



AMHERST COLLEGE

Department of Music

Guidelines for honors thesis proposals in music

Music majors who wish to submit an honors thesis proposal are asked to do so three semesters before their anticipated completion of coursework, and usually by the seventh week of that semester. The Music Department coordinator will send an email to majors with information about the deadline. Well before the deadline—even as early as declaring the Music major—students are encouraged to meet with department faculty to discuss their thesis interests and develop a plan for coursework that will prepare them for thesis work. Honors thesis students are required to register for MUSI-498 and 499 in their final two semesters.

Music honors theses can take many forms—a written thesis, a composition thesis, a performance thesis, or a combination—and have one or more possible focuses (including but not limited to popular music, classical music, jazz, electronic music, musical traditions beyond the west, and many more). Close consultation with Music faculty will help sharpen the focus of thesis proposals.

An honors thesis proposal should consist of the following:

1. A one or two page narrative that explains the subject, format, and goals of the thesis and indicates a tentative title;
2. A brief reflection on the coursework and/or other experiences that have prepared the student for their thesis work;
3. A brief explanation of Music faculty advising received for the thesis, and any requests for specific advisor(s) for the thesis.

Depending on the focus of a thesis proposal, the following should also be included:

- a. Written theses:
 1. Anticipated travel or other costs related to archival, field research, or other expenses, and including a timeline for such research.
- b. Composition and/or performance theses:
 1. The department has historically preferred a shorter polished work to a longer unrefined one.
 2. Proposals must include an additional paragraph describing:
 - a. Instrumentation and personnel information for every piece;

b. Technical needs (amplification, sound person, etc);

c. Anticipated budget for equipment, professional support, and/or professional musician fees.

Thesis funding:

In consultation with a thesis advisor, students should explore funding options available via the Provost of the Faculty and the department.