

August 16, 2023

Dear Fellow Bearcats—

Welcome to Willamette! This is just a quick letter from the Music Department outlining the details of our musicianship curriculum here at WU, the musicianship assessment “exam,” and what to expect as a first year student with any kind of interest in furthering your music theory studies in college.

Musicianship courses—which combine study in aural and written music theory—are required of all students wishing to major or minor in music. We also strongly recommend these classes for those of you who simply wish to improve your knowledge and skills in these areas, regardless of your intended major or minor.

The Musicianship Assessment, which consists of a short “exam” covering basic written and aural music theory (offered Saturday morning, August 26, at 10 am) is designed to tell us the following:

you’re ready for Musicianship I (MUSC 161), offered Spring 2024; or
Fundamentals of Music Literacy (MUSC 160), offered both Fall and Spring 2023-24, is a better fit for you at this time.

If you have significant experience with music theory via private lessons, or have successfully completed music theory or aural skills courses at the AP, IB, or college level, please arrange an appointment with Prof. Miley (following the assessment) in order to determine a suitable course placement in the musicianship sequence. Occasionally, students with substantial prior music theory knowledge are able to leapfrog Musicianship I and enroll directly into Musicianship II as first year students in the fall semester.

Important note: the musicianship assessment will be graded immediately upon completion and we will communicate the results to you and your advisor by email that afternoon.

MUSIC THEORY COURSES:

Fundamentals of Music Literacy (MUSC 160, 4 credits) is offered both fall and spring semesters (typically MWF from 10:50 – 11:50 am)

Musicianship I (MUSC 161, 4 credits) + Musicianship I Lab (MUSC 161Y, 1 credit) is offered spring semester only.

Rhythm Workshop (MUSE 160x, 1 credit) is offered each year during the fall semester and is *required* for both the major and minor (and some of the most fun you’ll have in a required course in any major or minor, guaranteed). Best to take this class as early during your time at Willamette as your schedule allows, but if you have a scheduling conflict this year, it’s possible to take this course as a sophomore instead.

I am available to meet with you to answer any questions that may arise. If you would like to meet in person, just email or call to arrange a time. Looking forward to working with you!

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