**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**HUMAN EXPRESSION**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number:** MU145 Introduction to Music Literature

**Home Department:** Music

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information** Jeffrey Vickers, [jevicker@nmu.edu](mailto:jevicker@nmu.edu), 227-2563

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** Each Fall

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? YES

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*



**A. Overview of the course content**

This course is designed as a survey course to introduce the history of Western classical music and literature. Topics include musical terminology, forms, styles, and historical periods. An emphasis is placed on listening to art music of the classical music canon. Special attention will be given to the primary composers, their masterworks (symphony, opera, etc.), and their contributions to the development of the history of music.

**B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes**

**CRITICAL THINKING:** The *Evidence* learning outcome dimension is addressed through the experience of examining significant musical works through the lens of established aesthetic standards. While not denigrating the validity of personal preference, students will be assessed on their ability to differentiate between such preferences and the characteristics of a composition and its cultural context that have earned it the status of a masterpiece. Using terms and concepts conveyed in lectures, text readings, and guided listening, students should demonstrate the ability to defend their judgments about a piece or musical style, basing arguments on an appropriate combination of actual analysis, accepted external opinion, and personal preference. This learning will be assessed primarily through written assignments described below. The experience will lead all students toward a greater enjoyment and appreciation for varying or unfamiliar styles and genres. Music majors in particular will develop a foundation vital to success in the music history sequence, in which they will need to grapple with significant contrasting viewpoints in music history and criticism, e.g. Wagner versus Brahms. To satisfy the *Integration* learning outcome dimension, students will apply music terms and concepts to the task of distinguishing among the major time periods of Western art music, including insight into the evolution of style and performance practice related to cultures from which the music came. This will be reflected in both exam performance and in the term paper. To meet the *Evaluation* learning outcome dimension, MU145 students independently attend live music performances from an approved list, and, using musical terms and acquired listening skills, report coherently on the concerts in written form. Concert reviews must include accurate comments on the music itself as well as subjective reactions. The term paper will also provide evidence of evaluation skills.

**HUMAN EXPRESSION:** A universal human experience, music provides a unique window into a society’s values and philosophy. As students are guided through the chronology of Western music, comparing masterworks with each epoch’s societal conditions and values, they will construct a life-long template for reflecting upon human culture through the arts. Appreciating the power of music to both express and influence culture, and armed with a working vocabulary of terms and concepts, they will be more likely to explore unfamiliar styles and genres, including non-western music and arts. In addition, for each style period, parallel developments in the visual arts, architecture, and literature will be noted, in order to develop a comprehensive aesthetic sense beyond music itself. The course will lay a foundation for making informed choices about music and the arts that will enrich the individual and community through listening, viewing, performing, and advocacy.

To address the *Knowledge of the role of the aesthetic* learning outcome dimension, students will examine primary composers and specific compositions within the contexts of time period, culture, location, and the composer’s personal motivations. The *Innovative Thinking* learning outcome dimension will be satisfied through assessing application of knowledge through written concert reviews, using appropriate musical terms that describe the music itself (genre, form, melody, harmony, rhythm, etc.) as well as the cultural context of the piece. Objective content will be stressed over subjective comments (“this was cool,” “I was bored”). To address the *Acknowledging Contradictions* learning outcome dimension, students will be exposed to basic ideas regarding aesthetics, wrestling with timeless questions: What is beautiful? Are there useful standards for evaluating the intrinsic worth of a piece of art or music, or for comparing two performances of the same work?

**C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.)**

MU125 Music in Society has long been part of the music core, but the faculty have agreed for years that the course, with its necessarily broad focus and geared toward the general university student with no musical experience, does not serve the needs of our music majors as preparation for entering the music history sequence. Replacing MU125 with MU145 in the core will provide this vital entry-level course for our majors, many of whom do lack sufficient background. *Human Expression* inclusion will permit them to apply the course to their General Studies program, as in the past. In addition, however, we are aware of the high number of NMU students with considerable musical experience and background, for whom MU125 often cannot provide adequate challenge or interest. It is believed that the 3-credit MU145 course will be an attractive option for these students.

**D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.)**

MU143 will replace MU125 in the core of the BME and BA/BS degrees and in the music minor.

**E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC**

Attempts have been made to adapt MU125 to the needs of music majors by putting majors in one section and providing additional assignments for them, etc. However, since lectures, discussions, and evaluation have needed to remain accessible to complete non-musicians, these experiments have not been deemed successful for either groups. In terms of non-major enrollment, the department recognizes the challenge of a course designed for music majors but open to non-majors. The course description will not mention any particular level of music reading ability or performing level, but it is assumed that non-majors will recognize the nature of the course and enroll appropriately. Faculty perception of external interest is based on the large numbers of musically experienced non-majors in ensembles, many of whom would not be sufficiently challenged by the content of MU125.

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | *Task Type*: Term Paper, concert attendance essay  *Frequency*: One term paper, one or two concert reports  *Overall Grading Weight*: approx. 10%  *Expected Proficiency Rate*: 75% upon course completion  *Assessment Plan*: The course provides tools for analyzing the elements and cultural context of music. Using these resources, students will be challenged to differentiate among the possible sources for their response to music (emotional/habitual/peer-group preferences, analysis based on understanding of musical elements/form/style, and time-established aesthetic judgements), and to defend their judgments about specific compositions, composers, or styles. |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with existing understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | *Task Type*: Exam listening questions, chapter listening quizzes, concert essay  *Frequency*: Listening questions on five exams, approx. 10-12 chapter listening quizzes, 1-2 concert essays  *Overall Grading Weight*: approximately 10%  *Expected Proficiency Rate*: 75% upon completion of the course. *Assessment Plan*: Terminology is only useful when it can be applied to real-time musical listening. These tasks will determine how the text readings, lectures, and discussion have influenced the ability to identify musical characteristics in actual excerpts. These include style, time period, tempo, dynamics, harmony, texture, and form. |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | *Task Type*: Concert essay(s) and term Paper  *Frequency*: Paper at end of semester following reviewed draft(s), 1-2 reviews at various times  *Overall Grading Weight*: approximately 20%  *Expected Proficiency Rate*: 75%  *Assessment Plan*: Written assignments will permit assessment of the student’s ability to evaluate their own musical experiences in the concert hall and to write coherently about a selected topic. Since the course is designed to lay a foundation for the music history sequence, proper bibliographic style and form will be evaluated as well as the content. |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
HUMAN EXPRESSION**

*Attainment of the HUMAN EXPRESSION Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Knowledge of the role of the aesthetic** | Demonstrate comprehension of the role of aesthetic in the human experience including artistic, literary, and rhetorical expression. | Task Type: Exams, quizzes, concert essay(s), term paper  Frequency: Five exams, 10-15 chapter quizzes, 1-2 concert reviews, one term paper  Overall Grading Weight: approximately 30%  Expected Proficiency Rate: 75%  Assessment Plan: The primary goal of all class activities and assignments will be to develop awareness of the vital place of the arts in human culture. While music will be the primary expression studied, parallel developments in other aesthetic areas will be noted. Exam questions will be designed to probe understanding and comprehension of this basic goal. Written reviews and papers will provide further evidence of learning. |
| **Innovative Thinking** | Create or adapt activities, ideas, or questions expressing both creativity and experience | Task Type: Concert essays and term paper  Frequency: one term paper, 1-2 concert reviews  Overall Grading Weight: approximately 15%  Expected Proficiency Rate: 60% The somewhat lower expected success rate is a reflection of the difficulty of reaching and evaluating actual musical *creativity* within a single course without prior experience  Assessment Plan: Evidence of increased aesthetic awareness will be sought primarily in the written responses found in the term paper and concert reviews. |
| **Acknowledging contradictions** | Integrates alternate interpretations or contradictory perspectives or ideas. | Task Type: Term paper, concert review(s), Exam questions  Frequency: one paper, 1-2 reviews  Overall Grading Weight: 20%  Expected Proficiency Rate: 75%  Assessment Plan: Throughout the course, students will be asked to consider basic aesthetic questions that involve contradiction or paradox, such as: What is beautiful? Are there useful standards for evaluating the intrinsic worth of a piece of art or music? To some extent, exam questions can test awareness of these questions, but evidence will mostly appear in the written paper and concert reviews. |