

Theory of Music and Sight Singing/Ear Training Courses at Northwest Missouri State

All music majors and music minors take a series of music theory classes along with companion classes in sight singing and ear training. When entering Northwest Missouri State as a music major or minor, there are options of where to enter the music theory sequence of classes, depending on the student's prior experiences before enrolling at Northwest.

- If the student has little or no knowledge of music theory, sight singing or ear training, they should enroll in Foundations of Music Theory during their first semester. Foundations of Music Theory is the entry-level class.
- Students may take a Theory Placement Exam to help determine where they should begin the series of music theory courses if they have completed a music theory course elsewhere or feel they have knowledge of music theory from other sources, such as private lessons.

If a student chooses to take the Theory Placement Exam, what do they need to know?

- Be able to identify any of the major and minor key signatures and write them correctly on a staff.
- Be able to identify and write correctly on the staff any of the major scales and the three forms of minor scales (natural, harmonic, melodic).
- Be able to identify and notate on the staff any of the intervals by modifier (major, minor, diminished, augmented) and numerical value.
- Be able to identify and notate on the staff all forms of the triads (augmented, major, minor, and diminished) and seventh-chords (MM, Mm, mm, dm, and dd).

Are there materials available to help students prepare to take the Theory Placement Exam?

- A thorough review of the chapters on fundamentals and the completion of the practice exercises in a traditional music theory textbook will greatly help you to prepare for university music studies. Many texts are available new and used online at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or where ever you buy music books. A partial list of titles is below:
 - Benjamin, Horvit, and Nelson, *Techniques and Materials of Music* (Thompson-Schirmer)
 - Benward and Saker, *Music in Theory and Practice* (McGraw-Hill)
 - Kostka and Payne, *Tonal Harmony* (McGraw-Hill)
 - Northwest uses this text
 - Turek, *Theory for Today's Musician w/ Musical Example CD-ROM* (McGraw-Hill)
- Websites Devoted to Music Theory
 - [Musictheory.net](https://www.musictheory.net)
 - [teoria.com](https://www.teoria.com)

The Theory Placement Exam is highly recommended if you feel you already have music theory knowledge. A proper placement could keep you from taking class(es) that would be redundant for you. If you have questions about music theory at Northwest, please contact Dr. Stephen Town (stown@nwmissouri.edu) or the Fine and Performing Arts office (fparts@nwmissouri.edu).