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# Synthesizing the Creative and the Scholarly: MUSC445: Analysis for Performance

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# Synthesizing the Creative and the Scholarly

MUSC 445 : Analysis for Performance

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## Course objectives

### ACE 10 objectives

- Creative or scholarly product
- Broad knowledge
- Technical proficiency
- Information collection
- Synthesis
- Interpretation
- Presentation
- Reflection

### MUSC 445 objectives

- Analytical paper about a piece of music with a performance of it
- Broad knowledge of musical styles and analysis
- Technical proficiency on the student's instrument
- Study of information in musical score
- Synthesis of creative and analytical
- Creation of unique personal interpretation of music
- Oral presentation and musical performance
- Critique of self and peer work

## Student outcomes

The final project of the course asks students to select a piece of music from their own repertoire to analyze using techniques learned in this course and previous undergraduate courses in music theory. The student then makes interpretive decisions about performance based on the analysis. An oral presentation in class is an opportunity to present analytical information, interpretive decisions, and a performance of the piece that demonstrates the interpretation. In a subsequent paper, the student must present the information in writing and in diagrams and annotated music scores (see samples to the right). Students have also been asked to provide assessments of their peers' presentations. As a whole, this final project ties together all of the course objectives as aligned with the ACE 10 objectives (see left).



## Assessment of student work

Student work in past years has been consistently strong, but has also shown trends that suggest areas for improvement:

- Students find it difficult to develop a clear thesis about their piece of music and write an organized, focused paper supporting the thesis
- Students have a difficult time remembering and utilizing analytical tools learned in previous undergraduate courses
- Students are creative in their interpretive decisions but are not always clear about how those decisions can be justified by musical analysis
- Student performances as part of a class presentation are not always as strong as they might be in a formal recital setting

## Improving ACE 10 Outcomes

Changes in the course implemented in 2014 are designed to improve the synthesis of broad knowledge acquired in the undergraduate music courses and the quality of the final project for the class in all of its formats: paper, presentation, and performance.

- Assignments and class activities leading up to the final project now focus more frequently on designing a strong thesis statement about a piece of music, improving the written presentation mode.
- Early assignments and class activities ask students to focus on analytical tools learned in previous undergraduate courses and build on them by adding new tools, improving access to broad knowledge and synthesis.
- A series of smaller assignments is designed to demand more consistent connection between the cerebral analysis and creative interpretation, leading to stronger synthesis of these elements in the final project.
- In-class performances of the music are being replaced by a public class recital at the end of the semester, resulting in a more realistic concert setting in which students can better present their musical performances.

