

UNDERGRADUATE THEORY/COMPOSITION STUDIES

Overview

The theory and composition programs at Sacramento State offer students the opportunity to pursue the Bachelor of Music degree in Theory/Composition. Students receive private lessons from, and take courses with, the distinguished Sacramento State faculty. Guest composers and lecturers enhance the program through their appearances at Sacramento State during the Festival of New American Music during fall semester as well as at other times during the year. Students have the opportunity to have their works performed at three composition recitals during the year, including a special student composer recital at the Festival of New American Music. The program has as its goal the development of the creative abilities of each student and the ability to work in varying media and styles.

The theory program at Sacramento State teaches students to interpret a broad body of music in many styles through an understanding of aspects of its structure, and to be able to express this interpretation through performance, transcription, composition, improvisation, and teaching. The broad array of offerings includes: a comprehensive lower-division theory and musicianship sequence; upper-division courses in instrumentation and arranging, contemporary music theory and musicianship, counterpoint, and the pedagogy of music theory and musicianship.

Requirements for Admission to the Bachelor of Music Program

Admission to the Bachelor of Music program in Theory and Composition requires a 3.0 GPA in music courses and the approval of the tenured and tenure-track theory/composition faculty. Along with their application to Sacramento State, applicants to the program must submit a portfolio and an essay, and they must take an exam.

- **Portfolio.** Applicants must submit three original compositions (not arrangements) in any style or for any medium (e.g., acoustic instruments, voice, electronic music). Each composition must be at least one minute in length, and at least one of the compositions must use traditional staff notation. Please submit scores as PDFs (e.g., not a file that needs to be opened with a notation program) and compositions without scores as audio or video files (e.g., not a file that needs to be opened in a DAW).
- **Essay.** Applicants must submit an essay of approximately 500 words detailing their interest and experience in both music theory and composition, and their reasons for wanting to pursue a degree in music theory and composition at Sacramento State.
- **Audition.** Applicants will audition on their primary instrument. The audition requirements are the same as those for Bachelor of Arts candidates. See the audition repertoire information for each primary instrument here: <https://www.csus.edu/college/artsletters/music/admissions.html>.
- **Exam.** Applicants must take a short music theory and musicianship exam. This exam is different from the placement exam that all music students take upon being admitted to the program.

The portfolio and essay are due at the time of the audition. Applicants should email their portfolio and essay to Dr. Scott Perkins, Head of Music Theory and Musicianship, at scott.perkins@csus.edu using the header "Application for BM in Theory and Composition". Dr. Perkins will reply and set up a time to take the exam.

After a successful assessment of the portfolio, essay, exam, and audition, applicants will be invited to interview with theory and composition faculty.

Scholarships

Students in the Bachelor of Music in Theory/Composition program are eligible for the following two scholarships in addition to School of Music general scholarships:

- **Emerging Artist Award in Music Theory and Composition.** Awards range between \$500 and \$3000 and are available to incoming students who demonstrate exceptional merit.
- **The Jeffrey Hoover Memorial Scholarship.** Awards begin at \$500 and are available to qualifying juniors and seniors.

Students who wish to enter the School of Music in or after Fall 2024 and be considered for a scholarship must complete a University Scholarship Application. To complete this application, visit <https://www.csus.edu/apply/financial-aid-scholarships/scholarships>.

The Sacramento State Music Theory and Composition Faculty

Full-Time

Dr. Stephen Blumberg, Director of the School of Music

Dr. Shuying Li, Head of Composition (Theory, Composition)

Dr. Scott Perkins, Head of Music Theory and Musicianship (Theory, Musicianship, Composition)

Dr. Chad Zullinger (Music Technology)

Part-Time

Dr. Josiah Catalan (Theory, Musicianship, Composition)

Prof. Mike Crain (Music Technology)

Dr. Brett Judson (Theory)

Prof. Tatiana Scott (Musicianship)

Prof. Kirsten Smith (Theory, Basic Piano)

Dr. Sarah Wald (Theory, Musicianship, Composition)

More Information

Please direct questions about theory and composition studies at Sacramento State to Dr. Scott Perkins at scott.perkins@csus.edu.