

SO... YOU WANT TO DO A SENIOR PROJECT in MUSIC?

Senior projects can offer a tremendous learning experience during your senior year. They allow you to engage some aspect of music in an intensive fashion, to conclude your music major at Skidmore with a sophisticated, culminating achievement.

Senior projects benefit from early planning, and you should talk with faculty about possible ideas in your junior year and even perhaps during your sophomore year.

Typically, senior projects fall into one of four categories: recital, thesis, music technology project, or composition project. Later in this document, you will find links to detailed guidelines for proposing each of the four types of projects.

But first, it is important to understand the broad goals and premises behind all senior projects, so that you can begin to explore how to focus your interests into a workable project topic.

WHAT A SENIOR PROJECT IS...

1. A senior project provides a capstone academic experience for the music major.

As such, it should grow naturally and logically out of the kinds of musical repertoire studied within the major and develop directly out of the modes of study and analysis that you have encountered in the music curriculum at Skidmore.

2. Senior projects are supervised academic experiences.

A senior project allows you to work intensively with a supervising faculty member, drawing on the expertise of that professor for guidance throughout the course of the project. For this reason, it is important that you shape a senior

project around a topic and approach that reflects a point of intersection between your personal musical interests, and the interests and expertise of the supervising faculty person. As one of the first steps in devising a focus for a senior project, you are encouraged to talk to a wide range of department faculty, and explore how your interests might benefit from the expertise of any potential supervisor. Although you can pursue a wide range of personal interests in a senior project, the range is not infinitely broad.

3. In a senior project, you build directly on the curricular foundation acquired during the earlier work in the major.

While the department encourages students to explore, through coursework and independent study, new areas of musical study right to the end of the senior year, senior projects are not the place for

acquiring rudimentary skills in a new area of study. A senior project—whether a composition, a music technology project, a recital, or a thesis—should be the culmination of your work in a particular area of concentration, and should reflect a level of sophistication that can only come through building upon previous study in that area from earlier semesters.

Consequently, some types of senior projects list explicit prerequisites to ensure some competence in the area of concentration; some are not so explicit. You are strongly urged to begin planning a senior project in your junior year, or even earlier, talking to faculty and taking appropriate preparatory courses, to ensure that they lay sufficient groundwork for a capstone project.

4. A senior project is a coherent demonstration of the your mastery in a focused area of interest .

AND...WHAT A SENIOR PROJECT IS NOT...

It is not an exploration of some area of music that, however interesting and worthwhile, is not connected to the expertise of the faculty, or to the types of material or the modes of analysis covered within the curriculum

It is not a loosely held-together sampling of diverse interests.

For detailed guidelines for the four categories of Senior Project, link to:

<http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/music/Majoring/Capstone.htm>

Senior Projects come in four broad types: Recital, Thesis, Music Technology Project, & Composition.

Students interested in doing a project should begin planning and doing preliminary work during their Junior year, and be enrolled in the appropriate classes during the fall semester of their Senior year. Early consultation with the dept. Chair & with your intended Capstone Advisor is recommended. A key component for success is connecting with a faculty advisor appropriate for the project, who can help you define your particular interest and identify achievable goals.

Thesis, Music Technology Project, & Composition Project. With the exception of Recitals, written proposals for other types of projects are due using this timetable:

Oct 1 - 100-word concept with advisor's signature of approval

Oct 31 - draft proposal submitted to advisor and Department Chair.

Nov 15 - final proposal to Department Chair by November 15th. This should be a thoughtfully prepared, thorough document outlining the scope of the project.

The faculty will consider proposals at the first faculty meeting in December.

Recitals. Recital planning and preparation with your teacher should begin in the Junior year. If you are considering a recital, you should also contact the current Head of the Artists-in-Residence.

All recitals given in the senior year will require an audition during the last week of classes of the semester before the recital is to take place. Senior non-jazz recital auditions will be 20 to 25 minutes in length, usually the last Friday morning of the semester. Auditions are normally held between 9 A.M. and 1 P.M. John Nazarenko will schedule senior jazz recital auditions for a separate time, also in early December.

For more details regarding audition requirements, please consult the Performance Handbook.

<http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/music/curriculum/Handbook/E-RECITALS.htm>

For classical recitals, link from there to section 2, and for jazz recitals, link to section 5.

Senior Projects & Departmental Honors

Although Senior Projects are a requirement for Departmental Honors, students may also do projects independent of Honors consideration.

Complete information about Departmental Honors can also be found by linking to:

<http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/music/Majoring/Capstone.htm>

Departmental Honors

Departmental honors for senior music majors are recommended on the basis of

1. a **distinguished academic career** as documented through department GPA (3.5 or higher for all work in MP courses; 3.5 or higher for all work in MU courses)

2. a **high level of accomplishment on a department-approved Senior project** (recital, thesis, composition, or music technology project).

3. **faculty recommendation (faculty vote on each individual, following discussion of the strength of the student's qualifications)**

Department approval of a project proposal or recital audition means that the student is a candidate for honors, but is in no sense a guarantee that the student will achieve honors.