

Music Department

SENIOR PROJECT OVERVIEW

Students majoring in the Bachelor of Arts in Music Studies (all emphases) must satisfy the Senior Project requirement by completing an independent, high-level Senior Project. The Senior Project is the concluding activity for all Music Majors.

With this project you are aiming to demonstrate your expertise and skills in one focused element of Music Studies. You must demonstrate: that you can work independently, rigorously, and in-depth; that you have high level critical and creative expertise in Music Studies. The Senior Project does not need to be an extensive project, but it should attain a high level of quality appropriate for the final year of a bachelor's degree.

You will be working on your Senior Project throughout your senior year so you should select a topic that excites and stimulates you, and that enables you to develop your own expertise and independent processes. It may be appropriate to develop a project that enables you to prepare for and transition into your career after graduating.

The Senior Project is an independent project. However, you must have a music department Senior Project Faculty Advisor for the duration of the project. This person will act as approver, facilitator and grader. Ideally this will be someone you have already know and have worked with, and someone who has expertise related to your project, so it is important to consider these factors when selecting a faculty advisor. Each student is responsible for contacting and getting the approval of a Senior Project Faculty Advisor and then for maintaining regular contact with this Faculty Advisor as they progress through their project over their final year.

The Senior Project is a 3-credit series (192 A, B, C) and you must register each quarter, with the approval of your Faculty Advisor. You should be developing your project through the year.

The topic, material, and framework for the Senior Project are broad, so you should see this as an opportunity to develop your expertise in one focused area from your previous courses and studies in the Music Department.

Examples of possible Senior Projects include:

- a research paper;
- a creative project with written documentation of your creative processes;
- a composition of original music, supervision of a performance and/or recording of it with written notes;
- a recital with accompanying notes;
- a multi-media project in which you create and discuss an original work.

You may have an idea for a senior project that does not fit any of the descriptions above. Other types of creative projects are possible. Discuss your idea with your chosen Senior Project Faculty Advisor for approval.

The particular topic, approach, scope, and length are worked out between the student and the Faculty Advisor.

Descriptive writing: The Music Department requires that detailed writing be part of ALL senior projects. These can range from a scholarly research and/or critical paper (minimum 20 pages); to program notes to accompany a performance recital; to an essay describing the particular compositional method used in the creative process for a composition project. Other forms of writing may be acceptable and should be agreed with the Senior Project Faculty Advisor.

Process and Timeline for Initiating, Developing and Completing the Senior Project

(Quarters may vary depending on expected graduation timeline. Your Senior Project should be taken in your last 3 quarters at UCSB).

JUNIOR YEAR - Spring Quarter

Stage One: Students make contact with and petition a music faculty member to act as Senior Project Faculty Advisor. If the student is abroad, this part of the process may be conducted by email. For students who are planning a formal public recital it is crucial that they make contact with faculty in their specific area (i.e. Winds, Strings, Keyboard, or Voice) and must audition. Students pursuing other performance-based projects must still have the project approved by their faculty advisor.

The petition to the proposed Senior Project Faculty Advisor should include a brief project description, i.e. an outline of what you are proposing to do.

Stage Two: When the proposed Senior Project Faculty Advisor agrees to advise the student, the student completes a detailed "Senior Project Form with the Project Plan", downloadable [here](#). This Form must be signed by the Senior Project Faculty Advisor.

The student should submit the completed and signed "Senior Project Form with the Project Plan" to the Music Department Undergraduate Advisor.

After the form is received, the student will be provided with an Add Code for MUS192A. The student then enrolls in the course, indicating their Senior Project Faculty Advisor from the drop-down menu.

SENIOR YEAR

Fall Quarter

At the start of the fall quarter, the student should propose a clear working schedule and aims to be completed through the 10 weeks of the quarter. The Senior Project Faculty Advisor will give feedback on this until these goals are agreed.

(For a research paper this might include a detailed abstract and outline, a draft, and/or an annotated bibliography. For a performance or composition project this might include a finalized list of repertoire, drafts or sketches of a composition, and/or a draft of the program notes or descriptive essay.)

Throughout the fall quarter, the student must be in contact with the Faculty Advisor every three weeks and should arrange to meet with the Faculty Advisor at least once in the fall quarter.

At the end of the quarter, the Senior Project Faculty Advisor may require some evidence of progress toward the quarter's goal in order to judge whether the student is making satisfactory progress and should continue in the winter quarter. The Senior Project Faculty Advisor will give a grade for the fall quarter based on this assessment.

Winter Quarter

Work on the project should continue through the winter quarter.

At the start of the winter quarter, the student should propose a clear working schedule and aims to be completed through the 10 weeks of the quarter. The Senior Project Faculty Advisor will give feedback on this until these goals are agreed.

Throughout the winter quarter, the student must be in contact with the Faculty Advisor every three weeks and should arrange to meet with the Faculty Advisor at least once in the winter quarter.

By the end of winter quarter the Senior Project Faculty Advisor will again grade the work-in-progress to ensure that successful completion of the project is well under way.

Spring Quarter

At the start of the spring quarter, the student should propose a clear working schedule to ensure that the project will be completed in this quarter. The Senior Project Faculty Advisor will give feedback on this until these goals are agreed.

It is crucial that the student is in contact with the Faculty Advisor every three weeks.

PROJECT TYPE TIMELINES

Written and mixed outcome projects

Students should submit a full draft by Week 5 of the Spring Quarter. Senior Project Faculty Advisors will aim to give feedback by end of week 7.

The final project should be submitted on or before by the last day of instruction for the quarter (posted on UCSB's Academic Calendar). The project will be reviewed by the Senior Project Faculty Advisor within three weeks of submission. When the Senior Project Faculty Advisor has submitted a final grade for MUS 192C, this indicates that the student has satisfied the requirements for the Music Department Senior Project.

Recital

If a recital is to be scheduled, the student is to coordinate with the Operations Manager at or before the beginning of the quarter to schedule the recital date and time. At this time, they will fill out the Student Recital Approval form, and Concert Equipment Request form. Once the forms have been signed by the instructor, pianist and accompanying director, pay the recital fee. See the [Recital Scheduling Policy](#).

SOME ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

DO extend and develop an area of interest that you have already worked on during your undergraduate program. There is a tendency for projects to be weak because students are aiming for something that is too broad and too complex or start entirely new research projects. You're aiming to build on and develop previous experience, expertise and interests.

You might revise and develop your favorite term paper or a compositional process or a repertoire you have previously worked on.

(**DO NOT** start something new).

DO keep the project very focused and very specific.

DO start as soon as possible and keep working throughout the year.
(**DO NOT** leave this until the last minute)

DO maintain regular contact with your Senior Project Faculty Advisor and send them updates.

DO maintain regular contact with the Undergraduate Advisor.