MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Chair, Associate Professor Jonathan Hallstrom  
Professor Steven Saunders; Associate Professors Jonathan Hallstrom and Steven Nuss; Assistant Professors Lily Funahashi and Natalie Zelensky; Visiting Assistant Professor Kathryn Heidemann; Faculty Fellow Jennie Gubner

Requirements for the Major in Music

Music 111, 181, 182, 241, 242, 252 or 262, 281, 282, 341, and 493 or 494; two four-credit electives in music at the 200 level or higher; two semesters of applied lessons (both of which must be taken on the same instrument and for credit) and two semesters of ensemble participation.

The point scale for retention of the major applies to all courses in music. No requirement for the major may be taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Requirements for the Major in Music-Interdisciplinary Computation

Music 111, 181, 182, 282, and 491 or 492 (in collaboration with computer science); one 200-level or higher music elective that has a computational or digital focus; two semesters of applied lessons (both of which must be taken on the same instrument and for credit); Computer Science 151, 231, 251; two of 351, 365, or other approved 300- or 400-level course.

The point scale for retention of the major applies to all courses in music and computer science. No requirement for the major may be taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Requirements for the Minor in Music

Music 111, 181, 182; one semester of music history chosen from Music 241, 242, 252, 341; two four-credit music courses at the 200 level or higher; two semesters of applied lessons (both of which must be taken on the same instrument and for credit), one semester of ensemble participation. The College does not subsidize the cost of lessons for minors. For additional information concerning applied music options, refer to the statement below.

Honors in Music

An honors program is available to students majoring in music who have a 3.25 overall grade point average and a 3.50 average in the major. In addition to fulfilling the requirements for the music major, honors students must take one additional course in music, approved by the department, at the 300 level or above; they must also complete the honors sequence (Music 483, 484) in one of four areas (theory/analysis, history/culture, performance, or composition/theory). During the second semester of the junior year, students seeking admission to the honors program submit a formal proposal outlining their proposed research or creative project to the department for approval.

Applied Music

Private lessons in voice and a variety of instruments are available, with or without academic credit (see Music 091, 191). Music 153, 154, or 181 fulfills the co-requisite for graded credit in Music 191 and 193. Fees for lessons, billed through the College business office, depend upon the number of credits elected; consult the Music Department for specific charges. By electing any applied music, the student incurs a responsibility for the appropriate fee. Students electing Music 091 or 191 or taking extracurricular instruction must consult the applied music coordinator. Individual lessons/times are scheduled in consultation with the appropriate applied music associate.

Instruction in applied music is also available in January and may satisfy a January Program requirement; no academic credit for applied music may be earned in January. Music majors, beginning in the first semester of their sophomore year, are eligible for six semesters of subsidized instruction in applied music (Music 191 for two credits) in the instrument of their choice provided they continue to make satisfactory progress in the major. Majors in good standing are also eligible for an additional four semesters of subsidized instruction on a second instrument; however, the College will not fund more than two instruments per semester. Subsidies are not available for non-credit lessons.

Course Offerings

MU091fjs  Music Lessons: Noncredit or JP  Noncredit instruction in voice and instruments for qualified students. Regular offerings include violin, viola, violoncello, piano, voice, flute, guitar (classical, American traditional, and jazz), and selected brass and woodwind instruments. One 30- or 60-minute lesson weekly in fall and spring; two 45-minute lessons weekly in January. For an application (required) and additional information concerning fees and scheduling, see the Music Department secretary.  Noncredit  FACULTY

MU093fs  Applied Music: Ensemble, Noncredit  Noncredit participation in musical ensembles sponsored by the Music Department. See
MU11s  Introduction to Music  An exploration and celebration of the art of listening. Develops techniques and vocabulary for critical listening, emphasizing student listening to a range of musical works in a variety of styles. Surveys the history of Western art music from the Middle Ages to the present, emphasizing the relationship between music as a historical and cultural artifact and as an object of aesthetic delight. Special attention to the structure of musical works, their place in Western culture and history, and the ways in which sounding music reflects the beliefs and values of those who made (and make) it. No previous musical experience is assumed.  Four credit hours.  A.  SAUNDERS

MU114j  Jazz Improvisation  Basic jazz theory and improvisation, including melody-, scalar-, modal-, and chord-based improvisation.  Introduction to arranging for jazz groups and interactions between soloists and background musicians; jazz style and performance practices. Includes semiprivate instruction and performances in large groups and smaller combos. Listening assignments include jazz greats. Instrumentalists and vocalists welcome.  Prerequisite:  Ability to sing or play major scales.  Three credit hours.  A.  THOMAS

MU116  Introduction to the MIDI Studio  Students will learn basic Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) and digital audio techniques primarily using the Ableton Live software program in the Colby electronic music studio. Topics include sequencing, synthesis, sampling, and audio processing. We will listen to classics of electronic music as well as current works. Each week students will create a piece of electronic music that will be played for the entire class. Final compositions will be played for an audience.  Prerequisite:  Knowledge of basic musical concepts such as pitch, rhythm, and time signature is assumed.  Three credit hours.  A.  THOMAS

MU118j  African Music  An introduction to the music of Africa, an integral and defining aspect of the culture of Africa. Hands-on experience with various instruments (e.g., drums, rattles, bells), as well as singing and dancing, to provide important insights into the cultures of Africa. Various African music themes will be explored through films and recordings. Culminates in a final performance by the class. Nongraded.  Three credit hours.  A.  HEIDEMANN

MU120f  The Voice: Iconic Popular Vocalists  Popular music is full of unique voices that are virtuosic, deeply expressive, invite feelings of camaraderie or desire, and represent pressing political and social issues. We explore the music of iconic popular vocalists, including Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, Freddie Mercury, and more. Students develop listening and research skills, assess popular music criticism and scholarly writing, and learn to write clearly and vividly about musical sound. Students write and revise a series of essays on the musical style, historical context, and sociocultural impact of a popular vocalist of their choice.  Four credit hours.  A, W1.  HEIDEMANN

MU121j  Entartete (Degenerate) Musik  "Degenerate Music" was the term Nazis applied to any music influenced by jazz, the avant-garde, or written by composers of Jewish descent. This music was banned, its composers driven into exile and/or murdered in concentration camps, creating a lost generation that altered the direction of 20th-century musical development. Now there is a worldwide effort to find a historical place for these artists, and this course contributes to that effort. Topics include German anti-Semitism, anti-Semitic thought in works of Wagner, Nazi racial laws targeting Jewish musicians, official agencies and cultural policies, performers and composers as victims and survivors.  Three credit hours.  A, I.  SILVER

MU122j  Israeli Pop Music  Listed as Religious Studies 152.  Three credit hours.  A.  FREIDENREICH

MU153fs  Introduction to Music Theory through Composition  An introduction to the fundamental elements of music theory through analysis and composition. Students will learn to compose pieces in a variety of styles by effectively manipulating rhythm, intervals, scales and keys, melody, harmony, and form. Primarily for students without extensive musical training. May be taken as preparation for Music 181. Students cannot receive credit for both this course and Music 154.  Four credit hours.  A.  HALLSTROM

MU154  Introduction to Music Theory through Improvisation  An introduction to the fundamental elements of music theory through improvisation. Students will learn about rhythm, intervals, scales, keys, melody, and harmony and how to use them in jazz improvisation. While designed for students without extensive musical training, does require basic music reading skills. May be taken as preparation for Music 181. Credit cannot be earned for both this course and Music 153.  Prerequisite:  Ability to read music.  Four credit hours.  A.

MU172  Music and Gender  Can musical sounds be gendered? What is the relationship between sound, sex, and the body? What elements of a musical performance—pitch, timbre, lyrics, instruments, staging, audience reaction—can inform, reflect, or construct modes of gender, and how, in turn, can this space be used as a subversive realm? How do these constructions vary across time and cultures? Exploring such questions through the lens of Western classical, pop, and world musics provides students with a starting point for considering the rich and often contested intersection between music and gender.  Four credit hours.  A.

MU181f  Music Theory I  The first course in a sequence exploring the language of music. Just as learning a foreign language involves
mastering a variety of skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), becoming conversant in music requires the ability to hear, noteate, analyze, compose, and perform. Assures that students are fluent in the elements and structure of music, including intervals, scales, triads, and seventh chords. Central attention to species counterpoint, all diatonic harmonies, and four-part writing. Introduction to composing in a variety of styles and to ear training and sight singing. Primarily for students with some prior musical training (see also Music 153 and 154).

Four credit hours. A. NUSS, SAUNDERS

MU182s Music Theory II A continuation of Music Theory I that further refines students’ command of diatonic harmony and counterpoint and introduces modulation and other important aspects of chromatic harmony. Includes regular work in ear training, studies of musical form, composition, and keyboard harmony. Primarily for music majors and others with prior training in music. Prerequisite: Music 181. Four credit hours. NUSS

MU191fs Music Lessons: Credit Instruction in voice and instruments for qualified students. Regular offerings include violin, viola, violoncello, piano, voice, flute, guitar (classical, American traditional, and jazz), selected brass and woodwind instruments, and African drums. The student’s performance in the course will be evaluated by faculty jury at the end of the semester. For additional information concerning fees, scheduling, and related matters, see the Music Department secretary. May be repeated for additional credit. Prerequisite: Music 153, 154, or 181 (may be taken concurrently). One or two credit hours. FACULTY

MU193fs Applied Music: Ensemble for Credit Credit for participation in musical ensembles sponsored by the Music Department. In addition to the large ensembles listed below, the department frequently offers a flute choir, a guitar ensemble, a trumpet choir, a string ensemble (master class), and small chamber music groups. Interested students should consult the department for additional information before registering. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Music 153, 154, or 181 for graded credit (may be taken concurrently). One credit hour.

African Drumming. Performance of music from various African cultures, with hands-on experience with various instruments, including drums, rattles, and bells, and exposure to several traditions of African singing and dancing. The group presents concerts on campus and throughout the state of Maine. BENISSAN

Chamber Choir. A select vocal ensemble whose repertoire includes both unaccompanied works by 20th- and 21st-century composers and chamber works for chorus and instruments. Joins the chorale for tours and concerts, as well as touring and performing independently. DOSMAN

Chorale. Colby’s largest choral ensemble, its repertoire includes unaccompanied works of the 18th through 20th centuries by European and American composers as well as major works for chorus and orchestra. Tours and exchange concerts are arranged. Enrollment, open to all students, is through auditions early in the fall semester. DOSMAN

Collegium Musicum. Early music ensembles, performing music from before 1750. Groups include the Collegium Chamber Singers (a small choir of about 16 performers) and the Collegium Chamber Players (an instrumental ensemble). Instrumentalists (strings and winds) should contact instructor; enrollment for singers is through auditions early in the fall semester. INSTRUCTOR

Jazz Band. Presents a standard big band setup, performing swing, Latin jazz, funk, soul, R & B, and bebop styles for concert, tour, and college functions. Brass, wind, and percussion players by audition. THOMAS

Orchestra. A symphony orchestra composed of students, local amateurs, and professionals. Performs four concerts per year of works spanning the entire range of major symphonic literature. Noncompetitive auditions are held at the beginning of each semester. INSTRUCTOR

Wind Ensemble. Each semester the ensemble presents a concert of works drawn from standard literature, symphonic works, movie music, marches, etc. Open to all interested brass, wind, and percussion players without audition. THOMAS One credit hour. FACULTY

MU198s Deconstructing Popular Music What makes a good song or track? We address this question by exploring the sonic components of popular music in a variety of genres. Topics include texture and timbre, basic recording and production, lyrics, melodies, fundamental harmonies, rhythm and groove, song form, and style. Involves regular in-class discussion, guided listening, and analysis projects using audio annotation software, and a hands-on introduction to basic compositional procedures. No prior musical training required.

Four credit hours. A. HEIDEMANN

MU213s Introduction to Computer Music Can music be expressed in quantifiable terms and still retain the non-quantifiable magic that affects us in such powerful ways? We attempt to answer this question by examining the ways composers of computer music have used synthesis techniques, top-down design, algorithmic music generation, and real-time interactivity to create musically meaningful output. Students learn how to describe musical processes as algorithms and to use those algorithms to assist in creating their own compositions. Composition and sound design are explored using the graphical music programming language Max and other audio manipulation and sequencing applications. Four credit hours. A. HALLSTROM

[MU222] Maine’s Musical Soundscapes: Ethnography of Maine What are the musical cultures outside of Colby and what are the communities making this music? We will engage this question through direct interaction and observation of Maine’s ethnic and racial
Students will learn ethnographic field methods and take field trips to conduct interviews at sites that make up the rich tapestry of Maine's soundscape, including Waterville establishments and Penobscot, Lebanese, Somali, Russian, and French-Canadian communities (the group under study will rotate on a yearly basis). Students will present their findings in the form of a documentary film. 

Four credit hours. A.

[MU234] From Rockabilly Kings to Lady Gaga: A History of Rock 'n' Roll A survey of rock music, from its roots in country and blues to the postmodern eclecticism of Lady Gaga. Rock music will be considered in relation to race, sex, gender, drugs, technology, marketing, and politics to better understand its powerful position in constructing, challenging, and reinforcing various positions of identity. Students will learn to discuss the musical characteristics of a work, identify its genre and era of composition, and contextualize it within a broader framework of American culture and politics. Four credit hours. A.

MU241f Music History I: Middle Ages to the Early Baroque Period An exploration of Western art music from c. 800 to c. 1700, including principal genres from the Middle Ages (chant, organum, motet, chanson), Renaissance (mass, motet, madrigal), and the 17th century (opera, instrumental music). Focuses on compositional concepts and processes, historical music theories, institutional patronage, and the connections between music and such areas as theology, philosophy, and the visual arts. Students develop analytical and writing skills through listening, writing, and analysis. Prerequisite: Music 111 and 181. Four credit hours. HEIDEMANN

MU242s Music History II: High Baroque to the Dawn of Romanticism Focuses on music of the High Baroque, Classical, and early Romantic periods, including works of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, and Schumann. Students develop critical, analytical, and listening tools for dealing with these repertoires and hone their bibliographic, oral, and written skills. Theoretical issues include the relationship between musical structure and cultural context, music's relationship to literature and the visual arts, tonality, music and drama, and aesthetics. Prerequisite: Music 111 and 181. Four credit hours. SAUNDERS

MU252f Introduction to World Music Examines a range of classical, traditional, and contemporary musics from areas as diverse as India, West Africa, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. Each unit engages a broader sociocultural issue to enable students to think more deeply and critically about music, with students exploring such topics as music and Apartheid, the Arab Spring, and the appropriation of "world" music by Western musicians. Students perform music in class, including the basics of West African drumming patterns, salsa dance steps, and singing Bulgarian folk songs. A number of guests will perform. No prior musical experience necessary. Open to first-year students. Four credit hours. A, I. GUBNER

MU254f Music of Meditation Study of music, ritual, and meditation in Rinzai Zen Buddhism, monastic Roman Catholicism, and Hinduism. Attention to ways communication and apprehension of sacred texts are affected by unique musical and meditative practices and ritual forms. Units include (1) discussion of writings by Japanese, Indian, and Western philosophers, musicians, and theorists of language; (2) instruction in the three forms of ritual choreography and meditation techniques; (3) chant instruction and performance. Each unit concludes with a required public group performance scheduled outside regular class time. Willingness to engage in original research and participate in group chanting and meditation/contemplation exercises is essential. Four credit hours. A, I. GUBNER

MU262s Music in Life, Music as Culture: Introduction to Ethnomusicology Provides students with a theoretical and methodological introduction to ethnomusicology, a discipline that is rooted in exploring music not merely as an aesthetic object, but as a cultural force that reflects and shapes our everyday lives. Topics include music and medicine, migration, war, ethnicity, sexuality, and spirituality. Topics will be explored through a close reading of seminal texts and an examination of relevant theory. Students will also learn the fundamentals of conducting ethnographic fieldwork through attending a religious ceremony, attending a concert, and scrutinizing the soundscapes of Colby's campus. Four credit hours. A, I. GUBNER

[MU275] Cultured Tough Guys: Samurai Devotion, Music, Poetry, and Art The samurai, known as the warrior class of medieval and early modern Japan, have a long history in the Western imagination. Through internationally famous Japanese warrior movies of the 1950s and 60s, and more modern images of crafty ninjas in video games and Western print and visual media, the samurai are often depicted as one-dimensional automatons ready to fight and die at a moment's notice for their superior's cause. A combination of historical readings and experiential learning activities offers a more refined view of the samurai and their elegant contributions to every aspect of the visual, literary, and musical arts of Japan. Three credit hours. A.

MU281f Music Theory III A continuation of Music Theory II, covering advanced chromatic harmony and modulatory techniques, counterpoint, and tonal analysis. Students will learn principles of Schenkerian analysis, including the concepts of composing-out, structural levels, harmonic degrees (or Stufen), melodic fluency, linear progressions, compound melody, and the middleground transformations. Attention to Schenker's early ideas about melody, harmony, and counterpoint; his development of the idea of the Ursatz or fundamental structure; his analytical and graphing techniques; and recent developments in Schenkerian theory. Prerequisite: Music 182. Four credit hours. SAUNDERS

MU282s Music Theory IV Post-tonal harmony and contemporary analytical techniques. Primarily for music majors. Prerequisite: Music
MU297f  Popular Music in Latin America  Examines recent popular music as a powerful cultural force in Latin America. By listening to music, watching films, and reading case studies, students will learn to think critically about popular music as a form of social life, an economic resource, and a tool for nation and identity building. Topics explored include music as a symbol of nationalism in early Latin American film industries and the transnational flow of dance musics like salsa, cumbia, and tango and their ties to questions of race, class, and globalization. No prior musical experience necessary.  Four credit hours.  A.  GUBNER

MU297Jj  Music, Body, and Mind  Why does music move us? How does music become meaningful to us? Explores how music's meanings arise by investigating the integral role the bodies and minds of listeners, composers, and performers play in musical experience and interpretation. Examines different modes of musical behavior and a wide variety of musical styles and engages with diverse accounts of human-music interactions (encompassing topics such as movement, identity, pain, sex, and disability). Texts draw from the fields of musicology, philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience.  Three credit hours.  A.  HEIDEMANN

MU298As  Popular Song Styles and Songwriting  Broaden your knowledge of popular song styles while building a portfolio of original songs and song ideas. Covers the foundational forms of popular song (Tin Pan Alley, blues, and folk) and related contemporary song types, interspersed with units that focus on the styles of specific songwriters and producers of the past century. Projects include stylistic profiles of a chosen genre and songwriter and a final songwriting portfolio, including lead sheets and/or simple demos.  Prerequisite:  Music 153, 154, or 181.  Four credit hours.  HEIDEMANN

MU298Bs  Experiencing Tango: Tango History/Culture through Performance  An introduction to Argentine tango and tango culture. Students will learn to perform tango music in different ensemble combinations as a means of exploring the rich social, political, and musical histories out of which this complex and dynamic genre evolved. Through discussion and performance, we will trace the genre from its origins in the lower-class port-neighborhoods of Buenos Aires to the world stages of Paris, New York, and Helsinki, and, most recently, to tango's revival as a form of underground youth culture in modern-day Argentina.  Prerequisite:  Permission of the instructor/ability to play an instrument.  Four credit hours.  A.  GUBNER

MU341f  Music History III: Music of the 19th and 20th Centuries  An overview of 19th- and 20th-century music with a focus on the evolution of musical styles and the manner in which they have been impacted by concurrent artistic, cultural, and political events. Students will acquire a fundamental knowledge of those composers considered to have had a significant impact on music from the late 19th century to the present and their position within the larger sociocultural milieu.  Prerequisite:  Music 111 and 182.  Four credit hours.  HALLSTROM

[MU483]  Honors Research I  Substantial original research or completion of a major creative project under faculty supervision, culminating in a written paper and/or a public presentation.  Prerequisite:  3.25 overall grade point average, 3.5 major average at the end of the junior year, and permission of the department.  Three credit hours.

MU491f, 492s  Independent Study  Individual topics in areas where the student has demonstrated the interest and competence necessary for independent work. Primarily for senior music majors.  Prerequisite:  Permission of the department.  One to four credit hours.  FACULTY

MU493s  Seminar: The New York School of Composers and Painters, 1950-1986  In the second half of the 20th century the work of American painters Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, William de Kooning, Philip Guston, and others made New York City the recognized center of the "new and important" in art. An important part of this artistic climate was the extremely close personal and intellectual connection of these artists with a tight-knit group of American composers: John Cage, Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, and Christian Wolff. We examine the historical trends behind America's artistic ascendance at this time and the musical and music-analytical potential of composers who were finding much of their inspiration and technique in the work of contemporary American painting.  Prerequisite:  Music 282.  Four credit hours.  NUSS