

Theory Placement Examination

All incoming transfer and graduate students must take a theory placement examination before beginning their studies at Illinois State University. This exam is to help us accurately assess your background in theory and place you in a course that is appropriate for you. This document will help you prepare for this examination. Topics and terms covered on each part of the test are listed. In addition, a sample question similar to what you might encounter on the exam is included.

I. General Information

There are four parts to the theory exam. They are:

- Part A – Fundamentals, roman numeral analysis, and basic part writing principles [MUS 101]
- Part B – Diatonic harmony, beginning chromatic harmony, and musical form [MUS 102]
- Part C – Chromatic harmony, advanced musical forms [MUS 201]
- Part D – Advanced chromatic harmony, 20th century techniques [MUS 220, 221, or 222]

Graduate students must pass all four parts of the exam. Transfer undergraduate students must pass those parts of the exam that correspond to the courses for which they wish to receive music major credit, regardless of transfer credit received from previous institutions.

The best source for information on music theory is the textbook that you used during your studies at your previous institution. Here is a list of recommended theory textbooks that may wish to consult:

Recommended Theory Textbooks

1. Clendinning, Jane Piper and Elizabeth West Marvin. *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2005.
2. Gauldin, Robert, *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2004.
3. Laitz, Steven G. *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Transfer students will also have to take a placement exam for musicianship and sight singing. This exam will occur concurrently with the theory placement test.

II. Part A (Required for all students wishing to place out of first semester theory (MUS 101))

A. Identification and Construction of Intervals

Terms to review: augmented, diminished, perfect, major, minor, compound intervals

Identify the following intervals:

Construct the following intervals:

B. Key Signatures

Terms to review: major, relative minor, circle of fifths

Identify the tonic of these key signatures:

_____ minor _____ major _____ major _____ minor _____ major

C. Scale Construction

Terms to review: melodic minor, harmonic minor, natural minor, major

Construct the following scale (ascending and descending) using individual accidentals (no key signature)

B melodic minor

D. Roman Numeral Analysis

Terms to review: figured bass symbols, inversion symbols, I v. i

Give the harmonic analysis for these chords with Roman numerals and figured bass symbols

c: _____

D: _____

E. Basic Part Writing

Terms to review: doubling, spacing, tonic and dominant function, voice leading, SATB

Realize the following chord progressions, SATB, with correct voice leading

c: i

V6

i

III. Part B – Required for all students wishing to place out of second semester theory (MUS 102)

A. Chord Identification; Chord Construction

Terms to review: proper notation and construction of inverted seventh chords including quality symbols such as \emptyset ; proper notation of secondary function chords such as V/V

Label the following seventh chords using roman numeral analysis Construct the following chords. Include key signature

E \flat : _____ D: _____ g: V7/V f: ii \emptyset ⁶/₅

B. Diatonic Part Writing

Terms to review: figured bass symbols, including V₈₋₇. Proper resolution of diminished seventh leading tone chords and linear dominants.

Realize the following progression, SATB.

c: i vii \circ 6 i6 V ₄/₂ i6 V

C. Basic Phrase Analysis

Terms to review: antecedent consequent phrase structure; parallel period; cadence and cadence types (imperfect authentic cadence, perfect authentic cadence, half cadence, etc.); non symmetrical phrase structure; symmetrical phrase structure, all non-chord tone types

In this section you will have to analyze the phrase structure of an excerpt of music.

1. Identify the cadences and cadence types of the excerpt below.
2. What is the phrase structure of this excerpt?

IV. Part C – Required for all students wishing to place out of 2nd year theory, first semester [MUS 201]

This part of the test involves identification, construction, and analysis of the following types of chords:

Neapolitan 6 chords (N6)

Augmented 6th chords (Ger+6, It+6, Fr+6)

Secondary function chords, including secondary leading tone diminished sevenths

Chromatic chords resulting from mode mixture

Sample Analysis Excerpt: Brahms Intermezzo in A major, op. 118, No. 2, mm. 1-8

Provide a roman numeral analysis of the excerpt below. Also identify cadences and cadence types.

Chord Construction and Identification; Part Writing Sample

Write these chords in four parts, SATB; please provide key signature

Write the following chord progression in SATB; (please note cadential 6/4 notation)

D: iv6 g: N6 Ab: Ger +6 F: Ger +6 V $\left[\begin{array}{l} 6-5 \\ 4-3 \end{array} \right]$ I

V. Part D—Required for all students wishing to place out of 4th semester theory

A. Extended Tertian Harmony

Terms for review: 9th, 11th, and 13th chords; popular music chord symbols such as D7 and Am7

Identify the following chords using popular music chord symbols

Three piano chord diagrams are shown on a grand staff. The first chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The second chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5, with a sharp sign above the G. The third chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5, with a flat sign above the G.

B. Modes and Symmetrical Scales

Terms for review: church modes (dorian, phrygian, mixolydian, etc.); octatonic scale; whole tone scale

Identify the mode or scale type

Construct the following scale

A musical staff in bass clef showing a scale starting on F. The notes are F, G, A, Bb, C, D, Eb, F. The scale is written in a single line.

F Mixolydian

C. Basic Set Theory

Terms for review: numeric notation, prime form, normal form, pitch class, PC sets

Identify the prime form of the following chord (use PC numbers, not the Forte classification)

A musical staff in treble clef showing a chord with notes G4, B4, and D5. The chord is written in a single line.

D. Basic 20th Century Analysis

You will have to identify structural aspects of a short excerpt of 20th century music.

This excerpt uses which scale? whole tone F dorian octatonic

A musical staff in bass clef showing a short excerpt of music. The excerpt consists of four measures. The first measure has a triad G4, B4, D5. The second measure has a triad G4, B4, D5. The third measure has a triad G4, B4, D5. The fourth measure has a triad G4, B4, D5.