

**Music Department**

297 Washington Terrace  
Music Studios  
Middletown, Connecticut 06459

## MUSIC MAJOR GUIDELINES (2025-2026)

### REQUIRED COURSE CREDITS

3 Music Theory and Composition

3 Music History and Culture

3 Music Performance

2 Music Majors Seminars

1 Capstone Senior Project (or 2 for Capstone Honors Thesis)

12 total (13 for honors)

### **PREPARING TO BECOME A MUSIC MAJOR**

To enter the Music major, a student must have taken one course in each of the following three capabilities that structure the major<sup>1</sup>:

Music Theory and Composition*	MUSC 103, MUSC 105, MUSC 201-240
Music History and Culture	MUSC 102, MUSC 106-199, MUSC 241-299
Music Performance	MUSC 413 – MUSC 499

Prospective Music majors should fulfill these prerequisites as early as possible in their academic careers. One of these entry level courses must be taken before the student will be admitted to the major.

\*Students may apply to be exempt from MUSC103 by taking a proficiency exam given by the instructor before the first week of classes. A highly prepared student may request an individual examination to be exempt from MUSC201. A student will still be required to complete 3 Theory and Composition credits if that student is exempt from MUSC103 and/or MUSC201. An AP Theory credit (score of 4 or 5) on the Wesleyan transcript also allows the student to be exempt from MUSC103 pending a placement test.

Students may take 200-level courses before declaring the major. In order to be accepted as a music major, the student's performance in these classes should demonstrate the ability to succeed in the program.

**Non-Music Credits.** Students are also encouraged to develop their musicianship by taking private lessons, performing in ensembles and taking other Music Department courses. Over a four-year period, it is possible for active musicians to accumulate nearly two dozen credits in Music Department courses. There are limits, however, on the number of such courses that can be applied toward graduation. No more than 16 Music credits may count towards the 32 required for a Wesleyan degree.

All Music majors must anticipate taking at least **16** credits outside the Music Department in order to graduate. For Music majors, cross-listed courses count in Music. It is therefore imperative that students contemplating a major in Music complete an average of 4 non-Music credits every academic year. Failure to maintain this pace may make it impossible to graduate within the standard four-year period; it may also necessitate taking summer courses.

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<sup>1</sup> Students who have not completed the required introductory courses at the time of being accepted into the major must complete the missing courses in the following semester.

**GenEd Expectation.** Music majors should complete their General Education expectation of at least three SBS and three NSM courses. Prospective majors who have not made substantial progress towards meeting these expectations or who have not taken enough courses outside of the Music Department may be refused entry into the major. Students who fail to fulfill the General Education expectations are generally not considered for departmental prizes and honors.

### ***DECLARING A MAJOR IN MUSIC***

A student who wishes to become a Music Major should:

- 1) **Attend** the New Music Major Meeting in February. An advisor will be assigned to you and you can receive the required In-House Concentration Form.
- 2) **Meet** with your Music Advisor to design your own program of courses and to fill out the In-House Concentration Form. As each student designs their own major (within the guidelines outlined below), subject to departmental approval, this is a crucial first step. Your music advisor must sign your form.
- 3) **Make a copy** of the signed In-House Concentration Form for your records. Take the original to the Administrative Assistant in Music Studios 111. Request the Music Major in the Major Declaration section of WesPortal. The assembled music faculty must approve the program of study before the student can be accepted as a major. When it has been approved your declaration request will be accepted via portal. The student then receives an official letter of acceptance to the program.

### ***A MUSIC MAJOR PROGRAM***

A Music Major program consists of three courses in each of the three capabilities (Music Theory and Composition; Music History and Culture; and Music Performance), two Music Major Seminars, and a Capstone Project taking the form of a Senior Project or an Honors Thesis.

#### **Music Major Credits by Capabilities Distribution**

##### ***3 credits in Music Theory and Composition:***

- **3 credits** from classes numbered MUSC103, MUSC 105, MUSC 201-240

##### ***3 credits in Music History and Culture:***

- **3 credits** from classes numbered MUSC 102, MUSC 106-199, MUSC 241-299  
There is no limit on the number of 100 level courses included.

##### ***3 credits in Music Performance:***

- **3 credits** from classes number MUSC 406 – 499

*Note: Private Lessons are available to all students. 1 credit of private lessons may be counted towards this total and it must be taken as a declared Music Major (MUSC 406).*

##### ***2 credits of Music Major Seminars:***

- **2 credits** from classes numbered MUSC 300-339

This course must be taken twice, normally once in the Junior year and once in the Senior year.

Generally, at least one seminar is offered every semester. Exceptionally well-prepared seniors may apply to take graduate-level seminars in lieu of MUSC 300.

##### ***1 or 2 credits of Capstone Tutorial:***

- **Senior Project** - 1 or both MUSC 403/404 **or Honors Thesis** - both MUSC 409/410

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***12 or 13 Music Credits TOTAL***

Students design their own course of study in consultation with their music advisor. **Diversity of musical experience is expected**; all students must gain familiarity with at least two different musical traditions. Within each capability students must take courses with at least two different faculty members.

Although only a limited number of courses in each category are required, students frequently take more, even all, of a sequence depending upon their interests and future plans. A student contemplating graduate studies in ethnomusicology, composition, music theory, or musicology, for example, will want to take as many courses in their respective area as possible.

Details of individual programs (for example which area[s] of World Music will be emphasized, which of the theory and history courses are appropriate, etc.) are worked out by the individual student and their advisor, with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies and ratified by the entire faculty. This is the essence of the Music Major at Wesleyan. The program allows enormous flexibility; however, once a student commits to a proposed major program and it is approved, significant changes must be proposed and approved in advance, in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies (see below under “Maintaining a Music Major Program”).

The Department expects its Majors to continue to refine and extend their performance skills throughout their undergraduate careers, but no more than three performance courses taken in the Junior and Senior years may be applied to a major program as recorded on the In-House Concentration Form. At least 2 semesters of performance credits should be in performance ensembles. It is assumed, however, that students will take additional performance courses. These practices may mean that students end up with more than 32 courses required to graduate, and correspondingly, substantially more than 16 courses that may be applied to the Major. Students are reminded that a load of 6 or more courses in one semester requires the permission of the Dean.

The proposed program of a student who plans to be a Double Major is judged exactly as if the student proposed to be a Music Major only. There is no “Minor” in music at Wesleyan.

The Music Department will accept a maximum of five Music credits for an incoming transfer student. We will accept a maximum of four Music credits for Music majors who spend a year at another institution. For one semester away, we will accept a maximum of two music credits. These maximum numbers can be adjusted up to ONE credit more, depending upon the decision of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, in conjunction with the advocacy of the student’s advisor.

**Cross-listed courses.** Only one cross-listed course *that originates in another department* may count in each of the three capabilities. Additional cross-listed courses from other departments may count beyond the required 12 or 13 required credits up to the total of 16 credits allowed in a Major.

**Advanced Placement Credit.** An AP Music credit with a score of 4 or 5 on the student’s Wesleyan transcript will provide one Wesleyan credit towards graduation. However, Music majors will still need to complete 3 theory/composition credits for the major, and so the AP credit may be applied on top of the 12-13 required Music credits. Students will still need to take the MUSC103 and/or 201 placement test to pass out of them.

### **THE CAPSTONE PROJECT**

All majors must complete a capstone project by the end of the senior year. This project may take many forms, including a concert, a written thesis, or a substantial musical composition. The nature of the capstone project is determined jointly by the student and the student's project tutor (who may or may not be the student's major

advisor). Work on the capstone project entails enrolling in **MUSC 403 and/or 404 (Senior Project Tutorial)**. If a student wishes to be a candidate for Honors, she/he must register for both **MUSC 409 and 410 (Senior Honors Thesis)**. Details on the Capstone Project can be found in “Information for Senior Music Majors” available from Music Studios 111.

### ***MAINTAINING A MUSIC MAJOR PROGRAM***

Students should use the program detailed in their In-House Concentration Form as a guide when making course selections. Failure to make progress through the program--particularly its academic component—may result in the suspension of fee waivers for private lessons and other Departmental preferences.

Majors considering significant changes in their approved programs should consult with their advisor, and then obtain the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, before substituting for a course listed on their In-House Concentration Form. The Director of Undergraduate Studies has the right to approve or disapprove such proposed changes. A “significant change” includes (1) a change in the content of the Theory and Composition capability; (2) a petition to change the ratio of Theory/Composition and History/Culture courses from 3:3 to 4:2; or (3) a change affecting the diversity of the student's musical experience.

This last type of change typically involves the balance of courses outside the student's area of concentration. For example, a student concentrating in Western (European) music studies, and whose approved program contains a semester of Gamelan as the only non-Western performance group should not substitute another Western-related ensemble for this Gamelan course; such a change significantly alters the diversity of student's musical experience. On the other hand, substituting a course in Indian music would not significantly alter the balance of Western and non-Western courses and does not require the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Any alterations to the program of study listed on the In-House Concentration Form must be registered with the Administrative Assistant in Music Studios 111, who can also help identify “significant” changes to the Major program. This registration must be done in the first week of classes.

Music Majors must complete the Major Certification Form in their student portfolio in the spring of the senior year. The Registrar’s office will notify students of the deadline for completion of this form.

Details on the requirements for Seniors can be found in the sheets entitled “Information for Senior Music Majors,” available from Music Studios 111.

### ***PRIVATE LESSONS WAIVERS FOR MUSIC MAJORS***

Music Majors in their Junior and Senior years are eligible for a partial waiver of the fees of one full academic credit of Private lessons per semester with a Wesleyan Private Lessons Instructor. To qualify for this benefit the student must have been informed that he or she has been approved as a major by the end of the previous semester. All applicable rules and regulations of the Private Lessons Program must be followed in order to continue to be eligible for the waiver. Students whose ability to complete the Music Major is in doubt (i.e., students that do not complete the classroom component of their programs in a timely fashion) will not be eligible for the waiver.

### ***HONORS IN MUSIC***

Full details on the requirements for Honors can be found in “Information for Senior Music Majors,” available from Music Studios 111. Students wishing to be a candidate for Departmental Honors in Music must notify the Honors Program before October 15 of their senior year.

Honors will only be awarded to students who have demonstrated compliance with Stage I and II University General Education Expectations. Compliance is necessary for Honors, Phi Beta Kappa nominations, and prizes awarded by

the Department. The assembled Music Department faculty must approve any exception to this policy. Students who hope to be considered for Phi Beta Kappa must give attention both to their major and non-major programs, as this organization requires evidence of education in a broad range of subjects.

revised 4/1/2025 (by the Chair with the approval of the faculty)