

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department/Program MUSIC 2025

- 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?)

The Music Department has formulated and adopted the following standards in learning and assessment for the Arts Core in Music.

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 (MUSA1320 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 MUSA1320 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.

One ongoing issue is that the Enduring Questions course *Aesthetic Exercises*, MUSA1701, is not listed here. This should finally be put on the website even though only one section of the course is offered every Fall. Separately, the Department could draft Core learning outcomes that apply across all courses offered. Much needed faculty discussion and revision of learning outcomes for both the Music major and the Core will happen under new department administrative leadership in the next academic year.

- 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?)

<https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/morrissey/departments/music/about/learning-outcomes.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?)

Historically, according to Music's past E1As, "sections of a specific 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." This year, instructors of MUSA 1100 *Fundamentals of Music* were asked to submit their syllabi, any prompts and material related to written assignments, and examples of stronger and weaker written assignments they received.

- 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?)

Historically, according to Music's past Core E1As, "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." I have not been a part of this review, and suspect that, in practice, this review fell solely on the Director of Undergraduate Studies. As Music's new DUS, I will review the evidence collected this year. Based on my review of other departments' Core E1As, in future years either all full-time Music faculty or a subset of full-time Music faculty should review these materials.

- 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?)

All MUSA 1100 instructors have writing assignments in their syllabi, with most instructors requesting two or three concert reports and/or some requesting annotated listening exercises in which students provide historical/cultural background on a piece of music in addition to noting how fundamentals of music operate in the assigned piece. The level of detail presented in the assignment prompts varied from a fair amount to not much at all. More concerningly, most of these assignments could be easily completed by AI without the instructor knowing because the prompts are broad enough without additional scaffolding and clear citation practices (for example, "pick a few moments in the work you are going to listen to in a live performance before you go, cite the track times in two different YouTube videos or Spotify tracks in which those moments occur and to which you will compare the live performance you attend, note what was different in each, be sure to compare these moments to what you hear in the live performance to support the argument in your report.") In a letter to all Music Core faculty at the beginning of the next academic year, I will stress the importance of creating meaningful writing assignments—with more detailed prompts/instructions and scaffolding—that actually foster student engagement given the realities of AI. Only one instructor (Riikka Pietiläinen-Caffrey) had a statement about AI on their course syllabus.

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

May 2012.