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Robin Attas

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Teaching What We Do and How We Do It: Using a Miniconference Assignment to Dig Deep into Musical Analysis

BY ROBIN ATTAS

From their earliest encounters with music analysis, I want students in my undergraduate music theory courses to understand, experience, and enact that which is truly fascinating about the discipline of music theory. Students still practice the skills and learn the concepts typical of the undergraduate music theory core, but they also ponder why they like a particular piece of music or a particular genre and develop the ability to communicate their ideas and opinions using technical vocabulary, thorough arguments, and appropriate evidence drawn from the musical text. Students thus learn the value of music theory's modes of thinking in their lives as musicians and in their lives beyond music. I am well aware that my students' career aspirations rarely include the profession of music theory, but instead are focused on popular music industry positions, grade school teaching, and performance and composition in pop, jazz, and art music traditions. Many students at my liberal arts institution take music classes simply out of curiosity, with no intention of pursuing a career in the field. I want my students to experience the full breadth of music theory's professional practices—not to encourage them to pursue an alternative career path, but as a way to develop transferrable skills in writing and critical thinking alongside music theory's discipline-specific content and skills.

Prose writing in the discipline of music theory offers a way to achieve these aims. Advocates of the "writing in the discipline" movement suggest that writing captures a particular discipline's "way of knowing" and that teaching disciplinary writing can teach disciplinary thinking as well.¹ It follows that teaching students how to write like music theorists should help them learn how to think like music theorists, too. Numerous texts provide resources for teaching

I am grateful for the feedback and guidance of Paula Rosinski, Omri Shimron, Lynn Beck, Paul Anderson, and Rosie Ruzzi at various stages of this project.

¹ Michael Carter, "Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Writing in the Disciplines," *College Composition and Communication* 58, no. 3 (2007): 385–418.

writing in general.² In music theory, several scholars advocate for writing as an important part of the curriculum, recommending activities such as informal papers, reflective learning journals, and end-of-class writing-to-learn exercises.³ These scholars reinforce that writing can complement and deepen traditional pedagogical techniques in the music theory classroom.

My own commitment to prose writing in the undergraduate music theory core led to a curricular redesign of my institution's four-semester model in order to integrate and scaffold prose writing throughout the core. My primary goals for the curricular redesign were the following: (1) to design writing assignments that would give students an introduction to disciplinary research in music theory, (2) to prepare students for upper-level undergraduate courses that require original research and essays, (3) to follow best practices of writing pedagogy in order to make the assignments interesting, engaging, and meaningful for students and faculty alike, and (4) to ensure that the inclusion of writing did not increase my workload nor reduce my students' abilities in more traditional music theory activities (part writing, analysis, composition, performance), which I see as equally necessary to their future lives as musicians.

² A notable example is John Bean, *Engaging Ideas*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011).

³ See Jan Miyake, "Weekly (or more) Writing in the Music Theory Classroom," *Engaging Students: Essays in Music Theory Pedagogy* 2 (2014), <http://flipcamp.org/engagingstudents2/essays/miyake2.html>; Lyle Davidson, Larry Scripp, and Alan Fletcher, "Enhancing Sight-Singing Skills through Reflective Writing: A New Approach to the Undergraduate Theory Curriculum," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 9 (1995): 1–30; and Bruce C. Kelley, "Part Writing, Prose Writing: An Investigation of Writing-to-Learn in the Music Theory Classroom," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 13 (1999): 65–87. While Kelley found write-to-learn activities (the use of writing to help students learn concepts) less effective than part writing in his study, his prose writing tasks emphasized concrete facts (e.g., how to spell an augmented sixth chord) rather than open-ended or ambiguous analytical questions. A number of additional strategies for integrating prose writing into music theory teaching are summarized in Sara Bakker and Timothy Chenette, "Writing Across the Music Theory Curriculum," *Engaging Students: Essays in Music Theory Pedagogy* 2 (2014), <http://flipcamp.org/engagingstudents2/essays/bakkerchenette.html>; and in Deron L. McGee, "The Power of Prose: Writing in the Undergraduate Music Theory Curriculum," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 7 (1993): 85–104.

Several aspects of my institution made a writing-focused curricular redesign a relatively straightforward process. I teach at a liberal arts institution where class sizes are small. A campus-wide Writing Excellence Initiative and a strong Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning provide excellent support for faculty interested in writing pedagogy. My department is not a professional school or conservatory, which allows for more curricular flexibility. Within my department, I coordinate the music theory area, and developing course content falls within my responsibilities. Faculty in my department have been supportive of my work, both because of the campus emphasis on writing and because upper-level courses that use the core theory sequence as a foundation also require students to write research papers. While I have these advantages, it is worth noting that many scholars have described the ease with which prose writing can be integrated into music theory courses taught in a variety of institutions and programs.⁴

My curricular design focuses on the integration of writing assignments with learning goals for music theory and ensures that writing tasks build on previous work within and across semesters. In all writing activities, I use documented best practices in writing pedagogy, including required multiple student revisions, frequent and early instructor feedback, peer review, and student choice of topic. Students write informally throughout all four semesters of the core. For example, I ask students to write regularly in class, including summaries of concepts and questions to follow up on with tutors or me. For analysis assignments throughout all four semesters, I ask students to explain musically ambiguous passages or express opinions in informal short paragraphs. Students also write formally throughout the core. In the first two semesters, students complete formal “Recital Responses,” which require that they attend concerts and then write in response to specific prompts that focus on the analysis of particular musical features and their impact on the listening experience. In the third semester, students write one-page “Writing for Analysis” assignments, in which they develop an analytical argument about a piece of music or collection of short excerpts. In this article, I will discuss in detail the innovative culminating analysis project that I designed for the

⁴ McGee, “The Power of Prose,” offers the most comprehensive argument, but this is demonstrated to varying degrees by all of the authors in footnote 3.

fourth and final semester of the core music theory curriculum, both to demonstrate how writing assignments can be deeply and meaningfully integrated within a semester, and to provide a specific example of how prose writing can facilitate deep student learning in music theory and analysis.

Since the fourth semester core course is the last in the core music theory sequence at my institution, I focus writing activities around a capstone assignment comprising a semester-long multipart analysis project that culminates with a public presentation at a “miniconference,” as outlined in Table 1.

Assignment	Grade Weight	Due Date	Description
Guided Analysis	5%	last class before midterm break	Students complete a guided analysis of one of four pre-selected pieces. Number of students for each piece is capped. At least one class period devoted to discussion of the analyses in order to stimulate research questions.
Abstract	5%	one month after guided analysis	Maximum 250-word abstract in scholarly style. Rough outlines and first draft sent to professor and peers for review. Final version reviewed by peers to suggest directions for final presentation.
Presentation	10%	three weeks after abstract	Ten-minute presentation with five-minute question period. Drafts of presentation discussed in class. Student’s grade includes feedback from both professor and peers.
Written Paper	5%	at final exam	Presentation converted to written paper, with more formal language, appropriate citations, and labeling of examples. Papers used as models for subsequent students.

Table 1. Components of the miniconference project

I use a high-stakes multipart writing project because it connects to several goals for the undergraduate core theory sequence as a whole and specifically for the final semester. As introduced in the smaller assignments during the previous semesters, in this culminating project students experience first hand what it means to develop an original piece of research in the field of music theory.⁵ Music theory’s professional practices provide specific pedagogical benefits: this assignment serves as the culmination of my aim to develop students’ critical thinking abilities through

⁵ I also draw inspiration here from Lee S. Shulman’s advocacy for the use of “signature pedagogies” that reflect professional practices in a particular field. See Lee S. Shulman, “Signature Pedagogies in the Professions,” *Daedalus* 134, no. 3 (2005): 52–59.

their use of evidence and argument, and helps students develop the skills required to write research papers in upper-level music courses. The miniconference project immerses students in a long-term analytical engagement with a single piece of music, or as Brian Alegant writes, it encourages students to “scuba dive” rather than “snorkel.”⁶ In addition to deep musical engagement, a long-term analysis project allows for a synthesis of course content both within and across the semesters. The miniconference itself is also an example of an authentic assignment with public accountability, which typically leads to increased student engagement and valuing of the assignment itself.⁷ While students might not ever present a research paper again, they will be able to transfer the skills learned through this process to other sorts of authentic writing, whether in music (grant applications, program notes, public lectures, etc.) or outside of it.

To begin the project, I create a list of four or five pieces that are a good fit with students’ abilities and the course content, which focuses on chromatic harmony, meter, and text–music connections. Since my classes feature a mix of pop-industry- and art-music-oriented students, I focus on one Lied composer and one pop singer-songwriter each year. I also emphasize gender parity by selecting one male and one female composer. In past years, pairings have included Robert Schumann and Joni Mitchell, and Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Bob Dylan. While students choose their own piece from the list, a maximum of one-quarter of the class is

⁶ Brian Alegant, “On ‘Scuba Diving,’ or the Advantages of a Less-is-More Approach,” *Engaging Students: Essays in Music Pedagogy* 2 (2014), <http://flipcamp.org/engagingstudents2/essays/alegant.html>.

⁷ Authentic assignments are not limited to writing assignments; they can simply be any “real-world” practice that we hope our students will be able to do after they finish our courses. For more on authentic assignments in general, see Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 2nd ed. (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2006). Some examples of authentic assignments in music theory teaching can be found in Cynthia Gonzalez, “A Christmas Eve Music Theory Emergency: A Call for Authentic Learning,” *South Central Music Bulletin* 4, no. 1 (2005): 20–22; Anna Gawboy, “On Standards and Assessment,” *Engaging Students: Essays in Music Pedagogy* 1 (2013), <http://flipcamp.org/engagingstudents/gawboy.html>; and Jeffrey A. Martin, “Toward Authentic Electronic Music in the Curriculum: Connecting Teaching to Current Compositional Practices,” *International Journal of Music Education* 30, no. 2 (May 2012): 120–32.

allowed to choose any particular piece. This ensures that the final conference is sufficiently varied, and reduces the possibility of plagiarism. Scores, transcriptions, and recordings are posted for the class on the course website.⁸

Guided Analysis Assignment

As the first stage of your research, you will complete the following tasks.

1. Harmony and Voice Leading

Lied: Identify the key or mode and complete a Roman numeral analysis and contextual analysis of your selected piece. Consider things like applied chords, chromatic harmonies (Aug. 6, mixture, Neapolitan 6ths), and modulation.

Pop song: Identify the key and complete a Roman numeral analysis. Then, consider chord function as similar to, or different from, the Classical 'basic phrase' you've studied. For example, is a IV chord still a predominant function? Is V the only dominant harmony?

Both: Examine how the melody interacts with the harmony. What type of motion is created (contrary, similar, parallel, oblique)? What scale degrees are used most often? What scale degrees are used at cadences?

Write a paragraph describing *one* aspect of the harmony and voice leading that you find interesting, challenging, or unique. Describe the feature using your analysis, and then describe your reaction to it.

2. Rhythm, Meter, Phrase Rhythm

a) Identify those musical features that create accents to support the notated time signature. Identify those musical features that create accents to support other meters not indicated by the time signature. Write a paragraph about one instance in particular (perhaps a bar or two) where you think any conflict is particularly apparent. Explain how the conflict is created, and the effect you think it has.

b) Complete a phrase analysis of the piece, identifying all phrases and cadences, and classifying them according to type (sentence, period, open, closed) if you can. Write a paragraph describing *one* aspect of the phrase rhythm. Describe the feature referring to your analysis, and then discuss your reaction to it.

3. Form

Identify the musical form of your selected piece. Consider both large-scale form and smaller (phrase-level) formal structures. What repeats? What changes? How often? Draw a form diagram to represent the large-scale and smaller-scale structure of the piece.

Write a paragraph describing one aspect of the form that you find interesting. Describe the form using clear terminology and referring to your analysis. Then, explain your reaction.

Example 1. Guided Analysis assignment (*continued next page*)

⁸ Since accurate pop music scores are rare, I typically spend a lot of preparation time transcribing the pop pieces. I find this valuable: it keeps my aural skills sharp and opens me to new repertoire and analytical ideas.

For the first part of this culminating project, students select a piece from the list and then have two months (the first half of the course) to complete a “Guided Analysis” assignment that requires them to provide a full analysis of their piece’s harmony, form, meter,

4. Text

Consider the text as a stand-alone poem. Indicate the rhyme structure of the text. Describe those moments that seem to have a clear meaning. Describe those moments that seem to have more ambiguous or multiple meanings.

Next, write a paragraph summarizing the meaning of the text. Make sure to address the possibility for multiple meanings.

5. Other musical features of interest

Write a paragraph (supported with annotations on the score as necessary) discussing one other musical feature of the piece that you find interesting. A list of some possibilities:

timbre	instrumentation
performance style	comparison of different performances
cadence placement	use of repetition
motivic structure	production choices

6. What’s next?

What questions does all this work raise in your mind? Are there areas you’re still confused about or that you want to return to? Particularly interesting or innovative passages you’d like to explore further?

Write down three research questions: things you’d like to investigate further. For instance: “Why does the pop singer-songwriter end -ing words with just -in’?” or “Why is a clear musical motive stated in mm. 1–2, but then not returned to until the end of the piece?” Be as specific as you can.

What you should bring to class and submit:

- A copy of the score that identifies all harmonies, key(s), and modulations
- Markings on the score that identify areas of interest in terms of rhythm/meter/harmony, labeled with appropriate terminology
- A form diagram (does not need to be in the format the textbook uses: feel free to be creative about how you represent the form, but make sure to explain how your diagram works)
- Paragraphs (typed, double-spaced, comprehensible) on all requested topics
- Three questions or areas for further inquiry that you are now pondering as potential research paper topics

Example 1. Guided Analysis assignment (continued)

and text structure and meaning. A sample template is shown in Example 1. In addition to ensuring that the basic analysis of the piece is completed, this assignment guides the students toward choosing a research question and defining an original thesis. Students have practiced these skills in smaller assignments

in previous semesters, but since this is a more comprehensive analysis than those undertaken previously, I ask students to write a paragraph describing one aspect of each musical feature that they find interesting, challenging, or unique in each of the categories that are required as part of the analysis. They also must describe their reaction to that feature (positive, negative, humbled, excited, etc.), which will help them develop their argument later on when they have compiled more evidence. At the end of the assignment, students are prompted to consider their future research more deeply by asking them to list three research questions for further investigation. On this assignment, students practice translating analysis into prose in a low-stakes environment and also begin to narrow their focus on a research question. Students might (and in many cases, will) come up with identical analyses, but their own interests and opinions shape their analyses in unique ways—just as they shape professional theorists' analytical endeavors.

While students work on the guided analysis assignment outside of class, I introduce the musical concepts required to complete the analysis (topics in chromatic harmony and voice leading, meter, and form) in class. I continue to assign short, low-stakes writing activities similar to those assigned in earlier semesters. Students work towards mastery of the new content, and continue to practice analytical writing and the synthesis of ideas in prose.

The guided analysis assignment is due the last class before the midterm break. Students bring their analyses to class, and the entire class period is dedicated to peer-to-peer and peer-to-professor discussion of their work.⁹ Those who have analyzed the same piece share their work with each other and discover points of commonality and divergence in their analytical details and interpretation. Students discuss possible thesis statements with each other and with me, and enthusiastically help their peers to fine-tune their ideas. In this way, I am not only modeling a collaborative learning environment, but I am also presenting an opportunity for students to engage in an informed music-analytical discussion with peers.

Over the midterm break, I review the submitted guided analysis assignments, looking for errors or points of confusion as well as for ideas about which the student appears to be particularly enthusiastic. This grading takes about the same amount of time as a

⁹ At my institution, class periods for music theory are one hundred minutes; instructors with shorter class periods might need more class periods for this portion.

typical analysis assignment would, but it is much more interesting, since I read students' opinions, ideas, and interests alongside their analyses. After the break, I schedule short individual conferences with students (five to ten minutes each, held during my office hours) to discuss their submitted work and potential directions for the rest of the project. For many students, this is the first time they have been able to discuss their research interests in music with a faculty member, and I find these conferences to be some of my favorite teaching moments of the semester. One week after their individual meetings, students are required to submit a thesis statement and a presentation outline. While these do not receive a formal grade, they provide another opportunity for me to check in with students as they develop their ideas. If time permits, I devote class time to short peer review and feedback activities related to their thesis statements.

At this point in the semester, the content in class shifts from the study of theoretical concepts in isolation to hands-on practical analysis. Short writing prompts continue in class, and student assignments continue to include both analysis of complete pieces and low-stakes writing. More class time is spent discussing models of good disciplinary thinking, presenting, and writing. Finding materials appropriate for second-year undergraduate students is a challenge, but not impossible. I present a ten-minute formal analysis focused on text–music connections in a pop song, and I often invite colleagues at other institutions to give similar presentations via video chat software.¹⁰ I sometimes require students to read and summarize short samples of analytical writing, although finding appropriate examples is more challenging.¹¹ However, since the written paper is weighted less than the presentation in the final grade, oral communication models are of greater pedagogical importance. With each model, whether written or oral, I lead the class to consider both content and structure as well as non-text elements (e.g., digital slides, tone of voice, and diagrams and examples) that help or hinder the audience's understanding of the argument.

¹⁰ Occasionally, appropriate video lectures can also be found online, such as Harald Krebs, "The Influence of Clara Schumann's Lieder on Declamation in Robert Schumann's Late Songs," *SMT-V* 2, no. 1 (February 2016), <https://vimeo.com/150344298>.

¹¹ I have successfully used excerpts from Deborah Stein, ed., *Engaging Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) and Steven G. Laitz, *The Complete Musician*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

The students' next graded task in the miniconference project is to write a 250-word abstract modeled after professional conference abstracts. Example 2 provides a sample grading rubric for this assignment.

Abstract Assignment Grading Rubric

Minimum Threshold:
If the abstract does not meet this minimum standard, a failing grade will be assigned.

- No more than 250 words and no less than 240 (include a word count)
- Formatting: 1.5 spacing, title, no more than one or two paragraphs
- Citations: if used, cited appropriately
- Comprehensible (if I can't understand it, I can't grade it)

Average Threshold:
If the answers to all of these questions are "yes," a grade of C or better is possible. If the answers to one or more questions is "no," a lower grade will be assigned.

- Does the abstract have a thesis statement?
- Does the abstract cite at least one specific musical example from the song as evidence in support of the thesis statement?
- Does the abstract state the implications of the research (i.e., why is this useful)?
- Are the ideas in the abstract organized logically?
- Is the writing mostly polished (very few spelling / grammar / word choice issues) and in present tense?

Going Above and Beyond:
If all of the above criteria are met, abstracts can qualify for a B or A grade by meeting some of the following criteria.

- Does the abstract have a clear and original thesis statement?
- Does the abstract contextualize the research within a larger body of work by including multiple citations?
- Does the abstract have two or more specific examples from the song that support the thesis statement?
- Does the abstract have an argument that flows logically from start to finish?
- Does the abstract use clear, concise, powerful, and complex language?

Not submitting a draft or participating in the peer review process will result in a lowering of your grade by 1/3 of a letter (e.g. A to A-, D- to F).

Example 2. Abstract assignment grading rubric

Finding appropriate model abstracts for students is more straightforward than finding model written papers or oral presentations. I provide students with five abstracts that are drawn from recent Society for Music Theory conference programs and selected for their readability, diversity of musical genre, and variety of organizational strategies. In small groups in class, students discuss the formal structure of each abstract and then share their findings with the whole class. Students leave class with a sense of the basic features of abstracts in the discipline of music theory and a few possible organizational models.

Following best practices for writing instruction, I require students to submit a draft of their abstract for feedback from me at least a week before the final version is due. Once the final version is submitted, I use student peer review sessions to stimulate further thinking about the research presentation. In years when there are multiple sections of the class, I ask students to complete blind reviews of the other section's abstracts by providing both a ranking and a justification using the categories laid out in the abstract grading rubric. If blind review is not feasible, I ask students to read each other's abstracts with the aim of providing constructive comments that will focus the analyst's work toward the final presentation and paper. Regardless of the scenario, I find that my main teaching problem in this class period is containing students' seemingly boundless ability to constructively criticize their peers' analytical work rather than having to painstakingly draw out student participation.

During classes held between the submission of the abstract and the final presentations, some time is dedicated to developing the students' presentations with their peers and the professor. I also continue to give model analytical presentations to deepen student understanding of analytical concepts and the structure of formal arguments, but at this point I decrease other homework assignments to give students time to complete their presentations.

A week before the end of the semester, two class periods are devoted to the miniconference itself, in which students give ten-minute research presentations followed by five-minute question periods. Students are encouraged to invite friends to fill out the audience, and I always advertise the event to faculty inside and outside the department. Students rise to the challenge of a public presentation: a nervous tension fills the room, formal attire appears after months of pajama pants, and tough questions are posed and ably answered. Audience feedback is included as a portion

of the final presentation grade, and there is the potential for such feedback to impact my own assessment of the presentation by a small percentage of the total grade. A full rubric (using a different style from the previous rubric) is shown in Example 3.

On the day of the final exam, students submit their presentation text as a paper, with any visuals or handouts from the presentation converted to in-text examples. The learning outcomes of the miniconference project have mostly been met at this point; the final written paper is an added bonus. As indicated in the written paper grading rubric in Example 4, the main goal for the final paper is not for students to learn to convert the oral presentation into a formal “professional” music theory paper, but to learn to integrate musical examples into a written document and label them appropriately. A secondary goal is for students to learn to use one of the typical citation styles prevalent in music theory, although this is not required. These tasks are valuable for students, as they will be required to do them again in upper-level music classes that require formal research papers.

The miniconference authentic assignment model is not for every music theory class, but it can be easily adapted to suit a variety of circumstances. The topic for the miniconference project could be altered: the analysis of string quartets from a particular time period or geographic location, the analysis of multiple works by a particular composer, or the analysis of world music are all possibilities. I use the miniconference project as the capstone of the four-semester core theory sequence because these are the courses I teach, and because most students at my institution end their formal music theory study at this point; however, a miniconference project would be equally appropriate for upper-level undergraduate courses, where smaller class sizes are more typical. Even in a large class, a miniconference could still be feasible if tutorials or other break-out sections are part of the course structure. Graduate teaching assistants could present model analyses, and the miniconference itself could occur in the final week of tutorials rather than during full class meetings. Students might work in groups to prepare posters or lightning talks, encouraging team-based analytical approaches that currently are less common in the field of music theory but are the research norm in many other disciplines.

Attas: Teaching **WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE DO IT** USING A **MINI-CONFERENCE AS A**
MINI-CONFERENCE ASSIGNMENT TO DIG DEEP INTO MUSICAL ANALYSIS

Category	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Average (C)	Poor (D)	Fail (F)
Argument /25 points	The presentation presents a coherent, strong, and original point of view that is complex and interesting.	The presentation presents a coherent, strong, original point of view.	The presentation presents a strong but non-original point of view that is occasionally difficult to follow.	The presentation presents a point of view that is often difficult to follow.	The presentation presents an unclear argument.
Analysis /25 points	The presentation makes specific reference to musical features of the designated piece on many occasions.	The presentation makes specific reference to musical features of the designated piece on at least <i>three</i> occasions.	The presentation makes specific reference to musical features of the designated piece on at least <i>two</i> occasions.	The presentation makes specific reference to musical features of the designated piece on at least <i>one</i> occasion.	The presentation does not make specific reference to musical features of the designated piece.
Evidence /25 points	The presentation clearly supports its argument with compelling evidence from outside sources, specific examples, and lots of detail.	The presentation supports its argument with adequate evidence, examples, and details.	The presentation almost always supports its argument with evidence, examples, and details.	The presentation rarely supports its argument with evidence, examples, and details.	The presentation does not support its argument with specific evidence, examples, and details.
Organization /15 points	The presentation features a clear and compelling overall purpose statement, a concise and engaging introduction and conclusion, and a logical flow of ideas throughout.	The presentation features a clear and compelling overall purpose statement, an introduction and conclusion, and a logical flow of ideas throughout.	The presentation features an overall purpose statement, an introduction and conclusion, for most sentences for most paragraphs, and a relatively logical flow of ideas throughout.	The presentation has a clear overall purpose statement, lacks <i>either</i> an introduction or conclusion, is missing topic sentences for several paragraphs, and has a mostly logical flow of ideas throughout.	The presentation is missing a clear overall purpose statement, lacks <i>either</i> an introduction or conclusion, is missing topic sentences for several paragraphs, and lacks a logical flow of ideas throughout.
Performance /10 points	The presenter uses an engaging voice with varied tone, projects to the back of the room, makes eye contact with the full audience, and uses several appropriate visual and / or aural aids.	The presenter uses an engaging and audible voice, looks at the audience from time to time, and refers to one or two appropriate visual and / or aural aids.	The presenter is audible and makes occasional eye contact with the audience; visual and / or aural aids are sometimes unclear or not used effectively.	The presenter's vocal tone is mostly unvaried and is sometimes inaudible; the presenter rarely makes eye contact with the audience and visual and / or aural aids are often unclear or not used effectively.	The presenter's vocal tone is unvaried and inaudible; the presenter rarely looks at the audience and visual and / or aural aids are unclear or not used.
Peer evaluation adjustment: (+ / - 5 points maximum)					
FINAL GRADE:					

Example 3. Presentation assignment grading rubric

Final Paper Grading Rubric

There are two main goals for this paper:

1. Learn how to include in-text musical examples following scholarly models in music theory and musicology
2. Create a document that you can use in the future and that can serve as a model for future sections of this class

Requirements

Text: Convert your presentation to an essay of about five pages in 1.5 spacing. Make sure your text is comprehensible and aim for a somewhat educated and intellectual audience (e.g., future students of this class).

Citations: If you cite the work of another scholar in your paper, you should use Chicago-style citations and a works cited. You do not need to include in-text citations for the score or recordings of your piece nor include those as part of your works cited.

Examples: You must include at least one in-text example that uses a part of the score/transcription for your piece. The easiest way to do this is as follows:

1. Obtain a PDF of your score (either from <http://www.imslp.org>, or from the course website).
2. Crop the PDF to include only the part you want.
3. Insert the PDF into your text document.
4. Center your image, and separate it from the text with a double space before the image.
5. Immediately below the image, write: "Example [number]. Example Title."
6. Leave another space before continuing with the text.

Here is a sample example, inserted after a paragraph ends.

Ziemlich langsam.

Singstimme.



Pianoforte.

The image shows a musical score for a voice and piano piece. The top staff is for the voice (Singstimme) in treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo marking 'Ziemlich langsam.' is centered above the staff. The bottom two staves are for the piano (Pianoforte) in bass and treble clefs, with the same key signature and time signature. The piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes.

Example 1. Franz Schubert, "Liebesbotschaft" from *Schwanengesang*, m.1

Grading

If you meet all the requirements above, you will get a B. If you go above and beyond in some way (more detail than in presentation, addressing questions and comments from presentation, beautiful scholarly prose, lots of interesting examples, well-argued document, etc.) then you will get an A. If for some reason you don't meet the above requirements, you'll get a lower grade.

Example 4. Written paper assignment grading rubric

Fears that adding writing to music theory courses will take time away from content and increase the instructor's workload are common. While I have never compared the exact amount of time spent grading in courses with and without writing components, I find that the grading I do in theory courses with a writing component is more engaging and interesting for me, and that I manage my time just as effectively as if writing were not included. Moreover, it appears that my writing-centered courses are more effective in achieving higher-level learning goals. When students work on miniconference activities in class, they are more engaged and more interested in the practice of thinking critically about music. In writing exercises generally and in the miniconference project in particular, students demonstrate their deepest and most meaningful commitment to music analysis, and they most fully employ the transferrable skills of critical thinking and argumentative writing that can serve them in any future career path. It is still important to help music theory students develop into musicians who are musically literate, who are fluent in the basics, and who are competent with traditional topics. At the same time, it is important to teach students how to think, talk, and write about their musical analyses. Employing an effective course design over multiple semesters in which prose writing is directly tied to the skills we want students to learn and to the professional practices of music theorists allows the potential drawbacks of this approach to fade as the benefits move to the forefront. By adapting creative and proven strategies appropriate to our discipline, we can have more engaged music theory students and a more relevant curriculum that teaches not only what we do as music theorists, but also how we do it.

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