BACHELOR OF MUSIC: THEORY/COMPOSITION

Overview

The program in composition, music history and theory aims to develop the aural skills needed by all musicians to provide the necessary theoretical knowledge for the continuing study and performance of music, to develop analytical and esthetic understanding of music forms and styles, and to foster the creative impulse in music.

Students also have access to Westminster’s music computing center, where they can compose, orchestrate, and print their compositions in publishable quality using computers interfaced with sampler/synthesizers as well as sequencing and music printing software.

Curriculum Overview

The curriculum for the undergraduate Theory/Composition major is designed to foster individual creative ability and to develop a broad and informed musicianship along with a knowledge of the literature of all periods. The department welcomes diversity of compositional styles and esthetic viewpoints and encourages exploration on the part of its students. Theory/Composition majors take Composition Class, six semesters of Applied Composition, and complete a senior project which may be a large-scale composition or a theory research paper. The program culminates with a recital of original music written while a student is enrolled at Westminster.

Required musicianship and historiography courses, contemporary trends, music since 1900, and elective theory and music history courses form the core of undergraduate study. The elective courses provide students with opportunities to apply their skills to specific areas of inquiry after satisfying specific prerequisites. All Bachelor of Music candidates must elect one music history elective, a level I theory elective and a level II theory elective. Theory/Composition majors take four additional music theory and history electives.

Degree Offered

- B.M. in Theory and Composition

Contact

Sharon Mirchandani, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair of Music Composition, History, and Theory
Williamson Hall 44
609-921-7100, ext. 8313
smirchandani@rider.edu

Program Website: www.rider.edu/wcc/undergraduate-programs/theory-and-composition

Associated Department: Department of Music History, Theory, and Composition

Related Programs

- Music Education (http://catalog.rider.edu/westminster-choir-college/undergraduate-programs/bm-music-piano)

Faculty

Sharon Mirchandani (chair) • Professor, Music History/Theory, 1997. B.M., Bowling Green State University; M.M., Temple University; Ph.D., Rutgers University.
Christian Carey • Associate Professor, Theory/Composition/Music History, 2004. B.M., Juilliard; M.M., Boston University; Ph.D., Rutgers University.
Charles Frantz • Adjunct Associate Professor, Theory/Music History, 2000. B.M., M.M., Temple University; Ph.D., Rutgers University.
R. Douglas Helvering • Adjunct Associate Professor, Theory, 2009. B.M., University of Nebraska; M.M., Westminster Choir College of Rider University; D.M.A., University of Kansas.
Ronald A. Hemmel • Professor, Theory/Composition, 1994. B.M., Westminster Choir College of Rider University; M.M., James Madison University; M.Phil., Ph.D., Rutgers University.
Anthony Kosar • Professor, Theory, 1984. B.M., West Liberty State College; M.M., Southern Illinois University; Ph.D., The Ohio State University.
Carmen Mateiescu • Adjunct Assistant Professor, Theory/Composition, 2007. B.M., M.M., University of Music (Bucharest); Ph.D., Rutgers University.
Stefan Young • Professor, Theory, 1979. B.M., Rollins College; M.M., The Juilliard School; Ph.D., Rutgers University.

Theory and Composition Program Requirements

Learn more about General Undergraduate Requirements. (http://catalog.rider.edu/westminster-choir-college/undergraduate-programs/general-requirements)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>CR 109</td>
<td>Chapel Choir (2 terms)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>CR 209</td>
<td>Schola Cantorum (2 terms)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>CR 509</td>
<td>Symphonic Choir (4 terms)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 215</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Conducting</td>
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Applied Music and Diction

Select one primary from Organ, Piano or Voice

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>or VC 201B</td>
<td>Voice Primary</td>
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<td>or VC 201B</td>
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<td>OR 301B</td>
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<td>or VC 401B</td>
<td>Voice Primary</td>
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Voice or Piano secondary (4 terms) 4  
Private Composition (6 terms) 12  
VC 115 English & Italian Diction 2 2  
VC 116 French & German Diction 2 2  
Theory and Music History  
TH 141 Musicianship I 12  
& TH 142 and Musicianship II  
& TH 241 and Musicianship III  
TH 342 Contemporary Trends 3  
Theory level I elective 3  
Theory level II elective 3  
MH 247 Music Historiography I 6  
& MH 248 and Music Historiography II  
MH 345 Music Since 1900 3  
Music history elective 3  
Professional Studies  
TH 237 Composition Class 3  
Additional Level I Theory elective 3  
Additional Level II Theory elective 3  
Additional Theory or Music History electives (2 courses) 6  
TH 480 Senior Project 3  
Arts and Sciences  
LL 131 English Composition 3  
Foreign Language I/II (2 courses) 3 6  
Literature or Philosophy elective 3  
Social/Behavioral/Natural Science elective 3  
History elective 3  
Arts & Sciences electives (4 courses) 12  
Free Electives  
Free Electives 6  
Total Credits 126  
Notes  
1 Eight terms of one-credit, half-hour lessons (suffix B) are covered under full-time tuition. Students wishing to take a full-hour lesson register for suffix G, and are billed for one half-hour.  
2 VC 115 and VC 116 are required for voice primary students only. Organ and piano primary students may substitute four additional credits of free electives for these two courses.  
3 If students are exempted from one or more semesters of foreign language study, they must replace the missing credits with other Arts & Sciences electives.  
4 Students must present a public recital in the senior year that includes both compositions written by the student and performance on the applied primary instrument. Recitals must be approved in advance by both the Music Composition, History & Theory Department and the applied primary department.  
5 Attendance requirements at monthly departmental forums must be met.  

Academic Plan of Study  
The following educational plan is provided as a sample only. Rider students who do not declare a major during their freshman year; who change their major; or those who transfer to Rider may follow a different plan to ensure a timely graduation. Each student, with guidance from his or her academic advisor, will develop a personalized educational plan.  

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<td>Chapel Choir</td>
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<td>TH 237</td>
<td>Composition Class</td>
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<td>Choose one primary from:</td>
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<td>OR 101B</td>
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<td>VC 101B</td>
<td>Voice Primary</td>
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<td>VC 115</td>
<td>French &amp; German Diction</td>
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<td>Piano Secondary I</td>
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<td>VC 103</td>
<td>Voice Secondary</td>
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<td>TH 141</td>
<td>Musicianship I</td>
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<tr>
<td>LL 131</td>
<td>English Composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semester Credit Hours</td>
<td>17</td>
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Year 2  
Fall Semester  
CR 209 | Schola Cantorum |
| TH 201A | Composition Primary |
| Choose one primary from: |
| OR 201B | Organ Primary |
| PI 201B | Piano Primary |
| VC 201B | Voice Primary |
| Choose one secondary from: |
| PI 204 | Piano Secondary II |
| VC 203 | Voice Secondary |
| TH 142 | Musicianship II |
| Lit/Phil Elective | 3 |
| Arts & Sciences Elective | 3 |
| Semester Credit Hours | 18 |

Spring Semester  
CR 209 | Schola Cantorum |
| TH 201A | Composition Primary |
Bachelor of Music: Theory/Composition

Choose one primary from:
- OR 201B Organ Primary
- PI 201B Piano Primary
- VC 201B Voice Primary

Choose one secondary from:
- PI 207 Piano Secondary for Theory Comp Majors
- VC 203 Voice Secondary

Additional Theory Level I elective
- MH 248 Music Historiography II

Arts and Sciences Elective
- 3

Semester Credit Hours
- 14

Year 3

Fall Semester
- CR 509 Symphonic Choir
- 1
- TH 301A Composition Primary
- 2

Choose one primary from:
- OR 301B Organ Primary
- PI 301B Piano Primary
- VC 301B Voice Primary

Theory Level II elective
- MH 345 Music Since 1900
- 3
- Social/Behavioral/Natural Science elective
- 3
- TH 342 Contemporary Trends
- 3

Semester Credit Hours
- 16

Spring Semester
- CR 509 Symphonic Choir
- 1
- TH 301A Composition Primary
- 2

Choose one primary from:
- OR 301B Organ Primary
- PI 301B Piano Primary
- VC 301B Voice Primary

Additional Theory Level II elective
- MH 343 Seminar in Music History
- 3

History elective
- 3
- Arts & Sciences elective
- 3

Semester Credit Hours
- 16

Year 4

Fall Semester
- CR 509 Symphonic Choir
- 1
- TH 401A Composition Primary
- 2

Choose one primary from:
- OR 401B Organ Primary
- PI 401B Piano Primary
- VC 401B Voice Primary

Additional Theory or MH elective
- MH 433 Seminar in Music History
- 3
- History elective
- 3
- Arts & Sciences elective
- 3

Semester Credit Hours
- 16

Spring Semester
- CR 509 Symphonic Choir
- 1
- TH 480 Senior Project
- 3

Choose one primary from:
- OR 401B Organ Primary
- PI 401B Piano Primary
- VC 401B Voice Primary

Additional Theory or MH elective
- 3
- Foreign Language II
- 3
- Free elective
- 3
- Composition recital
- 3

Semester Credit Hours
- 16

Total Credit Hours for Graduation
- 126

1 VC 115 and VC 116 are required for voice primary students only. Organ and piano primary students may substitute four additional credits of free electives for these courses.

Courses and Descriptions

**MH 247 Music Historiography I** 3 Credits
Historiography I begins by exploring similarities and differences between various music cultures around the world, and continues with an examination of selected genres of Western Art Music of the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods. Basic information literacy skills, such as searching library catalogs, databases and reading academic articles also will be covered.

**Prerequisite(s):** LL 131.

**MH 248 Music Historiography II** 3 Credits
Examines Western Art Music since 1750 and includes a research assignment that builds upon the information literacy skills gained in MH 247.

**Prerequisite(s):** MH 247.

**MH 345 Music Since 1900** 3 Credits
Examines controversies and aesthetic movements in 20th and 21st century music. Emphasis is placed upon critical reading and writing skills.

**Prerequisite(s):** MH 248.

**MH 433 Seminar in Music History** 3 Credits
The contents of courses carrying this number will vary with the special interests and qualifications of the instructors teaching them. Possible topics include period courses, courses from a distinct perspective, composer courses and genre courses.

**Prerequisite(s):** MH 248.

**MH 490 Independent Research and Study** 1-4 Credits
Students may pursue a special topic for which they have prepared through prior course work. Only one project may be scheduled in a semester. The project may involve 1-4 credit hours. Students may count up to a maximum of 18 independent study hours toward graduation. Approval of the faculty sponsor, department chair, and dean required prior to the first day of the semester in which the project is to be completed. Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 required.

**Prerequisite(s):** junior or senior standing.

**MH 608 Graduate Music History Review** 3 Credits
Required for graduate students who are admitted with deficiencies in music history, as determined by the graduate placement test in music history. It is strongly recommended that this course be taken at the outset of graduate study.
MH 635 Public Musicology 3 Credits
A graduate-level introduction to the many ways musicology can engage with communities and events outside the academy. Topics include music criticism, oral history, museum education, archives, and cultural tourism.
Prerequisite(s): Graduate Standing; removal of all Music History deficiencies.

MH 690 Independent Research & Study 1-3 Credits
Students may pursue a special topic for which they have prepared through prior course work. Only one project may be scheduled in a semester. The project may involve 1-3 credit hours. Approval of the faculty sponsor, department chair, and dean required prior to the first day of the semester in which the project is to be completed. Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 required.
Prerequisite(s): graduate standing.

MH 731 Intro to Musicology 3 Credits
Introduction to the basic tools of research in historical musicology in order to foster: (1) awareness of the nature and scope of historical musicology as a scholarly discipline; (2) familiarity with the techniques of musicological research; (3) an understanding of the relationship between musicological research and performance practice; and (4) experience in the application of musicological techniques to specific musical works and issues. It is strongly recommended that this course be taken at the outset of graduate study. Required for all Master of Music candidates.

MH 733 Seminar in Music History 3 Credits
The content of the course will vary with the special interests and qualifications of the professor teaching it.
Prerequisite(s): Removal of all music history deficiencies, it is strongly recommended that MH 731 be taken prior to this course.

MH 734 Proseminar in Music USA 3 Credits
A graduate-level introduction to the scholarly study of music in the U.S. Readings will cover music in Colonial/Early America, Western art music, popular music, and music of various ethnic communities.
Prerequisite(s): Graduate standing; removal of all Music History deficiencies.

MH 750 Thesis I 3 Credits
Independent research under faculty supervision leading to a master’s thesis. Students register for this course in their first term of thesis research.
Prerequisite(s): Graduate standing, removal of all Music History deficiencies.

MH 751 Thesis II 3 Credits
Independent research under faculty supervision leading to a master’s thesis. Students register for this course beginning in their second term of thesis research.
Prerequisite(s): Graduate Standing, removal of all Music History deficiencies, MH 750.

TH 045 Introduction to Musicianship 4 Credits
Integration of the basic elements of music, scales, intervals, key signatures, triads and rhythmic notation with the practical skills of sight singing, rhythmic reading, keyboard harmony and dictation. Both the theoretical and the practical portion must be passed individually in order to receive a passing grade; 0 credits toward graduation, counts as 4 credits in the semester load.

TH 101A Composition Primary 2 Credits
TH 101C Composition Elective 2 Credits
TH 101D Composition Elective 1 Credits
TH 101E Composition Primary 2 Credits
TH 101F Composition Primary 1 Credits

TH 141 Musicianship I 4 Credits
This course assists students in learning and integrating aural, performance, analytical and composition skills involving diatonic melody and harmony. Both the theoretical and the practical portion must be passed individually in order to receive a passing grade.
Prerequisite(s): TH 045 or passing a placement test.

TH 142 Musicianship II 4 Credits
A continuation of TH 141 involving chromatic melody and harmony with an introduction to binary and ternary form.
Prerequisite(s): minimum "C-" grade in TH 141.

TH 201A Composition Primary 2 Credits
TH 201E Composition Primary 2 Credits
TH 201F Composition Primary 1 Credits

TH 237 Composition Class 3 Credits
Class instruction in original composition. May be taken as a level I elective.
Prerequisite(s): For non Theory/Composition majors only, minimum "C-" grade in TH 142.

TH 241 Musicianship III 4 Credits
A continuation of TH 142 with an introduction to larger musical forms and counterpoint.
Prerequisite(s): minimum "C-" grade in TH 142.

TH 251 Analytical Studies I 3 Credits
An in-depth analytical study of a select body of tonal music to be determined by the instructor. The music, which will contain only the harmonic vocabulary and formal structures studied in TH 141 and TH 142, may vary each time the course is offered. May be taken as a level I theory elective.
Prerequisite(s): minimum "C-" grade in TH 142.

TH 253 Orchestration 3 Credits
A study of the orchestra and its individual instruments from the standpoint of the composer, arranger and conductor. May be taken as a level I theory elective.
Prerequisite(s): minimum "C-" grade in TH 142.

TH 255 Song Writing 3 Credits
Solo vocal composition in various styles. May be taken as a level I theory elective.
Prerequisite(s): minimum "C-" grade in TH 142.

TH 259 Electroacoustic Music 3 Credits
An introduction to the history and literature of electro-acoustic music emphasizing hands-on creative opportunities in sequencing and digital sound processing. May be taken as a level I theory elective.
Prerequisite(s): minimum "C-" grade in TH 142.
TH 301A Composition Primary 2 Credits
TH 301E Composition Primary 2 Credits
TH 301F Composition Primary 1 Credits
TH 342 Contemporary Trends 3 Credits
An analytical study of the compositional techniques of the 20th and 21st centuries.
Prerequisite(s): TH 241.

TH 401A Composition Primary 2 Credits
TH 401E Composition Primary 2 Credits
TH 401F Composition Primary 1 Credits
TH 424 Choral/Instru Arranging 3 Credits
Arranging for various ensembles of voices and instruments. May be taken as a level II theory elective.
Prerequisite(s): TH 241.

TH 431 Form and Analysis 3 Credits
Study of the compositional process as observed in selected examples of music literature, predominantly from the tonal repertoire. May be taken as a level II theory elective.
Prerequisite(s): minimum "C-" grade in TH 241.

TH 432 Contrapuntal Techniques 3 Credits
18th century counterpoint with an emphasis on analysis and writing of original compositions. May be taken as a level II theory elective.
Prerequisite(s): minimum "C-" grade in TH 241.

TH 433 Special Topics in Theory 3 Credits
The content of the course carrying this number will vary with the special interests and qualifications of the professor teaching it. May be taken as a level II theory elective.
Prerequisite(s): minimum "C-" grade in TH 241.

TH 452 Analytical Studies II 3 Credits
An in-depth analytical study of a select body of tonal music to be determined by the instructor. The music, which will contain a more advanced harmonic vocabulary and larger formal structures than the music studied in TH 251, may vary each time the course is offered. May be taken as a level II theory elective.
Prerequisite(s): minimum "C-" grade in TH 241.

TH 480 Senior Project 3 Credits
Independent study in theory or composition resulting in either a paper comparable to a substantial journal article or a composition in one of the larger forms.
Prerequisite(s): Five semesters of private composition study.

TH 490 Independent Research and Study 1-4 Credits
Students may pursue a special topic for which they have prepared through prior course work. Only one project may be scheduled in a semester. The project may involve 1-4 credit hours. Students may count up to a maximum of 18 independent study hours toward graduation. Approval of the faculty sponsor, department chair, and dean required prior to the first day of the semester in which the project is to be completed. Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 required.
Prerequisite(s): junior or senior standing.

TH 511 New Music Ensemble 1 Credits
This course provides an opportunity to perform new music, primarily works of fellow students. It will also provide instrumentalists an opportunity to develop their performance skills more fully.

TH 550 Keyboard Harmony 3 Credits
An intense exploration of and drill in musicianship-keyboard skills, including score reading, transposition, modulation, clef reading, figured bass realization, harmonizing melodies, improvising and lead sheet accompanying. Projects may include transposition of a number of songs (perhaps a complete set) into all keys, figured bass realization for a Bach cantata, improvisation of service music (prelude, offertory, interludes, chorale preludes, postlude), multiple re-harmonizations of hymns/chorales for a service and score reduction and performance of a movement of an orchestral work. May be taken as an undergraduate level II theory elective.
Prerequisite(s): Undergraduate, minimum "C-" grade in TH 241; Graduate, Removal of all theory deficiencies.

TH 608 Graduate Musicianship Review 4 Credits
Required for graduate students admitted with deficiencies in musicianship as determined by the graduate placement test in musicianship. This course assists students in learning and integrating aural, performance, analytical and composition skills. Both the theoretical and the practical portion must be passed individually in order to receive a passing grade. It is strongly recommended that this course be taken at the outset of graduate study.

TH 622 Electroacoustic Music 3 Credits
Advanced opportunities for creative activities utilizing the resources of Westminster’s Music Computing Center. Previous experience with sequencers and/or digital audio is expected.
Prerequisite(s): Removal of all music theory deficiencies.

TH 623 Seminar in Music Theory 3 Credits
The content of the course bearing this number will vary with the special interests and qualifications of the professor teaching it.
Prerequisite(s): Undergraduate, minimum "C-" grade in TH 241 and permission of instructor, or graduate student standing and removal of all music theory deficiencies.

TH 625 Composition 3 Credits
Class instruction in original composition. Projects and presentations.
Prerequisite(s): Graduate student standing and removal of all music theory deficiencies.

TH 645A Composition Primary 3 Credits
TH 645C Composition Elective 2 Credits
TH 645D Composition Elective 1 Credits
TH 645E Composition Primary 3 Credits
TH 645F Composition Primary 1 Credits
TH 655 Composition Project 3 Credits
Graduate-level private study in composition culminating in a major composition in one of the larger forms.
Prerequisite(s): three semesters of TH 645.

TH 690 Independent Research and Study 1-3 Credits
Students may pursue a special topic for which they have prepared through prior course work. Only one project may be scheduled in a semester. The project may involve 1-3 credit hours. Approval of the faculty sponsor, department chair, and dean required prior to the first day of the semester in which the project is to be completed. Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 required.
Prerequisite(s): graduate standing.
TH 726 Analysis 3 Credits
A study of the compositional process as observed in selected tonal works, using the analytical approach of Heinrich Schenker.
Prerequisite(s): Removal of all music theory deficiencies.