

Writing for Analysis

Last year, you practiced writing about music in Recital Responses, where you addressed a prompt relating to an aspect of music presented at a live concert. This semester, you will continue to develop your abilities as a music writer by completing three writing assignments. Each will require you to complete a musical analysis, and then write about your findings in professional analytical prose, to share your research with your peers. Completing these assignments will help you develop your critical thinking skills, help you practice expressing what you know about musical mechanics in an engaging and interesting way, and prepare you for longer research assignments in MUS 212 and upper-level music classes.

Due dates:

WA1 Draft (submit by 8am by email): week 5

WA1 Final (submit paper copy in class): week 6

WA2 Draft (email): week 8

WA2 Final (paper): week 9

WA3 Draft (email): week 12

WA3 Final (paper): week 13

Writing for Analysis Grade Rubric

Minimum threshold:

If the paper does not meet this minimum standard, a failing grade will be assigned.

- Length (must be within the upper and lower limits):
 - WA1: 300-400 words
 - WA2: 350-450 words
 - WA3: 450-550 words
- Formatting: 1.5 spacing, title, page numbers
- Citations: Cite specific bar numbers in the score or track timings on a recording, and identify musical events appropriately.
- Comprehensible (if I can't understand it, I can't grade it)
- Complete participation in draft and revision process: not participating in any pre-final stage means your final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter.

Average threshold:

If the answers to all of these questions is "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 paper have a thesis statement that clearly answers the prompt?
- Does the paper substantiate claims through use of appropriate musical-analytical evidence?

- Are the ideas organized logically, including an introduction and conclusion and topic sentences for most paragraphs?
- Is the writing mostly polished (very few spelling/grammar/word choice issues) and appropriate for an audience of intelligent peers?
- Does the paper use music theory terms discussed in class?
- Does the final version demonstrate substantial revision from the draft version?

Going Above and Beyond

If all of the above criteria are met, papers can qualify for a B or A grade by meeting some of the following criteria.

- Does the paper have a complex and original thesis statement that clearly addresses the prompt?
- Is the argument clearly supported by compelling evidence described in detail, with many specific analytical references to the assigned music?
- Does the paper have a compelling argument that flows logically from start to finish?
- Does the paper use clear, concise, powerful, and complex language?
- Does the paper integrate concepts and terminology from class into a meaningful musical discussion?