

HONOURS ESSAY IN MUSICOLOGY (MUSI 4908): GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS

Students contemplating writing an Honours Essay in the B.A. (Hons.) or B.Mus. degrees should consult with the faculty member with whom they would like to work in order to determine their eligibility and the feasibility of the research topic.

The Honours Essay in Musicology is restricted to fourth-year students who have at least an A- average or a minimum Major CGPA of 10.

Although it is not expected that the Honours Essay will necessarily involve the high level of research required for a Master's thesis, it should be stressed that it is intended to be considerably more than an extended undergraduate term paper. The suggested length is approximately 50 double-spaced typed pages (10,000 – 12,000 words) exclusive of appendices and other back matter such as musical scores and bibliographies. As MUSI 4908 is a full-credit (1.0) course, the following timetable for successful completion of the project is strongly recommended. It is based on the assumption that the course begins in September of a student's final year of study, although other timelines might be possible.

1. **By the first day of classes in the term in which they wish to begin the project**, students will submit to the Supervisor of Undergraduate Studies (i.e., the Departmental Undergraduate Advisor) a one-to-two page thesis proposal outlining their topic.

In choosing a topic and writing the thesis proposal, the student should state clearly why s/he has chosen it, how s/he intends to develop the chosen material, and mention what methodologies s/he intends to employ. For most topics, either a preliminary bibliography or a clear description of the resources to be employed should be included. The MUSI 4908 essay can choose from a variety of methodological approaches: analytical, comparative, editorial, critical, sociological, semiological, archival, to mention a few. The subject areas can include music history (periods, genres, composers), ethnomusicology, music theory, music analysis, aesthetics, pedagogy, performance practices, acoustics and/or psychoacoustics, music of ethnic groups, popular culture and music, applications of technology to music, notational systems, national styles, cultural theory and music, critical theory and music, etc. It is imperative that the proposal is focused in relation to the research area under consideration. Overly vague or excessively general proposals will be turned back for further refinement. Advance reading and forethought are therefore prerequisites to the submission of any topic. The proposal will be evaluated for feasibility and should be a thorough, well-reasoned document which demonstrates that the student has sufficient research skills to undertake the project in question.

Students should feel free to consult informally with members of the music faculty in preparing the proposal.

2. A faculty committee will meet during the first week of classes to review student submissions, and to assign a faculty supervisor to successful candidates. **Students will be advised of the committee's decisions before the last day for course registration and course changes.** Seeing as there is no guarantee that proposals will be approved, students should know what course(s) they would take to make up these credits and how those would fit into their schedule, should their proposal be rejected. In other words, **students are advised to plan their year without counting on the honours paper**, perhaps even enrolling in a full course schedule without it. If the Honours proposal is accepted, students could then drop the "plan-B" course(s) and enrol in the honours essay course.
3. **Once the proposal has been accepted, students are expected to arrange to meet with their supervisor early in the semester in order to discuss a research schedule.** Maintaining contact with the supervisor and arranging regular meetings is the student's responsibility, not the supervisor's.
4. **Within the first few weeks of class** the student will be expected to develop a detailed (10-page) outline of research and a full bibliography of sources.
5. **By the end of the first term of study** (i.e. December if the Honours Project begins in September), the supervisor should expect to receive a first draft of at least half of the essay.
6. **By the BEGINNING of the February spring break, the supervisor should expect to receive a first draft of the entire paper.**
7. The remaining four to five weeks should be devoted to the completion, revision, and polishing of the paper. **The last day of the winter term is the deadline for submission of the final paper.** It will be evaluated and graded by your supervisor in consultation with a second reader (normally another designated faculty member).

Failure to meet agreed-upon deadlines may result in the permanent withdrawal of the supervisor's services.

A typical 4908 grading scheme might be as follows, although individual faculty advisors may adopt different evaluation criteria:

20% Preparation (of final proposal, for advising sessions, etc.)
20% Midterm (December) progress report
60% Final paper