

Dear Incoming Graduate Music Students:

Welcome to the Music Division of the Meadows School of the Arts! We in the Musicology Department look forward to working with you during your time at SMU.

As you may know, most incoming music graduate students take the Music History Diagnostic Exam to assess preparedness for graduate-level musicology/music history study. The purpose of this letter is to explain everything you need to know about the exam, including what to expect, what happens if you do/do not pass, strategies for preparation, testing procedure, and the device requirement.

### **The Exam**

The exam will take place on **Wednesday, August 16th, 6:30-9:00pm in Owens Art Center Room 2020**. It is meant to evaluate your general knowledge of Western music history in the period 1600–2000. New graduate students come with a range of different backgrounds and familiarity with different music history textbooks. Understanding this, the exam is not based on any one text and it will not ask questions requiring the recall of specific historical dates or other factual minutiae (e.g., Igor Stravinsky's birth year<sup>1</sup>). Rather, questions will address basic terminology, historical context, style, and canonical composers and works (see below for sample questions). It is closed-book, with the aim of determining, as broadly as possible, your current fundamental knowledge of music history as acquired in a typical American undergraduate music history survey course.

The exam consists of two, one-hour timed sections of 75 multiple-choice questions each, divided chronologically as follows:

- Section I: 1600–1800
- Section II: 1800–2000

The exam is web-based, and will be taken through the Division of Music course page on SMU's online Canvas course management portal ([smu.instructure.com](http://smu.instructure.com)).

### **Practice Test**

On the Canvas page you will find an optional 5-question practice test ("Music History Practice Test") that you may take in order to familiarize yourself with the Canvas interface and timing of the exam.

### **Grading and Ramifications of Passing/Not Passing**

To pass the exam you will need to score at least 80% (i.e., 60/75) on each of the exam's two sections. If you pass, you will be free to enroll in MUHI 6335: Introduction to Graduate Studies (or equivalent depending on your degree program).

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<sup>1</sup> 1882, FYI.

If you *do not* score 80% or higher on each section you will have to enroll in MUHI 6000: Music History Review in the fall semester (or, in certain degree programs, the spring semester). MUHI 6000 is an uninstructed online 0-credit course: it entails studying, on your own time, the materials in the section(s) on which you did not score at least 80% and retesting on *only* those sections during one of the three testing sessions offered during the semester until your score reaches 80%. The dates for the MUHI 6000 testing sessions will be announced at the beginning of the fall semester.

MUHI 6000 is a 0-credit Credit/No-Credit course and so it will not cost anything or affect your GPA, but it will delay your ability to enroll in MUHI 6335 (or equivalent, depending on degree program), which cannot be taken until the diagnostic exam or MUHI 6000 has been passed. MUHI 6335 is itself a pre-requisite for all upper level MUHI courses, so you will slow your degree completion by not passing the diagnostic exam before classes begin. Furthermore, if you do not pass MUHI 6000 after the first semester in which you enroll in it, you will need to enroll in MUHI 6100 the following semester *at your own expense* and you will be placed on academic probation. If you do not pass MUHI 6100, you will be placed on academic suspension.

### **Exam Preparation**

The diagnostic exam assesses fundamental knowledge of music history as gained in a typical American undergraduate music degree. If you have received such a degree within the past several years, you should not need extensive additional study. However, if you would like to prepare for the exam, we encourage you to review any textbooks, listening lists/guides, anthologies of scores, recordings, and class notes from music history courses taken as an undergraduate. Examples of standard textbooks include: Grout/Palisca/Burkholder, *A History of Western Music*; Hanning, *Concise History of Western Music*; Bonds, *A History of Music in Western Culture*; Wright/Simms, *Music in Western Civilization*; and Taruskin/Gibbs, *The Oxford History of Western Music College Edition*.

Questions will address “big picture” issues in music history. For example:

Which nineteenth-century composer’s legacy was the most lasting and influential?

- (a) Haydn’s
- (b) Bach’s
- (c) Beethoven’s
- (d) Mozart’s

Richard Wagner is best known as a composer of

- (a) operas
- (b) symphonies
- (c) concerti
- (d) string quartets

By the end of the eighteenth century, the typical symphony had

- (a) three movements

- (b) two movements
- (c) five movements
- (d) four movements

### **Device Requirement**

Students will take the exam on their own personal laptop computers, which all Meadows students are required to own anyway. (For more information on this requirement, see <https://www.smu.edu/Meadows/About/Resources/MeadowsTechnology/LaptopRequirement>.) *Once you are on campus, please make sure that you can reliably access the Canvas site wirelessly in the Owen Fine Arts Center.* This means testing which wireless network and internet browser are most reliable on your machine. *We will not be responsible for an inability to connect to the network or use Canvas properly during the exam.* If you have questions about technology or issues with accessing the wifi network, please visit the folks at TechEffect, the technology help desk at Meadows, located just off the south side of the Caruth lobby. Note that while students have had success taking the exam on iPads and other devices, we cannot be responsible for any technical difficulties that arise using such devices.

Please direct questions about any of the above to Dr. Peter Kupfer ([pkupfer@smu.edu](mailto:pkupfer@smu.edu)). Once again, welcome to Meadows, we look forward to meeting you in August!

Sincerely,

Dr. Peter Kupfer, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Musicology  
Dr. Gillian Gower, Visiting Assistant Professor of Musicology  
Dr. Zachary Wallmark, Assistant Professor of Musicology