

Example of Classical Music Curriculum Redesign Panel Presentation

College Music Society, National Conference 2018

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Vice Dean, Division of Scholarly and Professional Studies

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Keyboard Studies, Early Music, Conducting

**University of Southern California
Los Angeles**

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The ReDesign

*Rethinking classical music instruction
at USC Thornton*

**We have redefined what it means to
be a virtuoso in the 21st century.**

This is the goal.....

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A virtuoso must develop a distinctive musical voice...

- 1** ...by developing musical excellence
- 2** ...by connecting scholarship to music making
- 3** ...by interrogating the relevance of music to a diverse and inclusive society
- 4** ...by erasing boundaries between different genres of music

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To have impact, a virtuoso must develop a fulfilling career...

- 5** ...by navigating a path into the music profession to monetize their skills
- 6** ...by mastering skills to share music through digital platforms & non-traditional venues
- 7** ...by building a lifelong, global professional network
- 8** ...by leading a healthy life as a musician

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**We have redesigned our curriculum
to focus on these goals.
We're calling it the ReDesign.**

Guiding Principles

- Musical Excellence
- Integration of Learning
- Relevance of Knowledge



Guiding Actions

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- Creating flexibility
- Offering choice
- Empowering students to shape their own careers
- Focusing all instruction on the goal of creating musical leaders

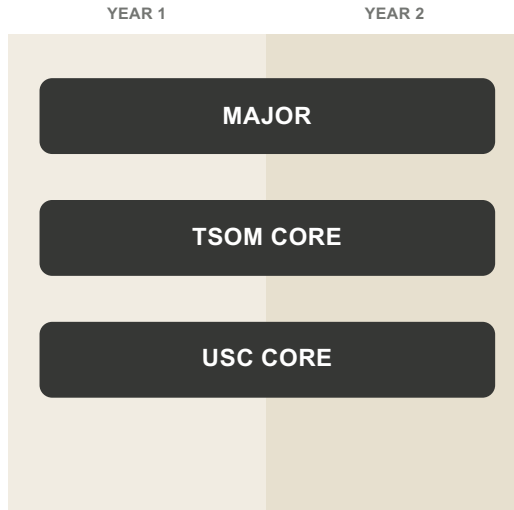


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Year 1 to Year 4

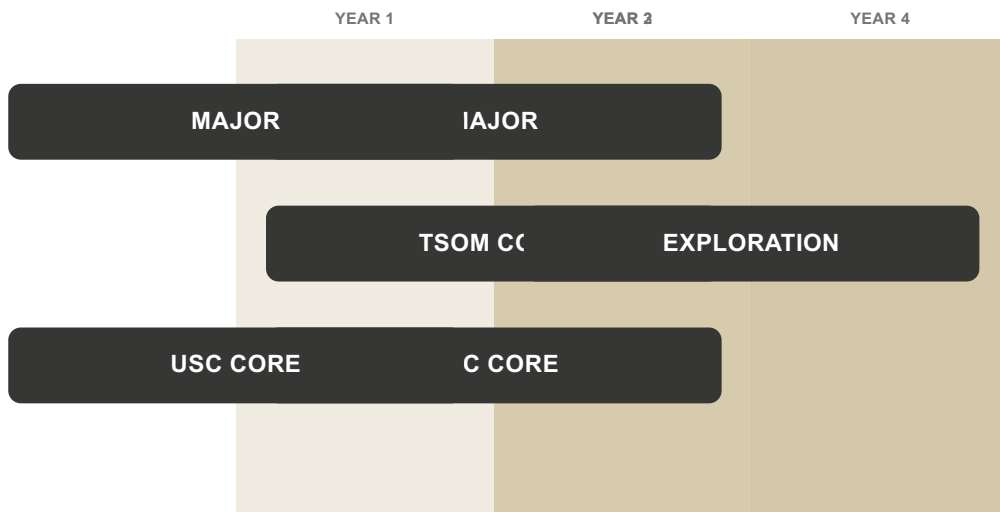
First Two Years

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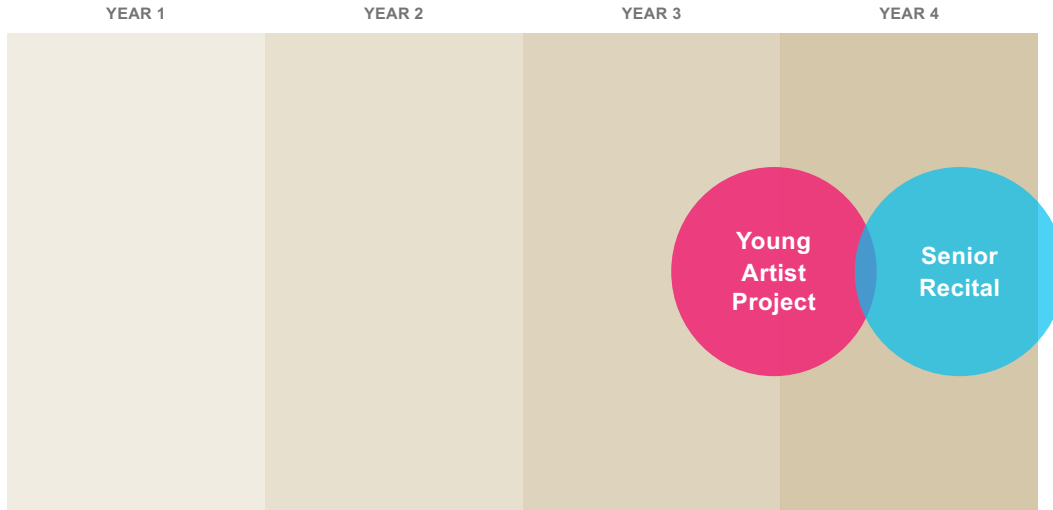
Second Two Years

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Young Artist Project

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We're putting all classes, lessons,
and ensembles through the
"Two Question Challenge"

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**How does this course help students
create a distinctive musical voice?**

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**How does this course help students
create a distinctive musical voice?**

**How does it help them create a
fulfilling musical career?**

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Each question has four “Through Lines”

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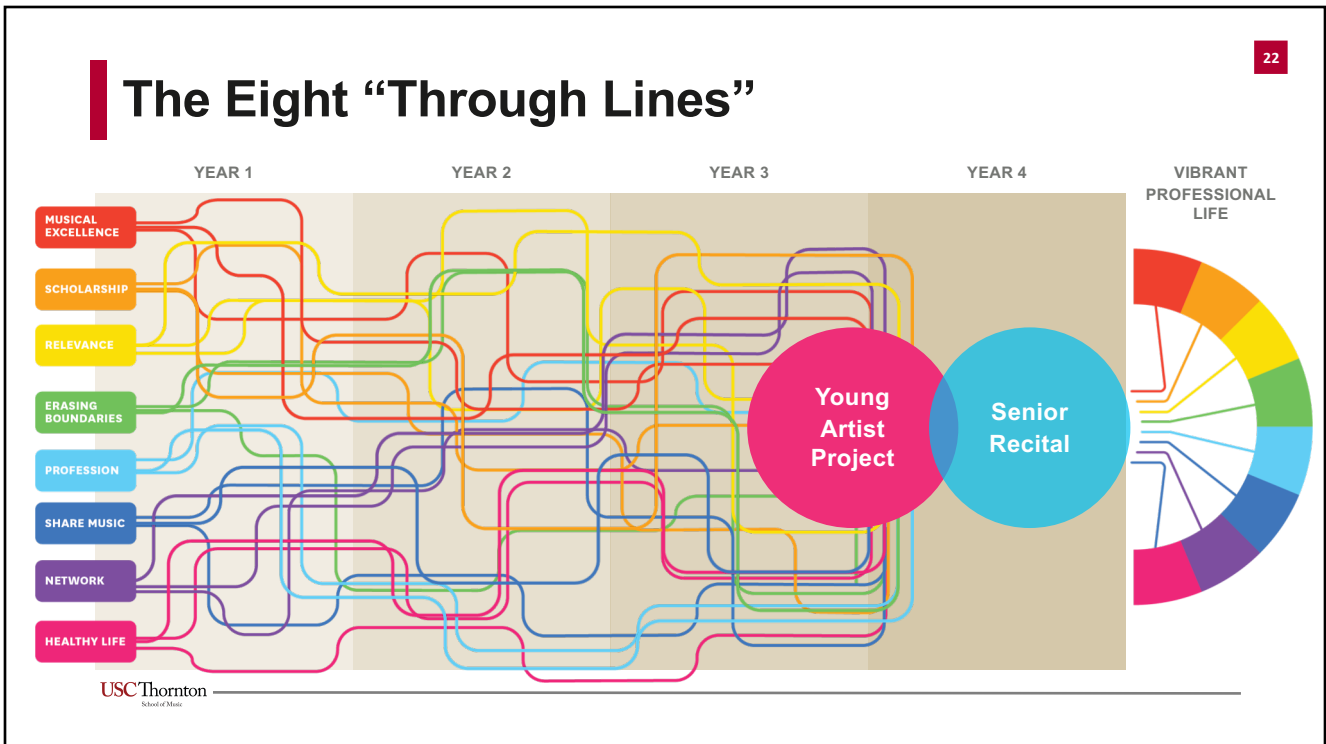
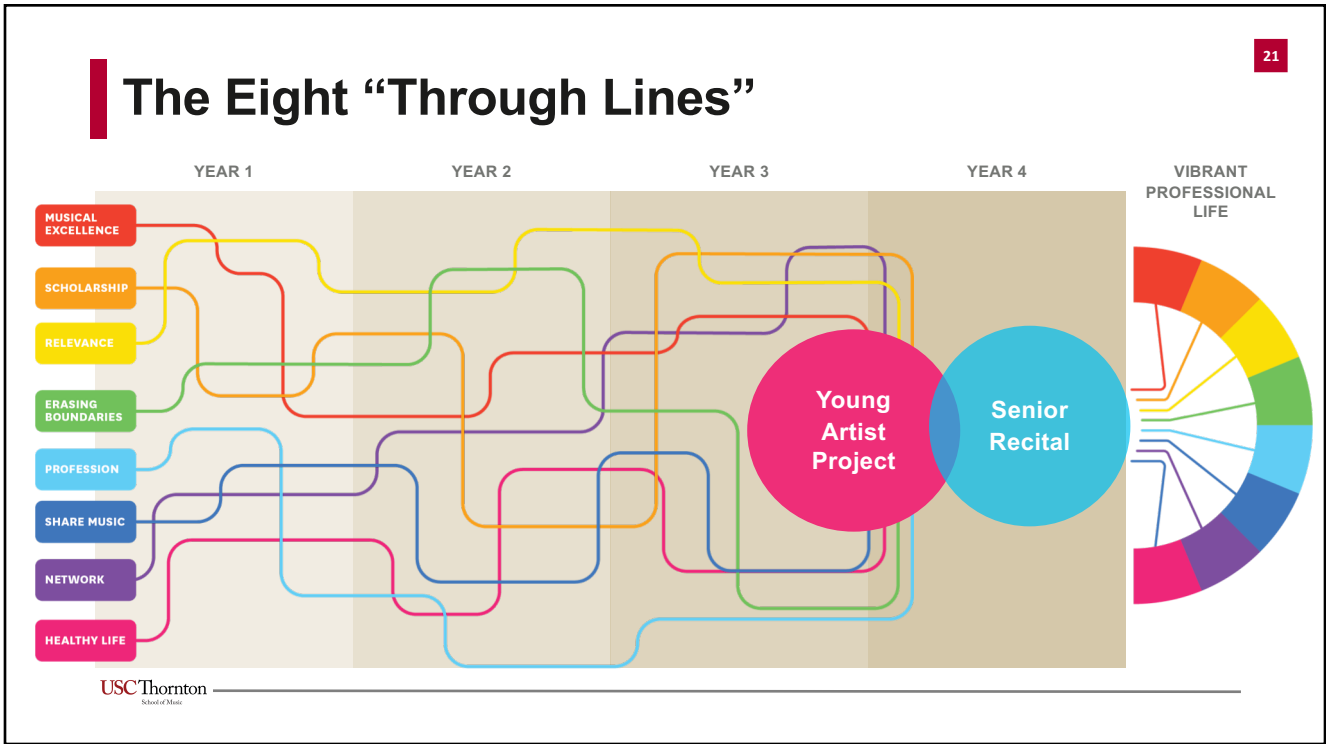
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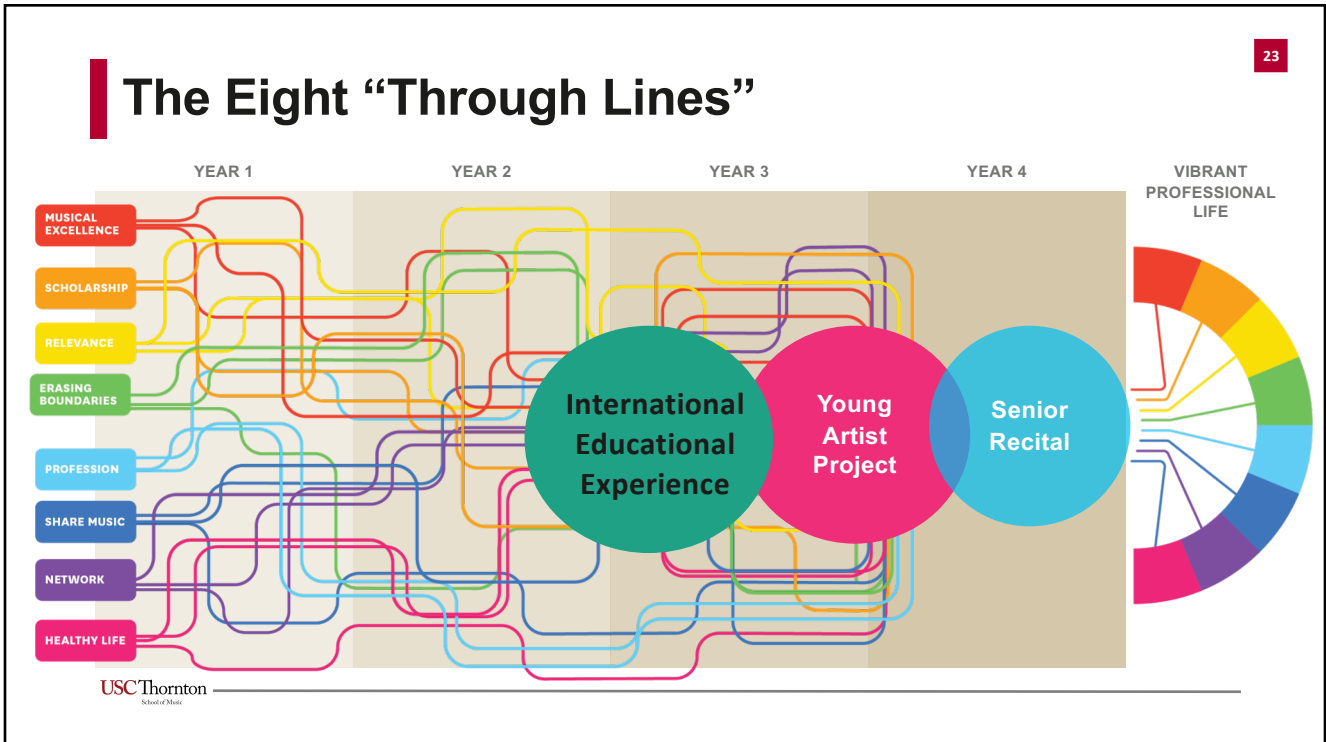
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- 8 ...by leading a healthy life as a musician

The Eight Through Lines

- 1 | Developing musical excellence
- 2 | Connecting scholarship to music making
- 3 | Interrogating the relevance of music to a diverse and inclusive society
- 4 | Erasing performance boundaries between different genres of music
- 5 | Navigating their way into the music profession to monetize their skills
- 6 | Mastering skills to share music through digital platforms and non-traditional venues
- 7 | Building a lifelong, global professional network
- 8 | Leading a healthy life as a musician





We will ask students:

What's the most daring thing you see yourself doing for your Young Artist Project?

**We'll change the
foundation of the
school from...**





LAUNCHING FALL 2019

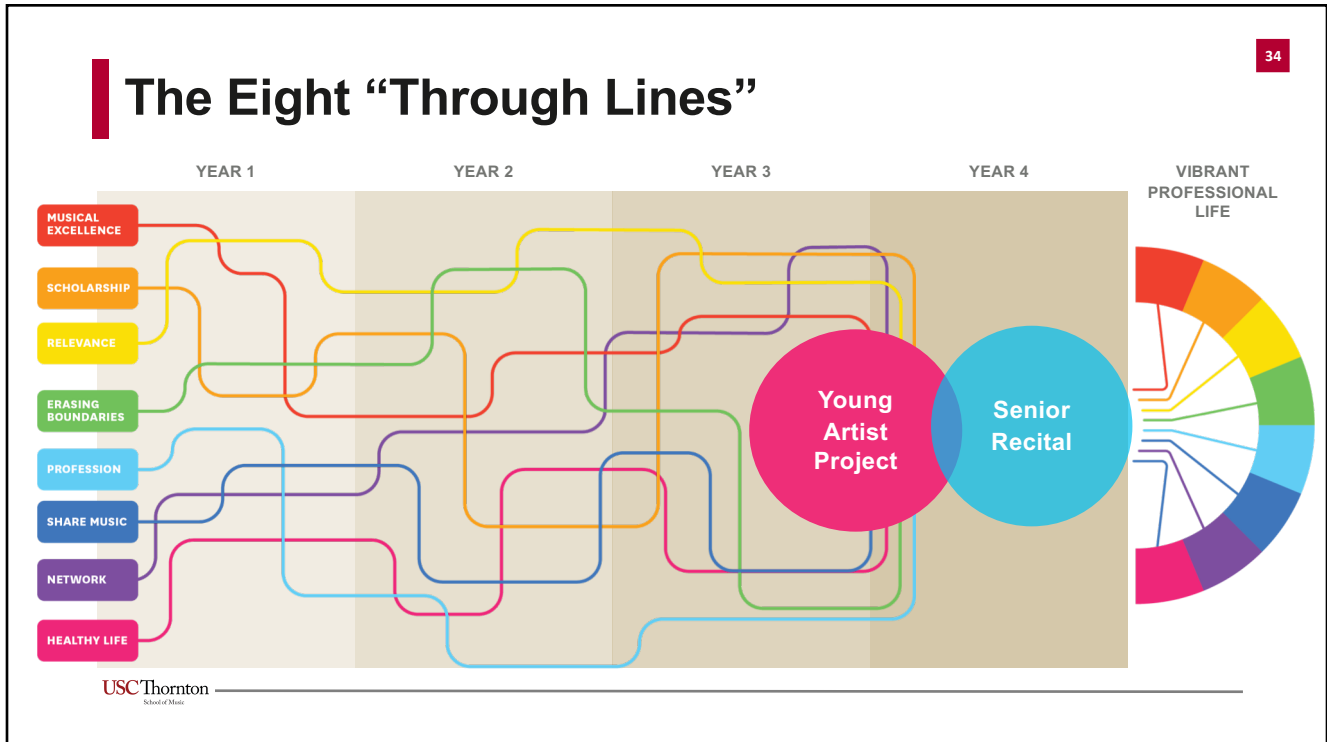
Highlights and Development of the ReDesign

Highlights of the ReDesign: Brian Head

Course Content Influenced by the Through Lines:
Some Examples



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Basic Structure

- **132 units** **Bachelor of Music at USC Thornton**
- 32 units University General Education and Writing
- 40 units Thornton Classical Core
- 40 units Major-Specific Core
Lessons, Ensembles, department courses
- 20 units Electives including 4 units of boundary crossing

Pre and ReDesign Curriculum: Strings

- **General Education (32 units)**
 - **Lessons (16 units)**
 - **Music Ensembles (16 units)**
 - **Program Intensive Courses (8 units)**
 - [MPST 471a String Pedagogy](#) Units: 2
 - [MPST 471b String Pedagogy](#) Units: 2
 - [MPST 472 Orchestra Repertoire Strings](#) Units: 2
 - 4 units total of MPST 472
 - **Core Thornton Academic Courses (46 units)**
 - [MUCO 132a Aural Skills I](#) Units: 2
 - [MUCO 132b Aural Skills I](#) Units: 2
 - [MUCO 133a Theory I](#) Units: 3
 - [MUCO 133b Theory I](#) Units: 3
 - [MUCO 232a Aural Skills II](#) Units: 2
 - [MUCO 232b Aural Skills II](#) Units: 2
 - [MUCO 233a Theory II](#) Units: 3
 - [MUCO 233b Theory II](#) Units: 3
 - [MUCO 338x Orchestration](#) Units: 2
 - [MUCD 343 Instrumental Conducting](#) Units: 2
 - [MUHL 250g Music and Ideas](#) Units: 4
 - [MUHL 350g Western Art Music History I](#) Units: 4
 - [MUHL 351 Western Art Music History II](#) Units: 4
 - LANG xxx 2 semesters of a foreign language: Units: 8
 - [MPKS 481 Baroque Interpretation](#) Units: 2
 - **Electives (6 units)*****
 - ***Violin majors must take [MPST 301 Viola](#) as 2 units of the 6-unit elective req.
 - **Capstone Projects**
 - Junior Recital: 0 units
 - Senior Recital: 0 units
- **General Education (32 units)**
 - **Lessons (16 units)**
 - **Music Ensembles (16 units)**
 - **Program Intensive Courses (8 units)**
 - [MPST 472 Orchestra Repertoire – Strings](#) Units: 2
 - 4 units total of MPST 472
 - [MPKS 250a Keyboard Instruction I](#) Units: 2
 - [MPKS 481 Interpretation of Baroque Music](#) Units: 2
 - **Core Thornton Academic Courses (40 units)**
 - [MUCO 132a Aural Skills I](#) Units: 2
 - [MUCO 132b Aural Skills I](#) Units: 2
 - [MUCO 133a Theory I](#) Units: 3
 - [MUCO 133b Theory I](#) Units: 3
 - [MUCO 232a Aural Skills II](#) Units: 2
 - [MUCO 232b Aural Skills II](#) Units: 2
 - [MUCO 233a Theory II](#) Units: 3
 - [MUCO 233b Theory II](#) Units: 3
 - [MUCO/MUCD xxx Orchestration/Conducting](#) Units: 2
 - [MUHL 250g Music and Ideas](#) Units: 4
 - [MUHL 350g Western Art Music History I](#) Units: 4
 - [MUHL 351 Western Art Music History II](#) Units: 4
 - [MUSC xxx Careers Class](#) Units: 2
 - Contemporary Division Electives 4
 - **Electives (16 units)**
 - **Capstone Projects**
 - Junior Recital: 0 units
 - Senior Recital: 0 units
 - Young Artists Project: 4 units

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Existing Boundary Crossing courses (1-2 unit)

- MPPM 240 Drumming Proficiency for the Popular Musician
- MPPM 250 Keyboard Proficiency for the Popular Musician
- MPPM 120 (Kobza, non-major section) Popular Music Performance I
- MPPM 370 The Vocal Edge: Contemporary Vocal Performance Techniques
- MTEC 175 Fundamentals of Audio Recording
- MTEC 176 Critical Listening
- MTEC 245 Introduction to MIDI Sequencing (8-week 1-unit course)
- MTEC 246 Introduction to Audio Recording and Editing (8-week 1-unit course)
- MTEC 248 Introduction to Music Notation (8-week 1-unit course)
- MTEC 249 Introduction to Web Design for Musicians (8-week 1-unit course)
- MUJZ 141 Basic Keyboard Skills for the Improviser
- MUJZ 218 Afro-Latin Percussion Instruments
- MUJZ 150 Beginning Jazz Improvisation
- MUSC 255 Songwriting I
- Other upper division classes:**
- SCOR 403 Introduction to Scoring Movies and TV
- SCOR 405 Introduction to Scoring Videogames
- MUIN 497 Special Topics: Current Topics, Case Studies, and Analysis
- Continuations: (require a course from above as a pre-requisite)**
- MPPM 340 Intermediate Drum Set Proficiency
- MUJZ 450 Intermediate Jazz Improvisation
- MUSC 355 & 455 Songwriting II & III



Some Explanation of our Already Established Music History Sequence.



- **MUHL 250 Music and Ideas**

- A topical study of critical issues and cultural relationships found in music from antiquity to the present and across musical genres and styles.
- Satisfies New General Education in Category B: Humanistic Inquiry

- **MUHL 350 Western Art Music History I**

- A study of the musical styles and genres from antiquity through early modern periods within their historical context. Detailed analysis of selected works.
- Satisfies New General Education in Category A: The Arts

- **MUHL 351 Western Art Music History II**

- A study of the musical styles and genres in the late modern and contemporary eras within their historical context. Detailed analysis of selected works.

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Some Explanation of our Already Established Music History Sequence (cont.)



- **Examples of MUHL 250 *Music and Ideas* topics, questions and organization:**

(Note: periodic guest speakers often from around Thornton)

- Nationalism/Politics.
- Musical Institutions.
- Musical Media/Transmission
- Artistic Genius/Innovation/Virtuosity
- Construction of Gender and Race/Ethnicity in Music
- Musical Meaning: Pain, Pleasure and Faith

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Current music theory / aural skills classes in the spirit of the ReDesign:

(Note: Freshman Music Theory and Aural Skills courses were redesigned in 2010 on several levels)

- Jazz, Popular Music Performance, Classical and Composition students are intentionally combined together in classes of 15-20 (5 total). Materials are drawn from many literatures and organized primarily by technique and idea rather than chronology. (INTEGRATION of styles).
- Aural Skills (primarily sight singing and other performance, and dictation in various forms) as a separate class BUT with the same cohort of students AND the same professor MWF. Theory classes Tu/Th. Content continually interleaved. (INTEGRATION of classes) .
- Effect of students learning combination of literatures together



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ReDesign Student Cohorts

FALL Freshman

Integrated Music Theory and Aural Skills
Full Performance/Composition cohort (100):
Jazz/Pop/Classical/Production/Composition

FALL Sophomore

MUHL 250: Music and Ideas
Full Performance/Composition cohort (100):
Jazz/Pop/Classical/Production/Composition

FALL Junior

MUHL 250: Western Art Music I
Classical/Composition cohort (50)

FALL Senior

MUSC 481: Young Artist Project II
Individual projects executed and reflection
w/ Classical/Comp cohort

SPRING Freshman

Integrated Music Theory and Aural Skills
Full Performance/Composition cohort (100):
Jazz/Pop/Classical/Production/Composition

SPRING Sophomore

MUSC 496: Careers
Full Performance/Composition cohort (100):
Jazz/Pop/Classical/Production/Composition

SPRING Junior

MUHL 250: Western Art Music II
Classical/Composition cohort (50)
MUSC 480: Young Artist Project I
Classical/Composition cohort (50)

SPRING Senior

Senior Recital
Individual performance and reflection on project

Young Artist Project Examples:

- **Research:** Consideration of several classical composers' struggles with mental health, and the changing language that critics and audiences have used to investigate the connections between mental health and musical genius.
- **Project:** Concert at USC featuring music by composers who have struggled with mental illness, framed by a discussion.
- **Research:** Exploration/analysis of the lack of female representation among film composers, and proposing ways to ameliorate the imbalance.
- **Project:** Curate a live concert of film and TV cues from female composers followed by an open forum following the concert.
- **Research:** The relationship between music and dance in the Rite of Spring.
- **Project:** Curate a Thornton/Kaufman collaboration between student performers and student dancers/dancemakers, producing multiple choreographies of two scenes from the Rite of Spring.

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New Signature Classes

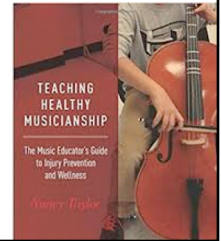
- **Orchestration/Conducting**
- **Language/Diction**
- **Careers class:**
 - **Professional Toolkit (press kit, digital tools, finances)**
 - **Wellness – (physical, mental, spiritual)**
 - **Professional anthropology (etiquette, e.g. working in a section; tools of your specific trade, professionalism)**



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Wellness initiative

- **Vocal health screenings**
- **Monthly speakers program**
- **Weekly dedicated PT/Chiro for Music and Dance students**
- **Dedicated hotline for musicians and dancers at Medical Clinic**
- **Wellness committee of faculty and staff including medical school faculty doctors and music professors and administrators**
- **USC Wellness initiatives as a whole**



ReDesign Development: Building Faculty “Buy In”: Lucinda Carver



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Time Line: Faculty Engagement

Two-Day Faculty and Administration Retreat: May 16-17, 2016
Reimagining the Classical Masters: Possible Model Leading to Classical ReDesign

Why does the Classical Division exist? Some answers:

- holistic approach to students' development
- sets the standard for the profession
- risk taking and creativeness
- flexibility and pragmatism
- creates open time and space for experimentation and failure
- discover their distinctive musical voice
- community involvement and engagement
- connect scholarship to music-making
- communicate effectively and eloquently in written and verbal forms
- become stewards of the art form
- interrogate the relevance of music to society
- transition to the professional world
- lead healthy lives for a life-long career



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Time Line: Faculty Engagement (con't)

One-Day Retreat: November, 2016, Feasibility of reworking the undergraduate curriculum

Six guiding principles of our redesign:

- Provides flexibility to allow student choice and increase available time within the curriculum, scheduling, and classes.
- Infuses opportunities to cross boundaries between divisions
- Encourages participation in professional masters in a 4+1 format
- Selects students to create student cohorts to create lifelong networks at the undergraduate and master's levels.
- Emphasizes individual and small group creation of music making
- Provides social engagement and global opportunities guided by a faculty that feels a part of a community.

Based on those discussions, Dean Cutietta made the strategic decision to re-examine the BM program **first** and charged Vice Dean Carver with leading a faculty committee to explore options.



Time Line: Faculty Engagement

- Exploratory Committee Task Force: Spring 2017
- Class Division Chair Meetings: Academic year 2017-2018
- Redesign Formulation Group : Spring 2018
- Classical division chairs were directed to discuss ReDesign with their faculty, particularly what courses would be cut to make room for the larger elective pool. In addition, a two-hour full faculty meeting announcing Classical ReDesign on May 9, 2018 was held
- In Summer, 2018 to present, there have been various small groups working on aspects of ReDesign including the Thornton Curriculum Committee, chaired by Brian Head. Representatives from the Division of Contemporary Music were included.



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Task Force Summary Actions

- The concept—examine everything: take nothing for granted
- The voice—'no holds barred' listening to our students in a frank and open environment
- The assessment—what are we doing well? What not so well?
- The person—what are our students' lives really like? Do they ever sleep??
- What do our students need? Re-examining the core competencies of a musician today
- Relevance and integration—the ultimate goal
- The Young Artist Project—out of the practice room and into the future





