

# SENIOR CAPSTONE PROJECT

## University of Pittsburgh, Department of Music

### CONTENTS

Overview and Important First Steps.....	2-3
Recital Option	
Guidelines and Procedures .....	4-5
Application .....	6
Assessment Rubric .....	7
Research Project Option	
Guidelines and Procedures .....	8-9
Application .....	10
Assessment Rubric .....	11-12
Alternate Project Option	
Guidelines and Procedures .....	13
Application .....	14
Assessment Rubric .....	15

### **Undergraduate Track Advisors & Curriculum Committee**

Roger Zahab, Director of Undergraduate Advising	<rzahab@pitt.edu>
Track Advisor: Performance	
Aaron Myers-Brooks	<aab66@pitt.edu>
Track Advisor: Composition	
Jay Arms	<jay.arms@pitt.edu>
Track Advisor: Global & Popular Music	
Yoko Suzuki	<yoko.suzuki@pitt.edu>
Track Advisor: Jazz	
Rika Asai	<rasai@pitt.edu>
Track Advisor: Music & Cultural History	
Susan Rice, Associate Director of Undergraduate Advising	<srice1@pitt.edu>

# SENIOR CAPSTONE PROJECT

## University of Pittsburgh, Department of Music

---

### **Description:**

All Music Majors are required to complete a senior capstone project to solidify the academic knowledge and educational experience acquired while at the University of Pittsburgh. A capstone project is the culmination of what you've learned in the music department.

Your capstone project may take a number of different forms: a performance recital (30 min); the performance of original music; a paper, poster, presentation, or other research product; a podcast; a work of community engagement; the possibilities are endless. In any case, it should be carefully prepared and highly polished.

An honors capstone project is substantial, sophisticated, and innovative. It takes the capstone project a step further by creating new knowledge through research and/or creative practice. In order to pursue an honors capstone project, you must meet the qualifications for Departmental Honors, which are:

- minimum 3.25 cumulative QPA
- minimum 3.50 QPA in music courses
- no grade lower than B+ in any music course

The following documents are intended to clarify the procedures, timeline, expectations, responsibilities, and assessment instruments appropriate to the senior capstone project. Over the course of two semesters, seniors will work in close consultation with a faculty mentor on the capstone project, typically falling into one of three categories:

- a. **Senior Recital**
- b. **Research Paper**
- c. **Alternate Projects** (e.g. the composition and performance of a piece of original music, lecture recital, a community engagement project, paper, poster presentation, podcast, etc.)

### **Project Advisor:**

In your capstone application, you may list faculty members with whom you are interested to work, but there are no guarantees that your preferred faculty advisor will be available to work with you. Faculty advisors must be members of the Core Faculty of the Department of Music.  
(see <[music.pitt.edu/people/core-faculty](http://music.pitt.edu/people/core-faculty)> for that list)

Students are strongly encouraged to get to know Core Faculty members before it is time to choose a Capstone Project Advisor; one excellent way to do this is to take a class with them, if possible.

### **BPhil Projects:**

If you are completing a BPhil in the Honors College, your research thesis on a musical topic may fulfill the capstone requirement for the Department of Music. Please consult with your track advisor in order to have your BPhil project evaluated by the Music Undergraduate Studies Committee to confirm that it will be an acceptable substitute for your music capstone.

**Project Expenses:**

As you envision the final product of your senior capstone project, be sure to keep in mind potential expenses that you could incur in the process. For example, renting an off-campus venue, professionally printing and binding a score or written document, hiring professional musicians, or renting time at a recording studio are all examples of potential expenses for which you may need to budget. We encourage you to plan ahead in order to find the resources you intend to use. We also encourage you to apply for available departmental scholarships the year before you intend to undertake your capstone to possibly offset expenses related to your project. More information regarding departmental scholarships can be found at the Canvas Advising Portal or at the Music Department website.

<http://music.pitt.edu/undergraduate/admissions>

**Milestones:**

Milestones are scheduled during 2 semesters: the Planning semester (typically Fall semester of your senior year) and the Capstone semester (typically Spring semester of your senior year). If you plan to graduate in December, these semesters will shift back a semester.

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Consult track advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss potential topics</li><li>• Determine whether you are eligible for an honors project</li><li>• Begin capstone application</li></ul>	Week 5 of Planning semester
Submit capstone application	Week 7 of Planning semester
Consult faculty advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Determine the format of your final project</li><li>• Determine whether or not you will undertake an honors project</li><li>• Create a plan for next semester – this may involve choosing repertoire and/or developing a research syllabus using the template provided here</li></ul>	Before end of Planning semester
Follow your plan, meeting your milestones, subject to change in consultation with your advisor	Capstone semester

## SENIOR CAPSTONE RECITAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

A recital capstone project provides an opportunity for students whose primary focus is performance to navigate the many organizational, research, and artistic tasks required to present a public concert. The recital project is designed to introduce the norms and behaviors of performance as well as the managerial and administrative requirements of the average working musician.

*Those students who are considering a capstone recital project should first discuss the musical plausibility of the project with their applied teacher before initiating a discussion with a recital advisor. **No student with fewer than four (4) departmental recital performances may apply for the capstone recital option.***

A **Capstone Recital** includes:

- A minimum of 30 minutes of music performed in public
- Repertoire that is appropriate in scope and demonstrates the skills gained from your college education
- All administrative tasks associated with the planning of the recital music be completed by the recitalist (the performance may not occur as a subsection of a previously scheduled Music Department event)

An **Honors Capstone Recital** includes:

- Approximately 45-50 minutes of music
- Repertoire that is appropriate in scope and demonstrates the skills gained from your college education
- All administrative tasks associated with the planning of the recital music be completed by the recitalist (the performance may not occur as a subsection of a previously scheduled Music Department event)
- Formal program notes and/or a research paper associated with the recital repertoire

### **Recital Milestones:**

In collaboration with the applied teacher, you will formulate a proposed recital program, secure an accompanist (if applicable) and negotiate the accompanist fee. The recital repertoire normally demonstrates a mastery of various periods, genres and languages. It is acceptable for recitals to include works that require additional performers, either singers or instrumentalists, provided the following conditions are met:

- You must perform one of the principal parts
- Collaborative works must not exceed 20% of the recital repertoire
- Any other performers must be willing to dedicate the time necessary to ensure a successful recital, including lessons, rehearsals, recital hearing(s), and the dress rehearsal and must meet an acceptable level of performance. Select your collaborating musicians with thoughtfulness and care

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Perform on at least one departmental recital during each of four (4) semesters while enrolled in applied lessons	4 semesters prior to the Capstone semester
Consult applied teacher	Week 3 of Planning semester
Consult track advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss potential recital advisor</li> <li>• Determine whether or not you will undertake an honors recital</li> </ul>	Week 5 of Planning semester
Submit capstone application	Week 7 of Planning semester

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Consult recital advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm the repertoire for your recital and identify any collaborating musicians</li> <li>• Create a rehearsal plan for the recital semester if working with collaborating musicians</li> </ul>	Before the end of Planning semester
Register for MUSIC 1903	Before the end of Planning semester
Schedule the following dates, times and locations with Rob Lynch (RWL32@pitt.edu, MB office #127) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress Rehearsal (no less than 1 week prior to recital date)</li> <li>• Recital (recitals may not be scheduled during the last 3 weeks of the semester)</li> </ul>	Before the end of Planning semester
<i>If you are pursuing an honors capstone recital:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with the recital advisor to determine a schedule for research, draft and revision of original, scholarly program notes</li> </ul>	At least three months prior to the recital date
Schedule and perform a recital hearing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform, in order and with all collaborating musicians, the entire recital program</li> <li>• All musicians must demonstrate appropriate progress toward mastery of the repertoire; developmental and evaluative guidance will be provided by the applied teacher and recital advisor</li> </ul>	No less than one month prior to the recital date
Create the program document in Microsoft Word using the template provided by the recital advisor	No fewer than two weeks prior to the recital date
Schedule and perform a dress rehearsal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recitalist should reserve at least one hour in the performing space</li> <li>• All performing musicians must participate</li> <li>• Applied teacher and recital advisor should be in attendance</li> <li>• Recitalist is responsible for coordinating this date/time with all parties</li> </ul>	No less than one week prior to the recital date

## Capstone Recital Application

Complete this form and submit to the music office.

*Students applying for the Senior Recital must be enrolled in applied lessons on the proposed recital instrument during the recital semester and the semester immediately preceding.*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Applied Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of recital (final decision to be made with your track advisor):

Senior       Honors

Student has performed as a soloist on Departmental Recitals on the following dates:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

List proposed recital repertoire that you have discussed with your applied teacher.

**Include title, composer, and approximate duration of each.**

Identify any collaborating musicians (name and instrument).

If there are any members of the faculty you're particularly interested in working with as recital advisor, please list them here (you may list one or more than one). You are strongly advised to have taken a class with the faculty member(s) you list here.

Will you need a piano?  Yes  No

Will you need an organ?  Yes  No

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH MUSIC DEPARTMENT  
CAPSTONE RECITAL ASSESSMENT**

*Please rate each area using a 10-point scale, with 10 being the superior score. The total number of points possible for a Senior Capstone Recital is 100. The total number of points possible for a Senior Honors Recital is 120 with additional assessment for the program notes or accompanying research paper. All scores will be adjusted to percentages in order to assign a letter grade. Please support your rating with comments for the performer.*

Timeline and Procedures – (10)

*grade:* \_\_\_\_\_

The recital experience serves as an opportunity for students to take primary responsibility for the demonstration of their performing ability; therefore, attention to the organizational groundwork necessary for successful planning and execution of the recital is essential. This portion of the grade serves as a cumulative evaluation of the student's adherence to the overarching timeline and procedures outlined in the Capstone Recital Guidelines.

*Comments:*

Dress Rehearsal – (10)

*grade:* \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation of the recitalist's performance at the dress rehearsal, including stage etiquette

*Comments:*

Recital Performance – (80)

*grade:* \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation of the recitalist's performance, including the following:

Tone Quality & Intonation (10)  
Rhythmic Integrity (10)  
Articulation, Diction (10)  
Dynamics (10)

Technical Accuracy (10)  
Phrasing, Musicality (10)  
Style, Interpretation (10)  
Performance Etiquette, Poise (10)

*Comments:*

*Please evaluate the following for a Senior Honors Recital*

Program Notes/Research Paper – (20)

*grade:* \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation of depth and breadth of research, content and writing style, including outreach to other faculty scholars, evolution of the writing throughout the draft process, and timeliness of submission

*Comments:*

*Total recital grade:* \_\_\_\_\_

## CAPSTONE RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The research paper capstone project provides an in-depth opportunity to explore scholarly writing about music. Scholarly writing includes all the types of writing a working scholar might do, including monographs, articles and opinion pieces in journals, critical reviews, and review essays. The purpose of such writing is to communicate the ideas, theories, methodologies, and research findings of the discipline.

The research paper is a project designed to help you see writing as a tool for thinking and communication. We encourage critical thinking about the readings you encounter and strong writing skills.

A **Capstone Research Paper** includes:

- Approximately 10 pages, double-spaced
- Reference to at least 10 academic sources
- Evidence of your ability to organize and synthesize the information you find

An **Honors Capstone Research Paper** includes:

- Approximately 15 pages, double-spaced
- Reference to at least 10 academic sources
- Independent work and thinking alongside thorough research

### **Research Paper Milestones:**

You should consider the paper an ongoing project that you work on each week. Your project will unfold in several stages, with the following due dates. These stages are designed to facilitate the process of conceiving and writing a research paper, to give you practice in doing what music scholars do, and to allow for frequent feedback.

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Consult track advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss potential topics</li> <li>• Determine whether you are eligible for an honors project</li> <li>• Begin capstone application</li> </ul>	Week 5 of Planning semester
Submit capstone application	Week 7 of Planning semester
Consult faculty advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine whether or not you will undertake an honors project</li> <li>• Create a plan for next semester—this may involve choosing repertoire and/or developing “research syllabus” using the template provided here</li> <li>• Compose an abstract and initial bibliography</li> <li>• Create reading syllabus</li> </ul>	Before the end of Planning semester
Register for MUSIC 1903	Before the end of Planning semester
Revised Abstract	Week 3 of Capstone semester
Outline	Week 6 of Capstone semester
Draft of research paper	Week 11 of Capstone semester
Receive feedback from faculty advisor and incorporate into paper	Weeks 12-13 of Capstone semester
Final version of research paper	Week 14 of Capstone semester



**Reading syllabus template:**

For students completing research-related projects, in consultation with your advisor, please use the following template to create a reading syllabus. During the semester of your project, in addition to meeting milestones, please complete precis for any week that you have assigned yourself readings. The precis column may be checked off by your advisor to show completion.

Reading is not required for milestone weeks – consider planning your syllabus accordingly. Do not schedule reading after week 11, as you may need to use this time for revisions and additions in keeping with faculty feedback.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Precis</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			Revised abstract
<b>4</b>			
<b>5</b>			
<b>6</b>			Outline
<b>7</b>			
<b>8</b>			
<b>9</b>			
<b>10</b>			
<b>11</b>			Draft
<b>12</b>			Discuss feedback from faculty
<b>13</b>			
<b>14</b>			Submit final version of research project that incorporates feedback from faculty

## Capstone Research Paper Application

Complete this form and submit to the music office.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Track Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of project (final decision to be made with your advisor):

Senior       Honors

Summarize here what you have discussed with your track advisor and faculty advisor about your project so far: what topic(s) are you interested in? How are you interested in approaching them (i.e. musical analysis, ethnographic interviews, manuscript study, etc.)?

If there are any members of the faculty you're particularly interested in working with, please list them here (you may list one or more than one). You are strongly advised to have taken a class with the faculty member(s) you list here.

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH MUSIC DEPARTMENT  
RESEARCH PAPER ASSESSMENT**

Rubric for general workflow, worth 30% of Capstone grade:

Planning semester

- Week 5: Timely consultation with faculty advisor in planning semester
- Week 7: Submission of Capstone application
- Create a research plan for next semester
- Compose an abstract and initial bibliography
- Register for MUSIC 1903

Capstone semester

- Week 3: Revised Abstract
- Week 6: Outline
- Week 11: First draft of research paper
- Weeks 12-13: Receive feedback from faculty advisor and incorporate into paper
- Week 14: Final version of research paper

Rubric for the paper, worth 70% of Capstone grade:

Area	Suggested parameters	Weight
Content	<p>Meets minimum page requirement and number of sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Approximately 10 pages, double-spaced</li> <li>o Reference to at least 10 academic sources</li> </ul> <p>Shows a clear and thorough understanding of the subject material. Treats the topic comprehensively and in depth. Are there enough relevant secondary sources? Coherent and insightful summarization.</p> <p>Additional content for Honors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Approximately 15 pages, double-spaced</li> <li>o Reference to at least 10 academic sources</li> <li>o Independent work and thinking alongside thorough research</li> </ul> <p>Is the argument properly situated within the literature? Does the paper represent independent work and thinking?</p>	60
Organization	<p>Is the organization clear, both in the paper as a whole and within each paragraph? Have unnecessary details and redundancies been eliminated?</p>	25
Style	<p>Is the paper enjoyable to read? Does it convey your thoughts efficiently? Are diction, spelling, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, and footnote and bibliographic form correct?</p>	15

Grading scale:

**A. (90-100)** An **A** paper will be excellent in content, organization, and style. The topic will be treated in depth, drawing on a good number of appropriate secondary sources. For Honors level papers, the ideas will be engaging and original and show illuminating insights into the topic and materials being studied. The organization will be clear at all levels. The paper will not include irrelevant material and digressions from the topic. There should be very few distracting errors in style, diction, and mechanics.

**B. (80-89)** A **B** paper will still be quite good, but weaker than an **A** paper in some areas. It may have good ideas but be weakened by problems of organization and style. Or it may be well written and organized but offer fewer and less valuable insights than an **A** paper.

**C. (70-79)** A **C** paper will show a competent understanding and coverage of the assigned topic, but its insights will usually not go beyond the obvious, and there will be weaknesses in two or more areas. A **C** may also be assigned to an inconsistent paper that shows some excellent insights yet fails to tie them into a unified whole.

**\*\*Papers that fall below 70 do not meet the requirements for this project\*\***

**D. (60-69)** A **D** paper has some virtues, but weaknesses in several areas. Examples include a paper with relatively little breadth of coverage, a paper with some good ideas marred by unclear writing and poor organization, or a clearly written paper with superficial ideas that shows a lack of engagement with the topic.

**F. (below 59)** An **F** paper is consistently weak, whether poorly written throughout, lacking insight into the topic or works being studied, or reflecting little thought or effort. Papers that plagiarize, that fabricate information or sources, or that rely excessively on quoting secondary sources will also receive an **F**.

## CAPSTONE ALTERNATE PROJECT GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

An alternate capstone project may take the form of a combination of research and performance or other forms such as the composition and performance/presentation of a piece of original music, lecture recital, a community engagement project, paper, poster presentation, podcast, etc. Students interested in undertaking an alternate project should use the guidelines for recital-based and research-based projects as a model. **The difference between a regular and honors capstone project is at the discretion of your advisor and the undergraduate studies committee.**

### **Alternate Project Milestones:**

Like all capstone projects, by the end of the prior semester, the student should have consulted advisors and established a rough timeline of the project:

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Consult track advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss potential topics</li> <li>• Determine whether you are eligible for an honors project</li> <li>• Begin capstone application</li> </ul>	Week 5 of Planning semester
Submit capstone application	Week 7 of Planning semester
Consult faculty advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the format of your final project</li> <li>• Determine whether or not you will undertake an honors project</li> <li>• Create a plan for next semester—this may involve choosing repertoire and/or developing “research syllabus” using the template provided here</li> </ul>	Before the end of Planning semester
Register for MUSIC 1903	Before the end of Planning semester
Follow your plan, meeting your “milestones,” subject to change in consultation with your advisors	Capstone semester

## Capstone Alternate Project Application

Complete this form and submit to the music office.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Track Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of project (final decision to be made with your advisor):

Senior       Honors

Summarize here what you have discussed with your track advisor and faculty advisor about your project so far: what topic(s) are you interested in? How are you interested in approaching them (i.e. musical analysis, ethnographic interviews, manuscript study, performance, etc.)?

Are you planning on undertaking an honors alternate capstone project? If so, please describe your rationale here (you may refer to the honors guidelines for research and recital projects—**remember that an honors project is substantial, sophisticated and innovative**. It takes the capstone project a step further by creating new knowledge through research and/or creative practice).

If there are any members of the faculty you're particularly interested in working with, please list them here (you may list one or more than one). You are strongly advised to have taken a class with the faculty member(s) you list here.

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH MUSIC DEPARTMENT  
ALTERNATE PROJECT ASSESSMENT**

**Grading rubric for alternate projects:**

- 20% Student has met deadlines throughout the semester
- 30% Ambition of project
- 50% Polished presentation of project

**Grading rubric for honors alternate projects:**

- 10% Student has met deadlines throughout the semester
- 20% Ambition of project
- 40% Polished presentation of project
- 30% Honors rationale: creation of knowledge through research and/or creative practice