

## THESIS GUIDELINES FOR MUSIC PROGRAM AT HUNTER COLLEGE

The degree candidate should consult the graduate advisor for requirements with respect to the thesis topic and submitting the first and final drafts. The deadlines for submission of drafts are determined by the graduate program and can be found at the following website: <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/artsci/graduate-education/guidelines-for-preparing-masters-theses-in-arts-sciences>. Guidelines for formatting, deposit, and all other parameters of the MA thesis can also be found at this website. What follows below are specific MA-thesis requirements for the Music Department at Hunter College.

### Theses in ethnomusicology, music history, music theory, and composition:

The requirement for MUS 798 (Thesis in Ethnomusicology, Music History, or Music Theory) may be met with either a traditional thesis or a set of shorter papers. Both options are described below. The requirement for MUS 799 (Thesis in Composition) is met by composing a significant original composition. Both MUS 798 and MUS 799 must be undertaken in close consultation with the advisor and the second reader. General questions should be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies in Music.

#### I. Traditional thesis (MUS 798):

A traditional thesis is a large-scale study (of roughly 50 pages) of a single topic based in part on original research. It may be an expanded version of a paper originally submitted for a course. A thesis proposal must first be approved by the thesis advisor and the second reader. Proposals for this type of thesis should be prepared as follows:

##### A. Criteria for selection of topic:

- The goal of a thesis is to discover new facts and ideas about a subject. The topic must therefore be one that has not been studied adequately from your point of view in the published literature of the field.
- The scope of a thesis should be sufficiently narrow that the subject can be investigated thoroughly in the time available for working on it. Broader background information may be presented as an introduction, but the subject of the original work should be small enough to be covered comprehensively in the thesis.
- A thesis should not merely describe a subject, but must draw conclusions and state a point of view about it. It is not possible to know what the conclusions will be before completing the research, but the purpose of the research should be to answer specific questions about the subject and not merely describe it.

##### B. Information to be included in the proposal:

- Title of thesis: Indicate the topic of the research as precisely as possible in the title.
- Goals of the project: Describe in one or two paragraphs the goals of the project and the problems to be solved or questions to be answered by it.
- History and present state of research in the area: Describe in approximately two pages the history and present state of research in the general subject area of the thesis. Explain how the thesis relates to past and current research in the area and how it might serve as a basis for future research.
- Structure of the research: Describe in approximately two pages the steps necessary for carrying out the research and the methods to be employed in the process.
- Bibliography: Include a bibliography of the principal sources of information on which the thesis will be based.

- Sponsor and second reader: Give the names of the sponsor and second reader of the thesis.

## II. Set of shorter papers (MUS 798):

Students who do not wish to write a thesis of this type may fulfill the thesis requirement with a set of two or three shorter papers totaling roughly 50 pages. Some or all of these papers may be revised and carefully edited versions of papers originally submitted for courses. Proposals for this type of thesis should be prepared as follows:

- A. Criteria for selection of papers: If papers submitted previously for courses are to be used, they should be the best ones the student has produced in graduate school. The topics of the papers need not be related.
- B. Information to be included in the proposal:
  - Title of thesis: The title of a thesis of this type will be “Studies of...” followed by brief titles of the papers.
  - Nature of new research (if any) and editorial revisions planned: Describe briefly any new research (whether additions to existing papers or new papers to be written) planned for the project and the nature of the revisions to be made in existing papers.
  - Sponsor and other advisors: The project must be supervised by a faculty sponsor who is responsible for ensuring that all required work is successfully completed. If previously written papers are to be included, the instructors for whom they were originally written should supervise the revisions whenever possible. Name the sponsor and the instructors responsible for the individual papers.
  - Current versions of existing papers: If revised versions of existing papers are to be used, include those papers in the proposal.

## III. Thesis in composition (MUS 799):

The thesis in composition should be a major original composition that is done in consultation with the thesis advisor and the second reader.

- A. The proposal should include the title of the work to be composed and a description of it, including the number of movements or sections, the planned length of the piece, its instrumentation, and any programmatic aspects. In the case of vocal or dramatic works, the description should include the origin of the text or libretto, the author of the text, the number of sections (individual poems or scenes to be set), the names of individual characters and their vocal setting. If the text is not in the public domain, the proposal should state that the copyright owner's permission to use has either been applied for or already received. The candidate should include a description of the stylistic characteristics of the work, and specific information on any proposed performance of the work, the date, time, place, and names of individual performers or performing groups.