Music – Theory

Music theory encompasses a variety of activities which all focus on understanding music. It includes such diverse fields as music analysis, the development of new theories of music and musical structure, history of theory, music perception and cognition, aesthetics of music, music theory pedagogy, and computer-assisted music instruction.

Pursuing Music – Theory at Ohio State

Students interested in music theory should develop performance skills in preparation for the School of Music entrance audition. Piano lessons and music theory classes are also recommended, if available.

All freshman applicants are considered within a competitive admission process for the Columbus campus; find admissions criteria at go.osu.edu/admissions.

Students planning to pursue a music major complete an entrance audition and the Theory Placement Exam (TPE) during the senior year in high school on a scheduled Audition Day. Transfer students and students already at Ohio State should also plan to complete an audition and the TPE. For additional information about auditions, visit music.osu.edu/admissions/undergraduate-procedures or contact School of Music Undergraduate Admissions at music-ug@osu.edu or 614-292-2870.

Acceptance into the Bachelor of Music in Theory degree program requires a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative point-hour ratio (CPHR) in first- and second-year music theory courses and in first- and second-year aural training courses, admission to the second-year level of performance (private lessons) on the student’s principal instrument, and approval by the music theory and composition area faculty.

School of Music students should apply for acceptance into the Bachelor of Music in Theory program at the end of the second year or the beginning of the third year of study.

Music – Theory Requirements

Music courses required for the degree:

• First- and second-year music theory, music technology, and aural training
• Music history and world music
• Ensemble and composers’ seminar
• Principal instrument, 2 years
• Minor instrument (must be piano if piano is not the principal instrument)
• Keyboard harmony
• Beginning conducting
• Orchestration, counterpoint, composition

• Extended tonality, theory and analysis, theory elective and more counterpoint
• Senior project: senior paper and presentation of paper

Educational Objectives

Students majoring in music theory will achieve the following learning outcomes:

• Students must demonstrate achievement of professional, entry-level competence in the area of specialization, including significant technical mastery, capability to produce work and solve professional problems independently, and a coherent set of artistic/intellectual goals that are evident in their work.
  - Students will engage in applied studies each semester that will provide appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to prepare students for graduate programs and professional careers in the field. They will demonstrate an understanding of a wide range of historical styles and periods.
  - Students will complete courses in music theory, music history, and area-specific literature and pedagogy that will provide appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to prepare them for professional careers in the field. These courses will represent a wide range of historical styles and periods.
• Students will have the ability to communicate musical ideas, concepts and requirements to professionals and lay persons related to the practice of the major field.
• Students will complete curricular requirements that include courses designed to develop oral and written communication skills.
• Students will gain knowledge and experience in pedagogical methodologies in their area of specialization.
• Students will gain an understanding of the nature of the music field in the professional world, particularly related to organizational structures, work ethics, technological resources and entrepreneurial skills required for advancing their careers.
• Students will complete a required course in music technology. They will prepare numerous assignments in music theory and music history courses employing a wide range of software, Web-based sources and skills covered in this course.
• Students will build workplace skills through independent studies with applied faculty and ensemble directors.

For more information, check these websites:

School of Music: music.osu.edu
Arts and Sciences: artsandsciences.osu.edu
Ohio State: osu.edu

Admissions: undergrad.osu.edu
Multicultural Center: multiculturalcenter.osu.edu
First Year Experience: fye.osu.edu
Students must gain experiences in general studies sufficient to prepare them for a range of career options.
- Students will gain skills sufficient for clear and effective verbal and written communication.
- Students will include a broad range of general studies courses in their curricula appropriate for complementing degree requirements that address their specific music concentrations.

Co-Curricular Opportunities
Whether students intend to enter the job market upon graduation or apply to graduate school, internships provide the experience students need to differentiate themselves from other candidates. Employers and graduate school committees are looking for graduates that have already taken the “next step” to becoming professionals in their field.

Internships provide the direct, field-related experience and application of classroom knowledge that is necessary to advance career goals. Ohio State’s career placement office provides a database of available internships and internship advisors. For more information, visit asccareerservices.osu.edu/students/jobsandinternships.

Honors & Scholars Opportunities
Through the Ohio State Honors and Scholars programs students have access to smaller classes, undergraduate research opportunities, close working relationships with faculty, priority scheduling and unique housing options. Learn more at honors-scholars.osu.edu.

Career Prospects in Music — Theory
Most music theorists continue their studies in graduate school and earn a doctoral degree before becoming a college teacher or university professor. Recent Ohio State music theory majors have gone on to graduate school at Indiana University, the University of Ottawa, The University of Rochester’s Eastman School of Music and SUNY at Stony Brook, as well as at Ohio State.