

MUSICOLOGY, PHD

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Field of Study: Musicology

Program Overview

The PhD program in musicology at Case Western Reserve University offers rigorous academic study and advanced research training, preparing students for leadership in music scholarship and higher education.

In close collaboration with a faculty advisor, each student designs a customized program of study aligned with their research interests and career goals. The curriculum covers music from the Middle Ages to the present, with particular faculty expertise in:

- Medieval and Renaissance Music
- Music and Gender
- French Music (1550–1900)
- American Popular Music
- Sound Cultures (1800–present)
- Opera and Social Issues

Our program emphasizes interdisciplinary approaches and is closely integrated with the Historical Performance Practice program and the Center for Popular Music Studies. Students benefit from hands-on experience with historical repertoires and research opportunities in collaboration with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Musicology faculty contribute broadly to undergraduate and graduate instruction across both CWRU and the Cleveland Institute of Music through the Joint Music Program.

Students in the program regularly present at national and international conferences, publish in leading journals, and earn prestigious fellowships, including support from the American Council of Learned Societies, AMS 50, and the Fulbright Program. Our graduates hold academic and research positions at top institutions across the country.

Learn more about the musicology program.

Admission

Applicants with good academic records from fully accredited universities and colleges will be considered for admission to graduate study at Case Western Reserve University. Admission must be recommended by the department or professional school of the university in which the applicant proposes to study and must be approved by the dean of graduate studies.

The PhD in musicology is awarded in recognition of exceptional scholarly ability and achievement, focusing not only on course completion but also on distinguished research work. While many applicants enter the program after earning a master's degree in musicology or music history, highly qualified candidates may be admitted directly after completing a bachelor's degree.

For more details on the graduate application and audition process, please refer to the Graduate Applications page.

Advising and Student Resources

Current graduate and professional students in music should review

departmental policies and procedures in the Graduate Music Handbook. The handbook provides additional information regarding graduate assistantships, general expectations and responsibilities, program outcomes, decision points, performances, scholarly activity, outside work, prizes/awards, deadlines, petitions, examinations, advancement to candidacy, and student record-keeping.

Additional resources and forms are available on the Current Graduate Students page.

Graduate Policies

For graduate policies and procedures, please review the School of Graduate Studies section of the General Bulletin.

Program Requirements

The PhD in Musicology is granted in recognition of superior scholarly ability and attainment. Award of the degree is based not only on computation of time or enumeration of courses, but also upon distinguished work.

All programs of study are formulated to suit the individual needs of the student and require the consent of the research advisor and Coordinator of Graduate Studies. The PhD requires 36 credit hours of coursework plus proficiency in a relevant foreign language and an additional 18 credit hours of MUHI 701. Students must submit the "Pre-Doctoral Standing" form in the spring of the second year in order to register for 6 credit hours (3 credit hours per semester) of MUHI 701. Required coursework includes three doctoral seminars MUHI 590, MUHI 610, and MUHI 612. In the first two years, students will be expected to take three seminars (9 credit hours) per semester, for a total of 36 credit hours.

Language and Qualifying Examinations

Students admitted to the program will take diagnostic examinations prior to the start of classes in the first year of the program. Based on these examinations, students may be required to enroll in specific courses to address deficiencies; these course credits may be applied toward the requirement. In December of each year, students will submit an Academic Progress Report (APR). Written evaluations included as part of this report, along with course grades and materials, will constitute the beginnings of the portfolio maintained by the coordinator of graduate studies that will be the basis for considering each student's advancement into the PhD program.

Students must demonstrate ability to read in one foreign language approved by the Musicology Committee as relevant to the student's research, usually drawn from German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Latin, though exceptions can be made by petition. The language examination must be taken by the end of the second year unless a successful petition allows for extension of the deadline.

At the beginning of the fall in the third year of study, students will take qualifying (comprehensive) examinations assessing their knowledge and skills across a broad range of subject matter, and which will also function as qualifying exams for advancement to the PhD program. These examinations will consist of written and oral sections, and will be conducted and evaluated by the musicology faculty. Students who do not advance but who have done satisfactory work will be eligible to receive the MA in music history at this juncture.

The Graduate Music Handbook outlines in detail the procedures and timeline for coursework, and language and qualifying examinations.

Dissertation Prospectus, Defense, and Candidacy/Pre-Doctoral Standing

Students who pass their qualifying exams will register for MUHI 701 credits and begin research work for the dissertation. Working with a faculty research advisor, the student will develop a prospectus for the dissertation, which will be presented in writing to the faculty committee at least two weeks before the prospectus defense. The prospectus defense must take place before April 1 of the third year. All other requirements, including the language exam, must be satisfied before the defense can be scheduled.

It is expected that the fourth and fifth year of study will be devoted to work on the dissertation; during this time, students will enroll in MUHI 710. Upon completion of the dissertation, each student will present a formal defense to the dissertation committee and members of the public.

Under the rules of the School of Graduate Studies, a student must complete the dissertation no later than five years after registering for the first MUHI 701 credits.

The Graduate Music Handbook outlines in detail the procedures and timeline for dissertation completion and graduation.

Required Courses:

Code	Title	Credit Hours
UNIV 400	Professional Development for Graduate Teaching Assistants	0
MUHI 590	Seminar in Musicology ^a	9
MUHI 610	Research Methods in Music	3
MUHI 612	Analysis for Music Historians	3
MUHI 699	Qualifying Exam Practicum	0
MUHI 701	Dissertation Ph.D. ^b	18
MUHI 710	Dissertation Seminar	0

Optional Courses:

Code	Title	Credit Hours
MUHI 442	Seminar in Historical Performance Practice	3
MUHI 443	Medieval/Renaissance Notation	3
MUHI 450	Topics in Music History	3
MUHI 590	Seminar in Musicology	3
MUHI 601	Special Readings Ph.D./D.M.A. ^c	1 - 3

Musicology Courses:

MUHI 431	Music of Medieval Europe	3
MUHI 432	Music of the Renaissance	3
MUHI 433	Music of the Baroque	3
MUHI 434	Viennese Classicism	3

a Taken three times.

b Students who advance to candidacy for the PhD will register for dissertation research credits and begin research for the dissertation. It is expected that the third, fourth and fifth year of study will be devoted to work on the dissertation; during this time students will enroll in MUHI 710.

c Course can be repeated.

Sample Plan of Study

First Year

Fall		Credit Hours
MUHI 434	Viennese Classicism	3
MUHI 450	Topics in Music History	3
MUHI 610	Research Methods in Music	3
UNIV 400	Professional Development for Graduate Teaching Assistants	0

Foreign language exam

Credit Hours 9

Spring

MUHI 450	Topics in Music History	3
MUHI 590	Seminar in Musicology	3
MUHI 612	Analysis for Music Historians	3

Credit Hours 9

Second Year

Fall

MUHI 431	Music of Medieval Europe	3
MUHI 450	Topics in Music History	3
MUHI 590	Seminar in Musicology	3

Credit Hours 9

Spring

MUHI 450	Topics in Music History	3
MUHI 590	Seminar in Musicology	3
MUHI 601	Special Readings Ph.D./D.M.A.	3
MUHI 699	Qualifying Exam Practicum	0

Credit Hours 9

Third Year

Fall

MUHI 701	Dissertation Ph.D.	3
MUHI 710	Dissertation Seminar	0

Qualifying Exams

Credit Hours 3

Spring

MUHI 701	Dissertation Ph.D.	3
MUHI 710	Dissertation Seminar	0

Credit Hours 3

Fourth Year

Fall

MUHI 701	Dissertation Ph.D.	3
MUHI 710	Dissertation Seminar	0

Credit Hours 3

Spring

MUHI 701	Dissertation Ph.D.	3
MUHI 710	Dissertation Seminar	0

Credit Hours 3

Fifth Year

Fall

MUHI 701	Dissertation Ph.D.	3
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MUHI 710	Dissertation Seminar	0
Credit Hours		3
Spring		
MUHI 701	Dissertation Ph.D.	3
MUHI 710	Dissertation Seminar	0
Credit Hours		3
Total Credit Hours		54