

## Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

### Department/Program MUSIC AY 2023

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

Students taking courses in music for the Arts Core will acquire knowledge and skills to develop analytical and critical thinking and creative problem solving as applied within a choice of courses in the following musical disciplines: theory/composition (MUSA1100 Fundamentals of Music Theory), musicology (MUSA1200 Introduction to Music and MUSA1300 History of Popular Music), and ethnomusicology (MUSA1326 Introduction to Music of the World). In whichever course, students will gain the ability to analyze musical texts through the mastery of technical terminology and concepts, and will understand music within historical, social, and cultural contexts.

Students in MUSA1100 gain skills in understanding and manipulating the elements of musical composition while touching on a broader understanding of how these elements are expressed in different historical and cultural contexts.

Students in MUSA1200 and MUSA1300 gain a broad understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of works of music in the formation of Western culture (MUSA1200) or American culture (MUSA1300), the changing concepts of beauty and music as an expression of cultural identity, while applying correct technical terminology in their discussion of music.

Students in MUSA1326 gain an understanding of the social and cultural contexts of works from a representative, varied range of cultures, addressing issues of how music shapes and expresses a society while acquiring the appropriate language to discuss such cultures and music.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

Department website (new location) <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/music/academics.html>

- 3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

Sections of a core class will submit a sample of papers or projects for review as to technical writing, and the understanding of historical, cultural and/or aesthetic contexts.

- 4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

Assessment of all classes will be reviewed by members of the full-time faculty with recommendations made to the chair. Review of music core classes will occur annually over the summer.

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

This year we asked various sections of our core classes two questions. Question 1 was unchanged from last year: “How has this course changed your understanding of music?” We changed question 2 to: “What has been the greatest revelation to you from taking this course?” Answers to these questions yielded some consistent trends in responses, depending on the nature of the core class taken. Answers to question 1 showed positive acquisition of our competency goals. In MUSA1100: Fundamentals of Music Theory, students broadly reported having a better technical understanding of how music works; they also emphasized how the course helped them engage with music: rather than thinking of it as an abstract source of emotional experience and enjoyment, students reported that they now saw music as a knowledge-based practice. In MUSA1200: Introduction to Music, the biggest trend supported the desired outcomes of understanding the role of music in an historical context, particularly how contemporary music derives from past practices. In MUSA1300: History of Popular Music, the desired contextual outcomes relating music and aspects of society, politics, race, gender, and identity—thus, understanding music as a social force and musicians as social and political agents. In MUSA1320: Introductions to Music of the World, answers focused on the thought that differences matter and these differences relate to different histories and social experiences. In each class, the competency goals seem to be clear and to be met.

Question 2, admittedly broad, resulted in similarly broad answers. Many “great revelations” were purely technical and recited what the course was about. Other answers were more personal with the recurring expression of discovering the undiscovered, of finding something they never knew about, or they never knew they liked. There is adequate evidence that the various Core classes are having a further impact than simply knowledge or skill acquisition. We are still deciding how to develop better questions concerning formation and how to develop better metrics in this regard. This summer we hope to better quantify the answers we currently have.

- 6) **Date of the most recent program review.** (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

May 2012