Department of Music

INDEPENDENT STUDY AND SENIOR WORK PROPOSAL FORM

To participate in independent study (MUSC 0500) and senior work (MUSC 0704), students must complete a proposal for approval by the faculty of the Department of Music. This is an opportunity to develop an individualized piece of work in a field of interest – music history, composition, theory, ethnomusicology, performance, electronic music. Steps in the process are described below.

Information to Review before Preparing Your Proposal

- Proposals for fall projects are due by the end of April.
- Proposals for winter and spring projects are due the previous fall semester by October 15.
- The music department cannot guarantee that proposals submitted after these deadlines will be considered for approval in time for students to meet the registration deadline.
- You must submit funding proposals and budgets by these times in order to get project approval before registering for classes, and it is your responsibility to apply for funds to cover expenses expected to exceed music department funding.
- You must consult a music faculty project advisor before submitting a proposal. Proposals without faculty advisers will not be considered.
- Independent study and senior work can take many forms, including a recital or concert (30-40 minutes of music), composition (length to be agreed upon with the advisor), research paper (20-30 pages), podcast (length to be agreed upon with the advisor), film (length to be agreed upon with the advisor), video essay (length to be agreed upon with the advisor), thesis (50-100 pages), an EP (4-5 tracks and at least 15 minutes of music), an album (7 or more tracks and at least 30 minutes of music), or other projects that students develop and create with guidance from their music faculty advisors.
- **You *must* accompany 0500 and 0704 creative work with a paper** (10-15 pages for independent study and 15-20 pages for senior work). The paper must include clearly marked sections that discuss the project's background, conceptual framework, relevant literature review, methodology or process, results or findings, significance or contributions, and conclusion(s). The content of each of these sections may vary depending on the project. For instance, your methodology or process section may discuss your methods, approaches, plans, timeline, technical development, challenges and solutions, post-project reflections, etc. Similarly, your results or findings section may discuss your evidence and analyze music or scores, etc. Your positionality, influences, and other pertinent historical or cultural information might be suitable for the background section. The paper's narrative should also include appropriate acknowledgements and a bibliography/reference list.
- You may submit a proposal for individual work, or as a member of a collaborative group (a small performing ensemble, for example).
- You can receive credit for successful completion of MUSC 0500 work as a sophomore, junior, and senior.
- First year students may participate in collaborative projects but cannot receive academic credit.

- You may take more than one independent study, but multiple independent studies in a single semester are not permitted.
- You can register for independent study projects only by approval of the music department faculty.
- Non-majors should take at least two music courses (preferably one 100-level course and one 200-level course) in the department before submitting a proposal for MUSC 0500. You are encouraged to take MUSC 0209 if your project requires composition.
- Joint majors should consider ways in which they can bring together their two areas of interest in a single senior work project and they will need approval from both departments.
- The music department is not currently supporting independent studies between two departments.
- To be eligible for senior work, a grade average of at least B+ in music department courses is required.
- Music majors are not required to do senior work. However, in order to be considered for departmental honors, they must complete senior work with at least a B+.
- You may propose one- or two-semester senior work projects, but you are encouraged to spend a full year developing your ideas.
- An independent study cannot fulfill a performance credit.

Steps in Preparing Your Project Proposal

- To begin, you must secure agreement from a music faculty member to be your advisor; they will provide guidance for the duration of your proposed project and evaluate it. *These meetings should occur within the first four weeks of the semester before your proposed project (e.g. if you intend to submit a proposal for 500 work to be conducted during the spring semester, you should meet with a faculty member within the first four weeks of the fall semester).*
- Prepare your proposal (see "Department of Music Checklist" section).
- Meet with your advisor to discuss your project ideas and review your proposal.
- The advisor will have to approve the proposal before you submit it to the music department for review.
- Communicate in advance with all collaborators (fellow students, professional accompanists, and technical staff) about schedules, fees, and other provisions. If you plan a performance, it is recommended that you ask an affiliate artist music instructor (of voice or instrument you intend to perform) to serve as a secondary advisor/coach. For additional information on how to plan a performance, see "Steps to Take Once Your Proposal Has Been Approved" section.
- Submit your proposal via the online independent study and senior work proposal form on the music department website for consideration by the music faculty.

Checklist for Independent Study and Senior Work

Your proposal must include the following information:

- Submission date

- Name
- ID#
- Major and minor
- Graduating class
- Phone #
- Email address
- List of music courses taken
- Primary music faculty advisor
- Music faculty advisor signature
- Project working title
- Semester(s)/year in which to do the proposed work (for example, Spring 2025)
- Project narrative
    - Provide a detailed narrative description of your proposed project (1-2 pages, single spaced, 12 pt. font). Be sure to include your reasons for selecting this particular project, preliminary concepts and initial production ideas, a description of the project or performance itself, supporting research you propose to do, and a preliminary bibliography. Your narrative must also include an abstract for the project, a timeline by which you plan to meet objectives (see below), and a proposed final deadline for completion of the work. *You should discuss these elements with your project advisor before submitting the proposal*.
- List of other experiences relevant to the proposed project (***see list of questions in the sample projects and project formats document***).
- Detailed budget
    - If applicable, include a funding request in your proposal. Estimated expenses for your proposed project should be based on research and, if possible, should be negotiated prior to submission of the proposal for departmental approval. For example, if you plan to hire a professional accompanist, negotiate their rate for rehearsals and the performance ahead of time. While not all will apply, consider the following possible expenses when putting together your proposed budget: musician(s)/accompanist(s) (contact music department academic coordinator for additional information on current hourly rate, performance fees, and reimbursable travel expenses); music instruction by affiliate artists (fees are waived for semester); coaching (# of hours, if assisted by an affiliate artist); event program (if atypical, requires extensive design); license/rights; musical score(s) purchase; costumes rental/dry cleaning; props; software; sound mixing/editing costs; professional (other than MAC) recording cost/final copies; translation/transcription; extra services provided by Facilities (set up/break down); apps purchase; equipment rental (if the music department. does not have in inventory); supplies (list); and travel (specify).
    - NOTES: *The music department cannot pay student musicians, and original receipts are required for any reimbursements.*
- Timeline
    - Please specify as much as you are able the approximate milestones in project work such as production schedule, first and second drafts of written pieces, dress rehearsals for performances, final presentation or concert, and submission of

deliverables. Include an approximate completion date for each phase. Projects should be completed and submitted by the last week of classes.

Project Funding

- The music department covers the costs for standard programs, standard performance space (facility charges and staffing, including ushers/crowd control), and production of publicity materials such as posters.
- Maximum music department funding is $350.00 for independent study projects and $425.00 for senior work projects.
- If you expect your project costs to exceed the music department maximum funding, it is up to you to cover the additional expenses.
- Other funding sources include the following: the Center for Careers and Internships; the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Research; and the Undergraduate Research Office. The impact these awards may have on an individual's annual tax returns varies. Contact the tax office for further clarification.

Steps to Take Once Your Proposal Has Been Approved

- Provide a copy of your signed proposal to the music department coordinator.
- Check in regularly to discuss your progress with your faculty advisor; weekly check-ins are mandatory.
- If you plan a performance, coordinating with any other required performers well in advance is key to the success of your event. In addition, if you plan a performance in the Mahaney Arts Center Robison Hall, you must:
    - Check in with the music department coordinator to discuss your event within department scheduling.
    - Contact Christa Clifford in MAC Room 128 (ccliffor@middlebury.edu) to check hall availability to schedule your concert date, time, and dress rehearsal, if needed.
    - Contact Technical Director Mark Christensen (mchriste@middlebury.edu) to discuss your technical and equipment needs (including recording of the event, if desired).
- If you plan to hold your concert elsewhere, you must:
    - Contact the music department coordinator to schedule through Events Management.
    - Coordinate technical needs through Events Management and recording needs through Media Services.
- You are responsible for creating your event publicity poster and posting it on campus, but the music department can assist with photocopies and online publicity for your event, given adequate time. You may work with Printing Services, located on the second floor of the FIC building.
- You are also responsible for creating the printed program for your event.
- Program notes are required, and your advisor will assess these as part of your grade. Notes should show evidence of research and include all information relevant to the performance (composers, dates, etc.), and brief biographical sketches of all performers.

Check with the music department coordinator for examples of format templates and production timelines.
- Upon completion of your project, you must submit two copies of your deliverables to your faculty advisor and the music department academic coordinator.
- All deliverables should be submitted before the end of the final week of classes.

Evaluation

- Your faculty advisor will grade your project, in consultation with other music department faculty and affiliate artist coach, if appropriate

Summary of Independent Study and Senior Work Approval Process

- Meet with your prospective faculty advisor and request them to supervise your project.
- If they agree, they will communicate to you the department approval process and timeline, discuss your draft proposal and any necessary revisions, and verify whether the project requires inclusion of an affiliate artist coach.
- If you will be working with an affiliate artist coach, ensure that they endorse your proposal and that you and your advisor submit a request to the department chair and academic coordinator to determine budget availability and completion of proper contractual paperwork.
- Submit your proposal via the online independent study and senior work proposal form on the music department website.
- Your advisor will review your proposal with the music faculty and inform you if further changes are needed/it has been approved.
- The approved proposal must be signed by your advisor, affiliate artist coach (if involved), and department chair before you commence work.
- The signed proposals will be submitted to the music department academic coordinator for recordkeeping.
- You and your advisor should ensure that you are registered for the appropriate MUSC 0500 or 0704 course in Banner.

Signatures:

Faculty Advisor signature _____Date: _____
Affiliate Artist Coach/Music Instructor signature _____Date: _____
Department Chair signature _____ Date: _____

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