

- Field Work prompt:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q2csGlg0zXFqPEU7snJX2PYE0g7OaPkg/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104022120413921522845&rtpof=true&sd=true>

### **MUSI 311 - *Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque Music***

MUSI 311 & 312 form an important sequence in the study of music history in our music major. In prior years, the courses were very much treated as a historical survey, covering many historical developments in each time period, examining seminal compositions, and evaluating musical style by focusing on distinct musical genres and styles. Following Dr. Morgan's 2021 sabbatical, the courses now focus on in-depth analysis of research studies, ongoing group work, and student presentations. The courses no longer include exams, with student grades now being determined largely by research presentations and papers, along with a series of short assignments pertaining to each musical period. We have included a research paper on Medieval percussion by Thomas Moslander (his paper earned 96%), and a reading response assignment by Quinn Gitchel (100%).

- Reading response assignment, Gitchel:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nfhlFuBMcqNezxNzgE6AUVx5V7LcdWCw/edit?usp=drive\\_link&ouid=104022120413921522845&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nfhlFuBMcqNezxNzgE6AUVx5V7LcdWCw/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=104022120413921522845&rtpof=true&sd=true)

- Research paper, Medieval percussion Moslander:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QJ9JfSAKgiHF9ESiKKJCz20cEY6j0y8G/view?usp=sharing>

### **MUSI 312 - *Classical, Romantic, and Modern Music***

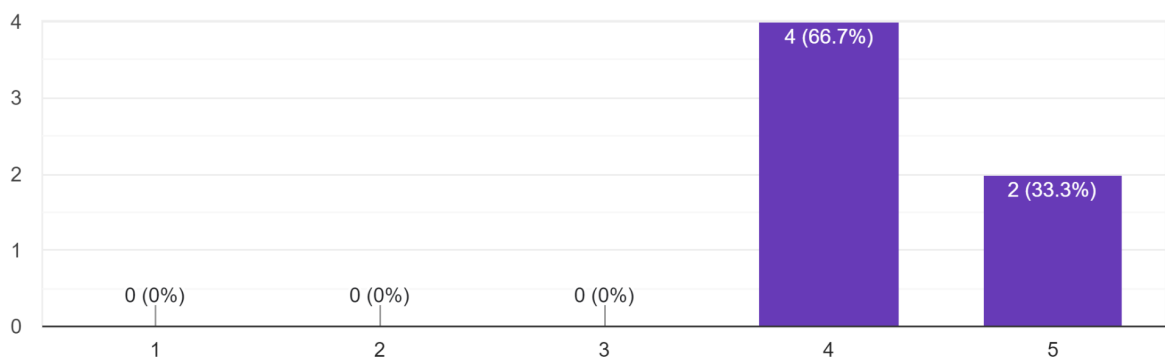
MUSI 312 continues in a similar manner: for each time period, students investigate research studies pertaining to each period, and use their developing research skills to pursue studies of their own, both through group work and individual research. Examples of student work from MUSI 312 are provided below:

- Reading response assignment, Ifrah (88%):  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Rz7HXIEmHLvNUAaswYu9p5ZyIacacW8J/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104022120413921522845&rtpof=true&sd=true>
- Research paper, Parisian salons, Hart (87%):  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-gDIsmKXNi9tUHAftESGweBZ5F1jTKvu/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104022120413921522845&rtpof=true&sd=true>

### **Indirect Evidence**

We sent a brief survey to music majors at the end of the spring semester, asking them to evaluate the effectiveness of our courses in fostering their understanding of music history. Responses were collected via a Likert scale, with 1 being “not at all” and 5 “very much so.” Six students responded, as seen below:

To what extent have your music courses (MUSI 270, MUSI 311, MUSI 312, etc.) helped you develop an understanding of the history of music in Western...ution of genres, styles, and musical philosophies?  
6 responses



Additionally, students were asked to provide comments regarding the ways in which these courses may have enhanced their knowledge. Responses were as follows:



- These music courses have given me knowledge on specific subjects, but I feel as if a broader context, especially regarding composers of each era, was omitted. While I feel confident on various specific subjects of study for each era, I don't feel confident regarding more general knowledge about each era, such as major composers of each era, their compositions, when they were born and when they died, etc.
- The survey classes have been pretty thorough and I feel that they have aided my knowledge of music history by taking me through each era and allowing me to learn in depth about the music styles and traits of each time period.
- In a general sense, I would say that the courses I'd taken did a fantastic job. I feel as though the changes to history courses this year improved this factor a lot. In previous years, I'd really struggled with the format of the class, and I feel like I retained much less- this research-focused structure helped me both to absorb the information and tailor the experience to be relevant to my personal interests.
- The courses provided a detailed and diverse overview of different cultures and periods in musical history and helped me develop a better sense of how Western musicology evolved over time and differed from place to place.
- These courses helped me gain contextual understanding of the development of music during differing time periods. I better understand why certain types of music originated during specific time frames and how certain historical figures came out the way they did. The classes were extremely influential in developing my repertoire of music history.
- While I think the coursework that I have had made me grow a lot in my knowledge of Western music this past semester, I do think that the knowledge I have received is extremely niche, and will not be the most generalizable moving forward. It will by far allow me to continue learning about the niches that I have been exposed to, so I enjoyed the opportunity to learn about topics I hadn't heard of before.

## **Results & Discussion**

The examples of student work, senior capstones, coupled with our student survey form, generally indicate that we are achieving the primary functions of LG2. Our courses address a range of historical periods and styles, and students generally feel that they are forming an understanding of the development of musical styles and the cultural contexts in which music occurs. Student work, especially in our senior capstones, indicate that students are gaining both historical knowledge of music, its contexts, and developments over time.

One topic worth discussing in depth is the new role of MUSI 311 & 312. While these courses in the past served as a comprehensive survey of Western classical music from the Medieval to present day, we found that the course content was simply too broad. Covering the full range of historical genres stylistic developments (as well as helping students to learn how to identify these in pieces of music) was an immense challenge. Students generally struggled at retaining information, and found that they were generally more concerned with memorizing information than contextualizing it, thinking critically



about complex historical issues, or developing research & writing skills. We now use these courses to investigate a limited number of topics from each period in depth (think of these topics as case studies); students then use their newfound understanding to generate related research topics of their own. Rather than emphasizing a broad knowledge from each period, students instead gain skills in identifying and researching topics of interest.

One student surveyed indicated that the new emphasis on historical study & research (as opposed to the survey approach used previously helped them significantly: “this research-focused structure helped me both to absorb the information and tailor the experience to be relevant to my personal interests.”

Quinn Gitchel’s senior capstone demonstrated a high level of historical research accomplishment, indicating that involvement in research-based history courses helped prepare him for his own individual work. Quinn’s study demonstrated both an appropriate scope and context for the topic, strong writing, and good use and analysis of existing source materials.

It should be noted that the new approach to 311 & 312 does come with a tradeoff, given that we no longer treat these courses as a delivery vehicle for comprehensive knowledge of musical styles across time periods. Two students mentioned this in their comments, one noting:

“While I feel confident on various specific subjects of study for each era, I don’t feel confident regarding more general knowledge about each era, such as major composers of each era, their compositions, when they were born and when they died, etc.”

The other student mentioned that the case study approach to studying music history resulted in knowledge that was highly specific:

“I do think that the knowledge I have received is extremely niche, and will not be the most generalizable moving forward.”

We would make the case that the study of history helps in both formation of knowledge (i.e., content) and skill development. While we acknowledge that our revised history courses have sacrificed the breadth of survey content, the cultivation of research skills and analytical thinking is a worthy goal, and one that will serve students well as they move towards their senior capstones, as evidenced by Quinn Gitchel’s work.

Addressing this difference in perception - some students feeling that they are missing the content while other students (and our faculty) are enthusiastic about the revised approach - could be addressed simply by taking extra steps to make our goals for the courses clear. Students might benefit from readings & discussions about history pedagogy, especially if those readings elaborate on the benefits of

treating history as an opportunity for skill development rather than merely content delivery and retention.

A larger concern for us moving forward relates to the issues presented in MUSI 150: two music majors, enrolled in a 100-level class, who both performed poorly in an introductory course. We have known for a long time that the typical music major at Hendrix is not driven by interests in classical music only. Many of our graduates in recent years were entirely new to classical music when they started here. This matter was discussed in our 2022 external review as well, in which our visiting evaluator noted the importance of fostering a culture of musical excitement and energy with our students. That energy ought to include a culture of musical curiosity. If students are new to classical music, that's fine - but we need to think about developing intentional ways to encourage our students to consume music - as listeners, audience members, and readers - with a voracious appetite. Forming a sense of eagerness to learn about music can do a lot to help address a lack of general knowledge.

### **Summary**

Generally speaking, we feel that our courses are doing an adequate job of helping students form historical knowledge across a range of topics and musical styles. We need to do a better job at helping students understand the reasoning behind course design, especially with regards to MUSI 311 & 312. We stand by the benefits of these courses, as evidenced by improved student research and writing, and the cultivation of critical thinking and analytical skills in approaching historical subjects. In the past we have had concerns over whether our courses are adequately preparing students for their senior capstones. The departmental consensus is that we are heading in the right direction.

It is rather fitting that next year we will be evaluating LG4, which states that students will “study, interpret, and perform music while synthesizing knowledge gained through their lessons, ensembles, and coursework.” In other words, our challenge now is to evaluate whether our coursework in history and theory helps students in their performance of music. With its emphasis on finding connections and synthesizing knowledge across disciplines, LG4 is in many ways the most liberal arts oriented goal in our department. We expect that next year's findings will provide opportunity for further reflection on how we approach our teaching of music history, especially in how we help students understand the possibilities for using historical knowledge to inform the way they approach a piece of music.