

**University of Nevada  
Las Vegas  
Department of Music**



**Music History Handbook**

# Music History Handbook

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## INTRODUCTION

Music history studies at UNLV help to ensure that our students have proficient understanding of music-historical concepts and methods, performance practices, reception history, source criticism, and inter-disciplinary issues related to the composition, performance, and criticism of music. In music history courses, students typically study individual musical compositions in order to understand significant composers, styles, genres, and performance traditions.

Music history courses foster students' critical thinking, reading, and writing skills, and encourage students to form and articulate their own ideas about music and its meanings. UNLV graduates in music work widely as performers and music educators, and music historical awareness and fluency are important attributes of their professionalism.

This Music History Handbook is intended to supplement and clarify information found in the University's undergraduate and graduate catalogs and the Department of Music's Graduate Handbook, address in detail issues specific to music history studies, and provide contact information so that students may submit comments and questions.

### **Music History Teachers and Topics**

Music history courses at UNLV are taught by performing artists and musicologists who have wide-ranging expertise and diverse perspectives. Recent course topics have included the history of rock music, the history of opera, great Broadway composers, American popular music, the British invasion of the 1960s, jazz history and appreciation, the German Lied, French *mélodie*, symphony, the music of Wagner, the music of Stravinsky, and music of the European fin-de-siècle.

### **Collegium Musicum**

The UNLV Collegium Musicum (MUS 494/694) offers students the opportunity to perform early historical repertoires under the guidance of faculty who are versed in historical performance practice issues and techniques.

All UNLV music performance ensembles provide students with manifold opportunities to explore historical repertoire and gain insight into the issues and methods of music history.

## MUSIC HISTORY STUDIES

### **Undergraduate Studies**

Candidates for the **Bachelor of Music degree with concentrations in Performance, Composition, Music Education, or Jazz Studies** are required to take some minimum

number of music history courses during their studies, and may elect to take additional music history courses at their discretion.

Undergraduate students interested in music as a humanistic discipline may pursue the **Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in History and Literature**. Candidates for this degree emphasize music history and related topics in their studies.

Undergraduate students may also elect to minor in music.

The current music history requirements for undergraduate degree programs are stated in the University's *Undergraduate Catalog*.

All undergraduate music degree candidates who matriculated in fall 2008 or subsequent semesters are required to take a three-semester sequence of music history surveys (MUS 341, 342, and 343) that cover Western music from the Middle Ages through the present as well as world music traditions.

The texts and audio recordings used in the MUS 341–343 music history surveys are: Burkholder, J. Peter, Donald J. Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 8th edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010); Burkholder, J. Peter and Claude V. Palisca, eds., *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, 6th edition, 3 vols. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010); and *Norton Recorded Anthology of Western Music*, 3 vols. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010).

### *Undergraduate Music History Placement Examination*

The Undergraduate Music History Placement Examination is administered every year during the fall semester (usually late October or November) to evaluate students' basic music historical literacy and competence and ensure that students enroll in appropriate music history courses. The date and time of the Examination will be announced early in the fall semester of each academic year. The Examination is described below.

The format of the Examination is subject to change.

The Examination is comprised of four parts and is designed to be completed within seventy-five minutes:

Part 1. The student will match each of ten terms (concepts, persons, musical works, or technical terms) from all historical periods (medieval and Renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic, and modern) with its correct explanation (15 points).

Part 2. The student will answer a series of multiple-choice and true/false questions pertaining to all music historical periods. There will be twenty questions (35 points).

Part 3. The student will hear six audio excerpts of compositions representing a range of historical periods and styles. The student will identify the music-historical period or time-

span represented by each composition, and will justify each answer with a very brief written explanation of relevant style characteristics heard in the excerpt (30 points).

Part 4. The student will write an essay (120–200 words recommended) on one broad music historical question that he/she will chose from a selection of questions. The essay will be evaluated based on content, form, and style (20 points).

A grade of 70 or more out of the Examination’s 100 points is a passing grade. Students who pass the Examination may enroll, at their earliest convenience and on the recommendation of their advisors, in the MUS 341–343 sequence. **A student who does not pass the Examination must enroll during the next spring semester in MUS 131.** A student who shows deficiencies in the essay portion of the exam may also be counseled to seek assistance with language and writing skills.

### *Transfer of Undergraduate Credit from Other Institutions to Satisfy Music History Requirements*

Undergraduate students may transfer music history credits earned at accredited institutions to satisfy the requirements of their degree programs at UNLV. The Department of Music may, at its discretion, accept or reject for this purpose such previously earned credits.

Any transfer of undergraduate credit from another institution is subject furthermore to the “Credit Evaluation” policies stated in the University’s *Undergraduate Catalog*.

### *Music History Courses for Non-Majors*

A variety of courses, especially the very popular “Music Appreciation” (MUS 121) and “History of Rock Music” (MUS 125), welcome undergraduate students who wish to learn about the major artists, works, genres, and styles of the Western music tradition. Other introductory courses covering popular, jazz, and world music traditions may also be offered.

## **Graduate Studies**

### *Graduate Music History Placement Examination*

Newly admitted Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts candidates are required to take a Graduate Placement History Examination upon matriculating. The purpose of the placement examination is to evaluate the depth and breadth of each incoming student’s knowledge of music-historical facts, concepts, and repertoire from the Western art music tradition (medieval through contemporary periods). **All incoming graduate students regardless of their area of concentration take this placement examination.** The examination helps ensure that all graduates of UNLV’s music programs are adequately

equipped to speak and write knowledgeably about the Western musical tradition, both in subsequent graduate courses or professional careers, which in many instances demand teaching, public lecturing, or writing about Western music.

### *Preparing for the Placement Examination*

The examination is an assessment of accumulated knowledge, and no specific preparation is prescribed or required. Students may wish to prepare, however, by reviewing facts and concepts in J. Peter Burkholder, Donald J. Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), earlier editions of the same, the volumes of the Prentice Hall History of Music series, or any similar authoritative texts.

### *Placement Examination Date*

The examination is given during the week prior to the first day of instruction in the fall semester. The specific date, time, and location of the examination will be advertised in late spring or early summer, normally on the Department Web site and/or in other electronic or printed communications. Students who will matriculate in a spring semester may take the examination on this advertised date, but may also take the examination prior to the start of the spring semester on a date to be determined and announced by the Department. *No student may take the placement examination later than the first fall semester of enrollment.*

### *Placement Examination Description*

The format of the examination is subject to change.

The examination will normally comprise four parts:

Part 1. The student will correctly explain and illustrate a selection of terms (concepts, persons, musical works, or technical terms) relating to each of the following five periods of music history (medieval and Renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic, and modern). The student will select two out of four randomly selected terms for each period, for a total of 10 (20 points).

Part 2. The student will answer a series of multiple-choice and true/false questions pertaining to all music historical periods. There will be 28 questions (28 points)

Part 3. The student will choose four out of five unidentified score excerpts that represent different musical periods, styles, and genres, and explain in brief essays (100–150 words recommended) the important style features of each excerpt and assign it plausibly to a

composer and/or historical period (28 points). Audio recordings of these excerpts will *not* be played.

Part 4. The student will write an essay (200–250 words recommended) on one broad music historical question he/she will chose from a selection of questions. The essay will be evaluated based on content, form, and style (24 points).

A grade of 70 or more out of the examination’s 100 points is a passing grade. A student who passes the examination may immediately take any of the department’s available graduate music history offerings, provided he/she has already completed or shall concurrently enroll in the Bibliography course (see “*Specific Music History Requirements for Graduate Students*” below). **A student who does not pass the examination must enroll during the first matriculated fall semester in the Graduate Music History Review class. Note that failure to take the examination and/or enroll in the Review class during the first fall semester can potentially delay completion of degree requirements.** Students are therefore advised to reserve time in their schedules to attend the Graduate Music History Review class should this be required. The placement examination will not be administered to students after the first fall semester, and penalties, costs, delays, or other consequences of the student’s failure to observe these requirements are the responsibility of, and will be born solely by the student.

#### *Graduate Music History Review Course*

The Graduate History Review Course helps students refresh or expand their knowledge of important music historical concepts, facts, and repertoires through close study of specific musical works. Students will emerge from the course equipped with knowledge of music historical styles, genres, concepts, and significant artists, as well as the skill to write and speak about these matters fluently and substantively. **Satisfactory completion of the Graduate Music History Review Course is indicated by a course grade of B (83.3/100) or higher.**

#### *Graduate Music History Requirements*

Candidates for the **Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in all concentrations** are required to take some minimum number of music history courses during their studies, and may elect to take additional music history courses at their discretion.

The current music history requirements for graduate degree programs in music are stated in the University’s [Graduate Catalog](#).

Upon passing the Graduate Music History Placement test at matriculation, or after successful completion of the Graduate Music History Review course, graduate students

may choose from a wide variety of graduate courses focusing on composer, genre, or period topics.

*Bibliography:* All Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degree candidates are required to take a one-semester Bibliography course that provides instruction in music research techniques, resources, and scholarly presentation styles. The Bibliography course should be taken at the earliest opportunity during the student's program, and must be taken prior to other graduate music history courses. It may, however, be taken concurrently with the Graduate Music History Review Course. **Satisfactory completion of Bibliography is indicated by a course grade of B (83.3/100) or higher.**

*Doctoral Research Seminar:* All Doctor of Musical Arts degree candidates in music are required to take a one-semester Doctoral Research Seminar, in which students explore a variety of advanced topics and methods in contemporary music scholarship. The course is intended to provide D.M.A candidates with the scholarly vocabulary and research tools needed for thesis research and scholarly collaboration with future colleagues. The Bibliography course (described above) or equivalent bibliography course taken at another institution is a prerequisite for the Doctoral Research Seminar. The Doctoral Research Seminar is offered only in spring semesters, contingent upon enrollment.

#### *Music History Components of Graduate Examinations*

*M.M. Degree:* At the end of their studies, Master's degree candidates take a written comprehensive examination that covers, among other topics, music historical repertoire, concepts, and methods. Master's degree candidates are expected to acquire and maintain general music historical knowledge appropriate to their level of artistic and scholarly study and experience. Appropriate knowledge includes the ability to explain cogently and accurately the general style characteristics, compositional techniques, performance practices, and interpretative issues related to at least one significant repertoire of Western music and its representative composers.

To demonstrate such knowledge, candidates can call upon knowledge and skills acquired not only in music history courses, but also in the course of their applied studies, performance activities, and other music-related studies.

Exam Design. The examinee will answer one essay question to be chosen from among three questions provided on the examination. Three general types of questions may appear on the examination: questions about one or more composers, questions about genres of music, and questions about periods of music history. All questions are broadly written so as to allow the examinee to select from among specific criteria that are provided in each question. In practice, the examinee therefore is able to choose one question from what are really between twelve and fifteen diverse questions.

Below is an example of a question that deals with periods of music history. Questions that deal with other topics will be similarly constructed.



### Question One

Explain, in a substantive essay, the history of style and technique in music from ONE of the following music historical periods:

Choose only ONE:

1. Baroque (1450–1600)
2. Classical (1740–1820)
3. Twentieth-century (1900–2000)

Choose at least six representative works that demonstrate the history and variety of genres, compositional styles and performance practices in repertoire composed during your selected period. At least three of the works must be *in different genres* (e.g., solo song and string quartet, etc.). At least three of the works must be composed *at least 15 years apart from each other, so that your discussion spans the whole of your period*. The remainder may be chosen from any time within the period.

Explain the important historical and aesthetic issues that dominate music in the period (e.g., what social, political, or other factors affect music? What marks the beginning and end of the period? What are underlying, shared characteristics of music in the period, if any?). Discuss the works you choose in detail sufficient to demonstrate your knowledge of their specific formal, melodic, harmonic, textural, instrumental, rhythmic, programmatic, and textual features. Other issues you may choose to discuss, if you feel they are important, include notation, performance practice, or interpretation. Your essay should demonstrate an understanding of the important styles, practices, innovations, and problems associated with repertoire from the selected period.

*Exam Preparation.* In general, examinees are advised to review their UNLV music history studies; and to review more broadly repertoire from multiple periods of music history, including areas of strength as well as weakness. Review of works found in anthologies such as the *Norton Anthology of Western Music* (or similar collections) is an efficient way to do this. It is also a good idea to think about the historical and stylistic aspects of pieces one has performed, so as to be able to write about them as needed.

An appropriate essay can typically be written in four or more double-spaced pages of text, but there is no specific length requirement or limit. The essay should, however, meet all the specific requirements of the question. Failure to identify a required number of illustrative examples of musical compositions substantially affects the grade assigned to the essay.

Consult the Department's Graduate Handbook, which may contain additional information about the Master of Music Comprehensive Examination.

*Doctor of Musical Arts Degree:* Following the completion of course work and prior to the writing of their research document, Doctor of Musical Arts degree candidates take a qualifying examination that includes broad coverage of music historical topics. Among other tasks, candidates must demonstrate their understanding of music history through essays and stylistic analysis of diverse scores.

The music history written portion of Doctoral qualifying examination is comprised of the following components:

Part 1. The examinee will correctly explain and illustrate a selection of terms (concepts, persons, musical works, or technical terms) relating to each of the following five periods of music history (medieval and renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic, and modern). The examinee will select two out of four randomly selected terms for each period, for a total of ten. The examinee will moreover identify a specific composer, musical work, or other object that clearly illustrates or exemplifies the meaning of each selected term.

Part 2. The examinee will choose four out of five unidentified score excerpts that represent different musical periods, styles, and genres. For each excerpt chosen, the examinee will explain in a brief essay (100–150 words recommended) important stylistic and technical features of the music, and will use this evidence to attribute the work plausibly to a historical period and composer. Audio recordings of these excerpts will not be played. The essays will be evaluated based primarily on the comprehensiveness, depth, and terminological accuracy of the examinee’s analysis, and secondarily on the attribution of the work.

Part 3. The examinee will write essays (500–750 words recommended) addressing two broad music historical questions he/she will chose from among four given questions. The essay will be evaluated based primarily on content, and secondarily on form and style. The questions will specify the minimum requirements for their adequate responses.

Consult the Department’s Graduate Handbook, which may contain additional information about the Doctor of Musical Arts degree qualifying examination.

#### *Transfer of Graduate Credit from Other Institutions to Satisfy Music History Requirements*

Graduate students may petition the Department of Music to transfer graduate music history credits earned at other accredited institutions to satisfy the requirements of their degree programs at UNLV. The Department of Music may, at its discretion, accept or reject for this purpose such previously earned credits. Students who wish to petition the Department to apply such credit toward their music history requirements should contact the Department at the earliest opportunity (see Contact Information below) and should be prepared to provide detailed documentation of their prior studies.

Any transfer of graduate credit from another institution is also subject to the “Transfer Credit Limitations—Prior to Admission and Enrollment” and “Transfer Credit Limitations—After Admission and Enrollment” policies of the University’s *Graduate Catalog*.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions or comments relating to music history studies at UNLV, please feel welcome to contact Dr. Anthony Barone (anthony.barone@unlv.edu or 702-895-5953; College of Fine Arts, Department of Music, 4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 455025, Las Vegas, NV 89154-5025). E-mail communication is preferred.

## **DISCLAIMER AND LIMITATIONS**

This Handbook is provided as-is for information purposes and does not represent a contract or agreement. Neither the University nor the Department of Music assumes liability for loss or damage incurred as a result of using this Handbook. The Department of Music reserves the right to revise this Handbook at any time. In the event of disparity or conflict between this Handbook and the policies of the University, the University's policies shall take precedence. In the event of disparity or conflict between this Handbook and the Department of Music's Graduate Handbook, the Graduate Handbook's policies shall take precedence.