

07.03.11 PhD – Major in Music Theory

Description

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The MA/PhD program in music theory includes a series of introductory courses covering the broad range of research in music theory; these lead to more focused pro-seminars, and then to seminars and finally independent studies. The student thereby gradually obtains the skills necessary to carry out independent research, which is the goal of the MA/PhD. The department strongly encourages individual research initiatives, especially those that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Prerequisites: Prerequisites for entrance to the program include skill levels (aural and keyboard skills) that are up to the very best students in undergraduate Eastman theory classes, though occasionally students with lower skill levels are accepted if they have strong potential as researchers. Each applicant to the program has a personal interview with faculty members from the Music Theory Department, and at least two of these interviews test skill levels in keyboard, sight-singing, dictation, and analysis. Since these students, upon entry into the program, will be teaching Eastman undergraduates, they normally must be able to demonstrate superior skill levels at the audition interview in order to be considered for admission.

Upon entry to the program, students take placement exams in music theory and history. If remediation is required, the appropriate courses are taken, but their credit does not count towards the degree. The same is true of any English-language instruction and/or instruction in bibliography that is needed.

Residency: At least one year of full-time study is required. See section 05.01 ([Residency](#)) for more information.

For students entering with a bachelor’s degree:

Requirement		Credits
Core Courses (To be taken during first two years of study)	TH 511 (Introduction to the Theory and Analysis of Tonal Music)	4
	TH 513 (Introduction to the Theory and Analysis of Twentieth-Century Music)	4
	TH 521 (Pedagogy of Music Theory)	4
	TH 523 (History of Music Theory, Part I)	4
	TH 524 (History of Music Theory, Part II)	4

Courses Outside Theory Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One MHS or MUY course taken in first two years (3-4 credits) • Additional elective coursework outside of theory dept. (5-7 credits) 	9-10
Additional Electives	See recommendations and restrictions below	42-3
Dissertation	TH 595 (PhD Dissertation Project)	18
Remedial courses – Please refer to 05.03 Orientation, Placement Examinations, and Remediation .		–
Total Credits		90

For students entering with a 30-credit master's degree¹:

Requirement		Credits
Core Courses ² (To be taken during first two years of study)	TH 511 (Introduction to the Theory and Analysis of Tonal Music)	4
	TH 513 (Introduction to the Theory and Analysis of Twentieth-Century Music)	4
	TH 521 (Pedagogy of Music Theory)	4
	TH 523 (History of Music Theory, Part I)	4
	TH 524 (History of Music Theory, Part II)	4
Courses Outside Theory Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One MHS or MUY course taken in first two years (3-4 credits) • Additional elective coursework outside of theory dept. (minimum of 5-7 credits.) These courses may include non-theory courses taken during the master's degree. 	9-10
Additional Electives	See recommendations and restrictions below	12-13
Dissertation	TH 595 (PhD Dissertation Project)	18
Remedial courses – Please refer to 05.03 Orientation, Placement Examinations, and Remediation .		–
Total Credits		60

¹If a student enters this program with a previous master's degree in theory, 30 transfer credits are normally accepted. (In some cases up to 6 additional credits for graduate theory courses taken above

the 30-credit master's may be granted.) If a student enters this program with a master's degree in some other area, transfer credit is normally accepted for graduate-level theory courses and one musicology course. See section 05.04 [Graduate Transfer Credit](#) for more information.

² If the student has already taken the equivalent of one (or more) of these core courses in a prior master's degree, it is possible that these requirements may be waived and other courses identified as substitutions.

The following course recommendations and restrictions apply to the category of additional electives:

- TH 475 Intermediate Keyboard Skills / TH 476 Advanced Keyboard Skills or other courses related to pedagogy
- TH 451 Modal Counterpoint
- TH 452 Eighteenth-Century Counterpoint
- TH 412 Acoustics
- TH 480 Style Composition
- Courses pertaining to the student's performance interests
- Department Proseminars
- Seminars on special topics
- TH 591 Theory Colloquium (maximum of 2 credits for students matriculating fall 2006 or later)
- Up to 12 credit hours of applied music study (6 credits during the master's degree and 6 credits during the doctoral degree.) It is necessary to audition in order to be assigned an applied teacher; please contact the Office of Academic Affairs.

Note that most course(s) required on the basis of placement exam results or language deficiency are considered remedial and do not count toward the total required credits for the degree. The exceptions are as follows: (1) one MHS 42x course may be required and counted as elective credit (but not *two* such courses); (2) one language 201G-202G sequence may be taken for elective credit (but not *two* such courses). Courses at the 100 level may not be used as elective credit and are not covered by Graduate Awards.

Foreign Language Requirements for the PhD in Music Theory

PhD students in Music Theory are required to demonstrate proficiency in one language, based on the student's research interests. Proficiency is demonstrated by the successful completion (grade of B+ or better) of X202 (or equivalent) within the second-year language courses or by interview with the relevant foreign-language professor at ESM/UR. Demonstrating proficiency in a language not taught at ESM will continue to be assessed via a two-part written exam (translate a general passage and musical passage, each with a minimum of 250 words).

PhD students entering with a Bachelor's degree should satisfy the language requirement by the fifth semester of enrollment; PhD students entering with a Master's degree should satisfy the language requirement by the third semester of enrollment. Students may not take the Comprehensive Examination Part 2a until these language requirements have been satisfied. On the recommendation of the chair and the approval of the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, up to two credits in a required foreign language may appear on the Program of Study.

See section 07.03.03 ([Foreign Language Requirements – PhD](#)) for more information.

Dissertation

The dissertation for the music theory major must constitute an original contribution to the field and should exhibit evidence of the student's outstanding ability in research and independent thinking, synthesis, and compelling organization of material.

Timeline for the MA/PhD in Music Theory

First Year

Coursework: The initial year of study consists of at least three of the five core courses. In addition to these courses, the student will take any remedial courses required, and/or select from among the first six items listed as recommended elective courses (above). It is recommended that students take at least one course each year outside the theory department; students are required to take one music history/musicology class within the first two years of study. One language requirement must also be completed during the first year. **First Year Review:** At the conclusion of the first year of study, the theory department will evaluate each student's record and progress. Those who do not meet the standards of the degree will be discouraged from continuing further in the program.

Second Year

Coursework: Students will complete the remaining courses from the five core courses (see requirements above). Upon consultation with their advisors and/or committees, students will also take a range of pro-seminars and seminars in music theory, as well as classes in other departments or from outside Eastman. Students entering with a master's degree will ordinarily have accrued 72 credits by the end of the second year (this total includes 30 credits from their previous master's degree), and may fill out their second semester with dissertation credits (TH 595 PhD Dissertation Project). The student will also prepare and submit their formal program of study during the second year, and fulfill the second language requirement. These students will also, in contact with their academic advisor, form a research committee.

Comprehensive Examination: Part 1

Part 1 of the Comprehensive Exam is composed of two parts, Part 1A and Part 1B. Students may not proceed to Comprehensive Examination Part 2 until satisfactory completion of both Part 1A and Part 1B.

Part 1A: Skills Examination

- Part 1A is required of all MA/PhD students, regardless of whether they entered with a BA or MA.
- Students are expected to take the examination in their fourth semester of study, although students entering with the MA degree may take it as early as in their second semester of study.
- Part 1A is officially given once per year during Jury Week. Retakes may occur in early fall by approval of the department chair and scheduled on an *ad hoc* basis. Normally a student may retake the skills examination only once (i.e., a total of two attempts).
- The examination will focus on musical skills (singing, playing, composition, improvisation, figured

bass, score reading, etc.). Sample examinations are available for study in the theory department office.

Part 1B: Research Presentation

- The Research Presentation is
 - Required for MA/PhD students who matriculate with a bachelor's degree, and normally completed in semester 3 or 4
 - Recommended for those matriculating with a master's degree in music theory, and normally given by the end of the first year of full-time registration.
- In all cases, the presentation will be not more than 30 minutes in length, with additional time for questions. The topic may focus on any area of music theory, broadly conceived. A proposal must be submitted for approval by the theory department Graduate Curriculum Committee at least one calendar month prior to its delivery. Presentations will be public, and normally will be scheduled during the TH 591 Colloquium. Students should refer to the instructor of that course to make suitable arrangements for date, time, location, and equipment.

The student's presentation may be videotaped; in addition, the student will submit a written copy of the presentation to the members of the Graduate Curriculum Committee. The student will receive a brief, written report on the presentation from the Graduate Curriculum Committee, which will determine whether the presentation was satisfactory. A final grade of S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) will be given. In assessing the presentation the Committee will bear in mind the significance, originality, and rigor of the project. If the presentation is deemed Unsatisfactory, the student may schedule a second attempt (i.e., a total of two attempts).

Third and fourth years

Coursework: By the end of the second year, students will normally have accrued 42-48 hours of credit (if entering without a master's degree) consisting of the five core requirements and other recommended courses.

Students who have satisfied the following requirements are eligible for the Master of Arts degree (in passing) in music theory:

- successful completion of the PhD Part 1a exam
- completion at least 30 hours of credit
- a minimum of 9-10 credits of music courses taken outside the theory department
- completion of the foreign language requirements

Students should confer with their advisor, fill out an [MA Program of Study form](#) listing only those courses to be counted towards the MA in passing, and submit the form to the Graduate Studies Office. It is the student's responsibility to complete a [Degree Application Form](#) and submit it to the Registrar's Office.

During the third year, students will concentrate on specialized courses and independent studies directed toward the dissertation. Students entering with a bachelor's degree will, in consultation with the academic advisor, form a research committee. The remaining hours may consist of free electives or applied music study (up to 6 hours per degree). Students will also begin preparation for the Theory

PhD qualifying exam, followed by the dissertation proposal. The research committee will guide the student's exam and dissertation activities.

Comprehensive Examination: Part 2 (Qualifying Exam)

Note on your preparation for the Theory part 2 comprehensive examination

- Students taking the Theory part 2 comprehensive examination are expected to prepare for it independently.
- A dissertation adviser will normally have been approved by this stage of the student's career, but it is not that professor's role to provide tutoring or detailed advice towards the preparation for the comprehensive examination.
- The dissertation adviser, or potential adviser, is likely to be one of the examiners of your comprehensive examination, making any significant amount of coaching even less appropriate.
- A part 2 candidate should of course feel free to approach theory professors on music theory questions, arising during preparation for the examination, on which they have particular expertise.
- It is not the intention of the department to inhibit the easy exchange between faculty and students which has always been an important ethos of our teaching and learning environment.

The Qualifying Examination is called Part 2 of the Comprehensive Examination and is the written component. Students may sit for this examination once they have successfully completed Part 1A and 1B.

- The department chair will appoint, annually, a senior theory faculty member to chair the part 2 examinations.
- The part 2 chair will invite where possible a candidate's adviser OR second reader to serve as one member of the individual examination committee for that candidate alongside a theory faculty member who is not part of the candidate's committee. If an adviser or second reader prefers not to act in this way, the part 2 chair may appoint any other appropriate colleague from the department. Any faculty member may serve on more than one committee at a time; and the part 2 chair may invite one examiner to act as one grader of a particular question in the case of all candidates when it is felt that specialist assessment and grading consistency make this appropriate.
- At or about the last day of spring term candidates will receive from the part 2 chair a list of three topics. Candidates will work as a study group on the same topics, or if candidate numbers require it then the part 2 chair in consultation with the department chair will allocate each candidate to a study group. Over about three weeks and by a deadline to be announced, candidates will construct a communal bibliography of approximately 30 sources (complete books and articles) per topic, making about 90 sources in all. Within one week of submission the examination committee will either approve the list or specify required revisions to be submitted by the study group not more than one week after notification by the committee. Candidates will proceed to study the approved sources ahead of the September comprehensive examination.
- Day 1 (which will be a Monday) consists of:
 - essay questions on the three prepared topics, one question per topic.
 - one essay question on a topic specific to each candidate's known research interests. Candidates will have an hour and a half to answer each question with an essay. The day includes a lunch break in the examination room.
- Day 2 At the end of Day 1 each candidate will have been handed an individual

music-analytical assignment to be submitted no later than the following Monday, 10:00am. This assignment will be chosen by the part 2 chair on the advice of the examination committee and providing a task appropriate to each candidate. Each assignment will be unique to each candidate. The common standard is that every assignment can reasonably be expected to be completed by a competent doctoral theory candidate in about six days of concentrated work. Candidates may not consult with faculty members during this examination period over any aspect of the Day 2 task. Any procedural questions must be put directly to the part 2 chair or an announced alternative faculty member.

About one week after submission of the Day 2 examination, each candidate, as part of the comprehensive examination, will be called for a general oral examination with two members of the Examination Committee, selected and chaired by the Part 2 chair, normally those faculty members who have graded the candidate's examination. The main purpose of the oral examination is to discuss points in candidates' examination performance considered to be relevant to their ABD studies and professional development. Although the examiners are free to discuss specific aspects of a candidate's part 2 written examination, it will not be advantageous for any candidate to spend time attempting to prepare for the oral examination by revisiting Day 1 and Day 2 work. The discussion with the examiners will be essentially formative rather than retrospective.

Failure in either element of the examination (topics or analysis) will result in failure of the examination as a whole. A candidate who fails the part 2 comprehensive examination for the first time will be entitled to take it again the following year on the basis of the new topics and music-analytical materials. The Theory Department Graduate Curriculum Committee may, in wholly exceptional circumstances, with regard to any available evidence, waive the requirement to retake either of the two elements of the failed examination in which a candidate's performance was clearly satisfactory.

The Dissertation Proposal Process

Once the written qualifying examination has been successfully completed, the student moves to the dissertation proposal stage.

- Normally within six months of passing the Qualifying Exam, the student completes the dissertation proposal. The Graduate Curriculum Committee Chair appoints a Dissertation Proposal Committee (consisting of the GCC Chair, dissertation advisor, the second reader¹, and another member from outside the department). This committee approves moving forward to the public defense (*the proposal must be distributed to the members of the Dissertation Proposal Committee at least three weeks prior to the defense*).
- There are normally two parts to the dissertation proposal. Part 1 is a public presentation by the student, with the Dissertation Proposal Committee in attendance. After the defense, the Dissertation Proposal Committee may exercise the option of having an additional private meeting with the student, or it may approve the proposal after the public presentation. In the event of failure, the Committee may recommend that more work be done, and it is entitled to exempt the candidate from another public presentation.
- Students may not approach members of the Committee, other than the advisor and second reader. Exceptions may be made upon written request to the chair of the Graduate Curriculum Committee explaining the reasons for this request.

¹In addition to the PhD program faculty within the Music Theory department, the following faculty from

outside ESM have been approved to serve as inside members of Music Theory dissertation committees: John Covach, Matthew BaileyShea. They may not be appointed as outside members for Music Theory.

The Dissertation Defense Committee

The committee for the dissertation defense consists of the dissertation advisor, the second reader, the outside reader, and a chair from outside the department, appointed by the University Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Outside Reader: The adviser must notify the Graduate Office as soon as the outside reader of the dissertation committee has been designated by the department, and/or when any changes are made to the dissertation committee after the dissertation proposal has been approved by the department. The adviser in consultation with the department is responsible for contacting the outside reader and securing that individual's consent to serve on the committee. If the outside reader comes from outside the Eastman/UR community, the department chair must make a written request to the Graduate Office for that reader to serve on the student's committee; a bio of the outside reader should be included with the request. The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies then seeks permission from the University Dean of Graduate Studies to include this outside reader on the student's dissertation committee.

Departments are responsible for paying travel and lodging expenses for an outside-UR reader traveling to Eastman for the final defense. The department is also responsible for an ESM faculty member serving on the committee who is on a leave of absence (LOA), and who agrees to travel back to Eastman for the defense; in cases where the ESM faculty member on a LOA is unable to serve on the committee she/he meets with the departmental chair and a substitute is arranged. Exceptional permission for a second reader or outside reader to participate in the final defense by videoconference must be sought by the department from the Senior Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. In no circumstances may a final defense take place without the presence at the school of the candidate and the adviser.

Summary:

In addition to coursework and languages, there are four additional requirements, each of which must be passed in order for the student to qualified as ABD. The chart below specifies an order and approximate timeline to accomplish each requirement. Note the differences for students entering with the BA and those entering with the MA.

Students Entering with BA: Students Entering with MA:

Comprehensive Examination – Part I:

A: Skills Examination taken:	Year 2	Year 1 or 2
B: Research presentation:	Year 2	Optional

Comprehensive Examination: Part II:

Written Examination:	Year 3 or 4	Year 3
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Dissertation Proposal:	Year 4 or 5	Year 3 or 4
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Date

2024/07/06