

A Snapshot of Music History Teaching to Undergraduate Music Majors, 2011–2012: Curricula, Methods, Assessment, and Objectives

MATTHEW BAUMER

The past fifteen years have seen a groundswell of research on music history teaching: presented at Teaching Music History Day conferences; in edited collections by Mary Natvig, James Briscoe, and James Davis; at sessions sponsored by the Pedagogy Study Group (PSG) at annual meetings of the American Musicological Society (AMS); and in the pages of this *Journal*.¹ But as Scott Dirkse noted in the Fall, 2011 issue of this *Journal*, very little of this scholarship uses the empirical methods that are common in other areas of education research.² This is by no means a criticism of the vibrant flowering of scholarship in our field, nor would I suggest that empirical research is superior to other kinds of research, or that it is free from epistemological problems. However, empirical research can provide some data that are unavailable through other methods. In particular, I am interested in what education researchers call descriptive data, which provides a numerical snapshot without trying to establish cause and effect. I believe that this type of data would be useful to those who wish to teach, administer, reform, or advocate for music history in the undergraduate music major curriculum.

For musicological readers, what follows may seem long on details and short on explanation and interpretation. My purpose here is not primarily to critique the curricula, teaching methods, assessment strategies, and objectives that

1. Mary Natvig, ed., *Teaching Music History* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002); James R. Briscoe, ed., *Vitalizing Music History Teaching* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2010); and James A. Davis, ed., *The Music History Classroom* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

2. Scott Dirkse, "Encouraging Empirical Research: Findings from the Music Appreciation Classroom," this *Journal* 2, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 25–35, <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/21/61>. Dirkse kindly shared a draft of his bibliography of music history pedagogy research, compiled for his dissertation. The bibliography documents a noteworthy body of empirical studies of music appreciation, primarily reported in doctoral dissertations in music education or performance, but none of those studies addresses music history curricula for undergraduate music majors.

music history teachers currently employ, although I will offer some thoughts in that direction; rather my purpose is to provide the data on which such critiques might be founded. In keeping with the methodology of music education that informs the study, I will withhold discussion and conclusions until I have presented the findings. Readers pressed for time may wish to skip to the Discussion sections below.

Previous Research

Descriptive studies of music history curricula are rare. The few surveys I found in the early- to mid-twentieth century aim to describe the state of music in higher education in general, and do not focus on music history.³ An exception is Hugh M. Miller's brief report on his 1949 survey of music history courses in approximately sixty college catalogs. He found that most music history courses were intended for first- and second-year students, that virtually all were two ($n = 26$) or three credits ($n = 30$), that most did not have any prerequisites, and that titles of the courses varied widely. He also noted that "in several instances music history is only a one-semester course."⁴ Fortunately, this no longer seems to be the norm, as we shall see.

The most extensive surveys of music in higher education in recent years have been undertaken by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the College Music Society (CMS). NASM issues its yearly Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS) survey to collect demographic and financial data on faculty, students, and music departments, but not curricular matters.⁵ In 1982 and 1989, the CMS completed two surveys under the rubric "Music in General Studies: A Survey of National Practice," but these focused exclusively on courses for non-majors.⁶

3. Selected examples include J. Lawrence Erb, "Report of the Committee on Colleges and Universities," *Proceedings of the Music Teachers National Association* 22 (1927): 215–20; Randall Thompson, *College Music: An Investigation for the Association of American Colleges* (New York: Macmillan, 1935); Arlan R. Coolidge, "College Degrees in Music," *Proceedings of the Music Teachers National Association* 40 (1946): 191–209; Lillian Mitchell Allen, *The Present State of Accredited Music Instruction in American Universities* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1954); and Thomas Clark Collins, *Music Curriculum Trends in Higher Education* (Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 1960).

4. Hugh M. Miller, "The Teaching of Music History at the College Level," *Proceedings of the Music Teachers National Association* 43 (1949): 93–98.

5. "Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS) Project," *National Association of Schools of Music*, accessed June 24, 2014, [http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=Higher+Education+Arts+Data+Services+\(HEADS\)+Project](http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=Higher+Education+Arts+Data+Services+(HEADS)+Project).

6. Barbara Reeder Lundquist, "Music in the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Reassessment," *College Music Symposium*, CMS Reports no. 7, accessed June 20, 2014, http://symposium.music.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=9314:music-in-the-undergraduate-curriculum-a-reassessment&Itemid=146.

There is one recent study of music history curricula, although it focuses only on the basic design of the sequence. At the 2011 Annual Meeting of NASM, Douglass Seaton presented a study of the music history curriculum at 101 institutions in the U.S.⁷ The program describes the impetus for his study:

During the past three Annual Meetings, NASM members and friends have undertaken a broad review of issues concerning core music studies in the undergraduate curriculum. To continue and deepen this discussion in 2011, we will concentrate on the component parts of the core, each of which is critically important.⁸

In preparation for his talk, Seaton asked a graduate student to examine the undergraduate music history curricula of 101 randomly selected institutions, taking care to ensure that the sample was diverse in terms of size, ownership, and location.⁹ Presumably the graduate student examined published catalogs, as there is no mention of a survey. Seaton summarized his findings in five brief paragraphs. Forty percent of the sample used a two-semester “period-based music history sequence,” while another 40% used a three-semester sequence. Roughly 10% used a four-semester sequence, and the final 10% took “somewhat different approaches.” Most programs with a two- or three-semester sequence added “an introductory course” (more common with two-semester sequences), “a world and/or vernacular music course,” and/or “more advanced topic courses or seminars” (more common with three-semester sequences). None of the programs with a four-semester sequence added further courses, implying that four semesters was likely the outer limit for most curricula. Among the remaining 10%, the most common format was “an introductory course to be followed by courses selected from a menu of offerings,” some of which were likely to be period courses.¹⁰

Based on these data, Seaton offers three observations:

First, we find evidence of a ubiquitous commitment—at least an inherited one—to teaching the material of the music history core via a multi-semester sequence of period-based courses. No signs emerged that faculty intend to abandon that kind of plan in droves. Second, there is a wide recognition that the multi-semester sequence of period-based courses does not cover everything that faculties hope to accomplish as part of the history and literature

7. Douglass Seaton, “Core Music Curriculum Components II: History and Repertory: A Survey and Some Questions,” in *Proceedings: The 87th Annual Meeting, 2011* (Reston, VA: The National Association of Schools of Music, 2012), 23–26.

8. *Program: National Association of Schools of Music: The 87th Annual Meeting, 2011*, p. 7, accessed January 13, 2015, http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/AM%20Program%20Archive/NASM_Program_2011_Scottsdale.pdf.

9. Seaton, “Core Music Curriculum,” 23. The student is identified only as “Catherine.”

10. Seaton, “Core Music Curriculum,” 23.

core. We find felt needs for preparation of students before they start an intensive sequence, for the inclusion of world and vernacular musics, and for deeper and more focused experiences for students. Third, even when we look for flexibility, almost all the programs that do not require a complete sequence nevertheless offer the courses of a typical sequence as part of the menu available. We can't say that, across our discipline, the variety or creativity appears particularly stunning. Perhaps we're just all perfectly satisfied. Perhaps, when we evaluate and critique our curricula, we hesitate at radical or creative innovation, and we merely tinker around the edges.¹¹

Despite his obvious disappointment about the conservative nature of our field, Seaton does not offer specific solutions, but instead a barrage of rhetorical questions, such as: "Do these common models reach our own students as they come to our diverse institutions today . . . [and] send them into their futures with something more than a cookie-cutter background?" and "What do we think students should most importantly master in the history of music?"¹² These questions make it clear that Seaton would like to see a thorough reconsideration of the objectives and makeup of music history curricula, but also that he recognizes the many practical reasons why major changes have not caught on.

Although I was unaware of Seaton's study when I designed and administered my survey, my study provides a thorough extension of his. While my findings largely confirm Seaton's, I can offer much more detailed information about curricula, as well as information about teaching methods, assessment and objectives.

Sample and Survey Methodology

My initial goal was to focus on music history curricula, including such questions as how many semesters of music history are required of a typical music major. As a pilot project, I examined published university catalogs with the help of a graduate assistant, Sarah McAfoose. After collecting data from approximately 25 universities, it seemed more efficient and more accurate to rely on a survey sent directly to music historians, who could interpret their own curricula. Making sense of catalog requirements can be a difficult task for those unfamiliar with the institution. To trope Mark Twain's famous quote about statistics, there is math, fuzzy math, and curriculum math.

Using a survey approach allowed me to broaden my investigation and add several research questions about the details of each curriculum, such as what kinds of courses it included, when students usually began it, and what class sizes were typical. I defined several categories of music history courses and asked about

11. Seaton, "Core Music Curriculum," 23–24.

12. Seaton, "Core Music Curriculum," 24.

the teaching methods and assessments used in each category. Finally, I added a section on the overall objectives of an undergraduate music history curriculum.

Beginning on September 18, 2012, links to the online survey were distributed via the AMS-Announce email list, the AMS Pedagogy Study Group list, and the College Music Society (CMS), which maintains lists of its members according to their teaching interest.¹³ The CMS sent 2,863 emails with the survey link.¹⁴ Along with the AMS emails, approximately 6000 emails were sent,¹⁵ but they almost certainly did not reach 6,000 unique addresses due to overlap between the lists.¹⁶ Of the 329 people who started the survey, 232 finished it.¹⁷ Of the total number of emails sent, approximately 3.9% yielded a response. I received data from 204 individual institutions, with 13 from Canada and 191 from the United States. According to the College Music Society's *Directory*, there were 1,795 institutions with music degrees in the United States and Canada in 2011, so I received a response from roughly 11 percent of them.¹⁸ Of the 204 institutions, 130 were members of NASM, so I sampled approximately 20% of NASM's total membership of 653.¹⁹

In keeping with the protocols required by our Institutional Review Board, the responses were anonymous, and I did not collect any demographic data, such as the respondent's academic position or rank. To proceed through the survey, respondents had to give their informed consent (two declined) and had to agree that they had taught a music history course to undergraduates within the last five years (16 had not).²⁰ I did ask for the name of the respondent's institution, which I collected in order to sort out the problem of receiving more than one response from a particular college or university. For many questions, the presence of multiple responses from a large university, for example, would have skewed the results towards the qualities of that university. I also asked for a few basic facts about each institution, including private or public, the highest degree offered, the total enrollment, and the number of music majors. These data are shown in **Figures 1–4**, which compare each sample characteristic to data for all

13. This project was reviewed and approved by my university's Institutional Review Board.

14. Julie Johnson, personal communication with author, September 20, 2012.

15. According to its webpage, AMS-Announce has approximately 3,000 subscribers. "AMS Jobs / Fellowships / Conferences / Calls for Papers Bulletin Boards," *The American Musicological Society*, accessed June 18, 2014, <http://www.ams-net.org/announce.php>.

16. I was unable to compare the names on the lists, which are kept private by the CMS and AMS.

17. Qualtrics is an online data collection and statistical analysis service to which my institution subscribes. See <http://www.qualtrics.com> for further information.

18. College Music Society, *Directory of Music Faculties in the U.S. and Canada* (Binghamton, NY: College Music Society, 2011), 1.

19. "NASM Directory Lists: Accredited Institutional Members," *National Association of Schools of Music*, accessed June 20, 2014, http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=List_Accredited_Members.

20. These 18 respondents were not included in the count of 232 completed surveys.

U.S. institutions of higher learning collected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching or to NASM's HEADS data for 2011–2012.²¹

The sample skews towards public institutions as compared to the Carnegie data, as shown in **Figure 1**. This may be due to the fact that 26% of the Carnegie institutions are private, for-profit colleges, few of which offer the traditional degrees in music that are likely to have music history courses. It is also possible that faculty at public institutions may be more inclined to answer a survey about pedagogy.

As illustrated in **Figure 2**, the sample includes far fewer two-year institutions than the U.S. as a whole.²² This likely reflects the fact that two-year degree programs in music are relatively rare, and seldom include music history. The sample also includes proportionally more institutions with higher enrollments than the Carnegie data, as seen in **Figure 3**.²³

Figure 4 details the number of music majors. For private institutions, the Higher Education Arts Data Survey (HEADS) contains an extra category of 1–50 students, while for public institutions the smallest category is 1–100 students. I also used 500+ as my highest category, while HEADS uses 400+. These differences aside, the sample corresponds fairly closely to the characteristics of NASM institutions.

Findings: Curricular Design

The original impetus for this study was to find out how much music history a typical undergraduate music degree requires and what components it comprises. Obviously, the total amount of time allotted to the music history sequence affects everything from course and textbook design to how many musicologists are hired to teach. Given the somewhat fluid boundaries between music history and ethnomusicology, and the fact that in many curricula these disciplines may be blended together or occupy a similar space, I decided to ask about both disciplines together. To create a basis for comparison regardless of how an institution defines a credit, I decided to express the amount of music

21. Data for all US Institutions (I did not try to integrate Canadian data into these tables) were compiled from "Summary Tables," The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*, accessed July 16, 2014, <http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/summary/>, and from *Music Data Summaries, 2011–2012* (Reston, VA: Higher Education Arts Data Services, 2012).

22. In this figure and several figures to follow, I report both the number of institutions and the percentage of the sample that they represent. The abbreviation *n* (used in statistical studies) refers to the number of institutions in each category of the sample.

23. Carnegie uses a different set of size categories for two-year institutions than for four-year institutions. Because only 4% of institutions in my sample were two-year institutions, I eliminated two-year schools from the Carnegie data for this figure.

Figure 1: Percentage of public vs. private institutions

Type of institution	Sample	All U. S. institutions
Public	60%	44%
Private	40%	56%

Figure 2: Highest degree offered

Type of degree	Sample	All U. S. institutions
Associate	4% ($n = 9$)	47%
Bachelor	40% ($n = 82$)	26%
Masters	30% ($n = 61$)	19%
Doctorate	26% ($n = 52$)	8%

Figure 3: Total enrollment

Enrollment	Sample	U.S. 4-year institutions
< 1000	5% ($n = 11$)	25%
1000–2999	24% ($n = 48$)	36%
3000–9999	26% ($n = 54$)	25%
10000+	45% ($n = 91$)	14%

Figure 4: Number of music majors

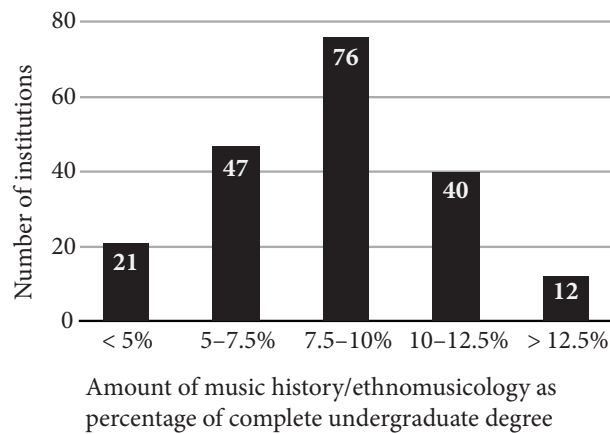
Number of majors	Sample	Number of majors	NASM institutions
1–50	24% ($n = 49$)	1–100	45% ($n = 287$)
51–100	24% ($n = 49$)	101–200	25% ($n = 158$)
101–200	20% ($n = 41$)	201–400	21% ($n = 135$)
201–500	28% ($n = 57$)	400+	9% ($n = 56$)
500+	4% ($n = 8$)		

history/ethnomusicology as a percentage of a complete undergraduate degree. For example, if a degree is 120 hours and students take 12 credits of music history/ethnomusicology, the “music history/ethnomusicology percentage” would be 10% of the complete degree. Two questions on the survey yielded this information. The first asked, “In the box below, please type the total number of credit hours in a typical undergraduate degree at your institution.” The second asked, “What is the *typical* amount of music history/ethnomusicology required by your institution’s music degrees (i.e., the music history ‘core courses,’ not including extra courses taken only by music history majors, etc.)?” The question called for the respondent to decide what the “typical” amount was for his or her institution; by asking this I was trying to get around the considerable variety that might exist among degree types, such as performance, education, and liberal studies. The presumption is that most curricula have a music history core that all music majors take, although this does not always hold true.

There were two problems with the data I received for these questions. The first problem was that 31 respondents returned numbers that, when compared with the majority, seemed anomalous. Some respondents reported that the complete degree was only 30 or 60 credits, with 15 of those in music history/ethnomusicology. While I would be happy to endorse such a degree, I thought it more likely that these respondents had given the number of credit hours in the music major only, and I believe that several other respondents made a similar interpretation. To find the correct numbers, I examined the published catalogs of all 31 of those institutions to confirm both the total number of credits in a typical undergraduate degree and the number of credits in the music history/ethnomusicology core.²⁴

The second problem involved duplicate responses from the same institution. For any question intended to compare curricula rather than the practices or opinions of individual teachers, I consolidated multiple responses into a single response for each institution. The problem was that respondents from the same institution did not always agree on how to describe their curriculum. Respondents sometimes disagreed about whether a course was a one-semester introduction, a part of the survey, or a choice on a menu of electives. In some cases, respondents did not agree on how many credits were in the music history/ethnomusicology curriculum. These inconsistencies may reflect some confusion on the part of the respondents, but more likely they are a consequence of asking respondents to describe their curricula within a format designed to facilitate comparison. Clearly, not all curricula fit into the survey’s boxes. To

24. In standard survey methodology, it would be an error to alter any data submitted by respondents. In this case, given the relatively small sample, my knowledge of the subject, and the availability of published materials for confirmation, I felt it was reasonable to alter the responses.

Figure 5: Institutions by music history/ethnomusicology percentage

resolve conflicting responses from the same institution into one response, I again examined that institution's catalog to determine the best answer according to my classification.

Using this "corrected" data, both the mean and the median music history/ethnomusicology percentage was 8.5%, or 10.2 credit hours in a 120-hour degree. The mode, or the most frequent response, was 10% of the degree or 12 credit hours, higher than the mean and median. The mean number of discrete music history/ethnomusicology courses in the curriculum was 3.4 courses, with a median of 3 and a mode of 4 courses.²⁵ **Figure 5** shows the number of institutions with a music history/ethnomusicology percentage below 5%, between 5–7.5%, 7.5–10% or 10–12.5%, and greater than 12.5%. These ranges correspond roughly with below 6 credits, 6–9 credits, 9–12 credits, 12–15 credits and more than 15 credits.

I was also curious to know when in their academic careers students generally begin the music history/ethnomusicology sequence. As **Figure 6** shows, students most often begin in the second year, followed in roughly equivalent measure by the first year and the third year. Several respondents noted that depending on student choice or a rotation, their students begin in year one or two (5%) or in year two or three (12%). If we assume that half begin in each year (i.e., half of the 5% begin in year one and half in year two) and add these to the rest of the numbers, we can calculate that 24% of students begin in the first year, 54% in the second, 22% in the third, and 1% in the fourth.

25. Of the 204 institutions, nine structure the academic year in trimesters, 195 in semesters. When calculating the mean number of discrete courses in the curricula, I reduced the number for trimester institutions by one-third to facilitate comparison with semester institutions. A similar calculation was not necessary for the music history/ethnomusicology percentage.

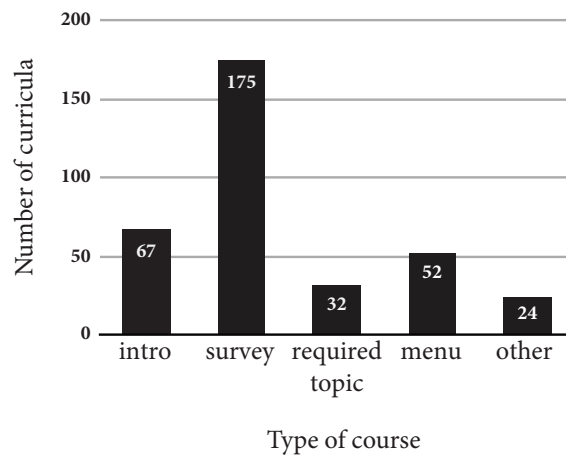
Figure 6: Point in their academic degree programs when most music majors begin the music history sequence

	<i>n</i>	%
1. first semester/trimester/quarter	20	10
2. in the first year, but not necessarily in the first semester/trimester/quarter	22	11
3. second year	89	44
4. third year	32	16
5. fourth year	1	0
6. either the first or the second year depending on a rotation or student choice	11	5
7. either the second or the third year depending on a rotation or student choice	25	12
8. other	4	2
TOTAL	204	100

The next set of data describes the makeup of music history/ethnomusicology curricula. To facilitate comparison, I created four categories based on courses that I had taught or that I knew existed at other institutions: (1) a one-course introduction to music history, musicology, or ethnomusicology; (2) a multi-course survey, primarily of Western art music; (3) one or more courses that all undergraduate music majors must take, and that focus on a limited time period or topic (but are not primarily a survey); and (4) a menu of period and/or topics courses, from which students choose a certain number of courses (but not all of them). Respondents could also indicate that their curriculum did not fit into any of the four categories.

As seen in **Figure 7**, the multi-course survey was by far the most common category, present in 86% of curricula. Next most common was the one-semester introduction, at 33%, followed by the menu of courses, at 25%. Only 15% featured a required period or topics course, and 12% indicated that the curriculum contained something not described above.

When I examined the “other” column, I found that for 16 of the 24 comments I was able to assign the courses mentioned in the comment to one of my categories. For example, one respondent wrote, “A one-semester course on History of American Music; 3 semesters of survey of Western Art Music.” I would have categorized that curriculum as a survey plus a required topic course. Eight comments mentioned a course that did not fit my categories. Two respondents mentioned music literature courses such as Art Song Literature or Orchestral Literature. While these could be considered part of a menu of

Figure 7: Curricula that include each course category

courses beyond or instead of the survey, the respondents saw them as an additional feature. Two other respondents reported that their music history curriculum was interdisciplinary, either with music theory and performance, or with a broad spectrum of disciplines. Two respondents noted that while they have a survey, it is not primarily of Western art music, as I had specified. One respondent noted a capstone course, which could be considered as a required topics course, and one other noted that all students complete a senior thesis.

Considering the various ways in which these four categories could be combined into a curriculum, each of the 15 possible combinations was represented by at least two of the 204 institutions, as seen in **Figure 8**.

The most common curriculum by far features only a multi-course survey, primarily of Western art music, with 82 schools using this scheme. Next most common with 37 curricula was the one-semester introduction plus the survey. The combination of the survey with a menu of courses from which students can choose came in third with 22 institutions. Tied for fourth were the survey plus topics and the intro plus the survey plus a menu of courses, each with 11 institutions; none of the remaining combinations was over seven.

Another area of inquiry was the extent to which world music and popular music are represented in music curricula. Several questions in the survey referenced world or popular music. The first asked, “For undergraduate music majors, does your institution require a course specifically devoted to ethnomusicology or world music?” As shown in **Figure 9**, 43% of the 204 individual institutions reported that they require one or more courses in world music or ethnomusicology in their curriculum, while another 18% reported that they cover world music as part of their music history survey. Thirty-nine percent of the institutions, however, do not require a course in world music, but some

Figure 8: Curricular combinations by institution

I = introduction; S = survey; T = required topics course; M = menu of choices

I	S	T	M	Number of institutions
	x			82
x	x			37
	x		x	22
	x	x		11
x	x		x	11
			x	7
x	x	x		7
		x		6
	x	x	x	6
x			x	5
x		x		3
x	x	x	x	3
x		x	x	2
x				1
		x	x	1
			TOTAL	204

of them do include one in their menu of choices. Of the 51 institutions with a menu of courses, 34 include a world music or ethnomusicology course in the menu; 17 of these institutions had previously answered that they do not require such a course.

As mentioned above, the historical survey was by far the most common element of these curricula. The mean number of credits in the survey was 7.5, with a median and mode of 6, and the mean number of courses was 2.5, with a median and mode of 2. These figures are in line with Seaton's finding that 40% of his sample used a two-semester survey and 40% used a three-semester survey.²⁶

Every institution with a survey reported that the survey was organized chronologically as opposed to by topics. Teachers said that they spend a significant portion of the survey with each of the six traditional periods of music history, with an average between 11 and 19 percent as shown in **Figure 10**. Perhaps these numbers account for the very small amount of world music in the survey, which was below 5% on average.

26. Douglass Seaton, "A Survey and Some Questions," 23.

Figure 9: World music/ethnomusicology requirement

Requirement	Sample
One course	43% ($n = 87$)
More than one course	1% ($n = 2$)
No	39% ($n = 79$)
No, but in survey	17% ($n = 36$)

Figure 10: Percentage of the survey spent on each period/topic

Period/Topic	Mean time spent
Antiquity/Medieval period (Antiquity to 1400)	11%
Renaissance/Early Modern period (1400–1600)	13%
Baroque period (1600–1750)	16%
Classical period (1750–1800)	16%
Nineteenth century	19%
Twentieth and twenty-first centuries	19%
Non-Western or World music	5%
Other	1%

The final two categories, the required period or topics course that all students take, and the menu of courses from which students choose, were more diverse, but still showed the predominance of Western art music. By a wide margin, the required courses were based on historical periods, averaging 4.7 credits and 1.6 courses; world music occupied 1.2 credits and 0.6 courses, while popular music occupied 0.75 credits and half of a course. For institutions with a menu of choices, the choices were a little more varied. Courses on historical periods were still the most frequent, appearing on 46 of 51 menus. Conceptual topics such as Women and Music or Film Music were the next most common choice on the menu, with 44; popular music appeared on 36 menus, and world music on 34.

Findings: Teaching Methods and Assessment

The next part of the survey asked two sets of questions directed at how individual instructors teach and assess their students. For these questions, it was not necessary to combine duplicates from the same institution and it would not

have been possible to check the answers against published materials. The survey was constructed so that when a respondent indicated that his or her curriculum contained a course in one of the four categories, the survey would present additional questions about that type of course. If the respondent indicated she or he had taught a course within that category in the last five years, the survey presented two further questions on teaching methods and assessment.

Figure 11 shows how frequently each teaching method was used in intro, survey, and topics courses, along with its mean across all three categories.²⁷ For each teaching method there are four horizontal bars, with the mean of all three categories on top, followed by the mean for each category underneath. The methods are sorted by the overall means, but comparing the three lines below each mean shows that teachers did not use the same methods with equal frequency in each category. Lecture is the most common teaching method overall, but while it is used “fairly often” (mean > 4) in the intro and survey courses, it is only used “sometimes” (mean > 3) in topics courses. Guided listening and textbook readings are also used more often in intro and survey courses than in topics courses. Whole-group discussion, readings not from a textbook, and individual or group presentations are more likely to be used in topics courses than in the intro or the survey.

The next question asked teachers to indicate the significance of several different kinds of assessment in terms of a percentage of the student’s course grade. **Figure 12** shows how significantly each assessment figured into student grades for intro, survey, and topics courses, along with its mean across all three categories. By a wide margin, instructors gave the greatest weight to examinations. The mean significance for exams almost reached the level of “very significant” (5 on the scale in the figure) or 30–40% of the overall grade. No other category’s mean rose above “somewhat significant” (3 on the scale) or 10–20% of the overall grade level. One striking difference was in the “non-documented writing under three pages” category; this assessment was more than twice as significant for topics and intro courses as it was for the survey. The research paper, either in long form or short form, ranked relatively low on the list, at “minimally significant” or less than 10% of the grade. The research paper of more than 1250 words was slightly more significant in topics courses than in survey or intro courses, perhaps indicating a correlation with class size; however, the difference is very small.

The low ranking of blogs or wikis as teaching methods and significant modes of assessment correlates with the finding that online music history courses for undergraduate majors are not very common. Only 33 of the 204

27. I decided to combine the required topics and menu of topics categories because I thought the answers would be roughly the same; the difference between the categories has more to do with their position within the curriculum than with differences in course content or presentation mode.

Figure 11: Frequency of use of teaching methods in intro, survey, and topics courses

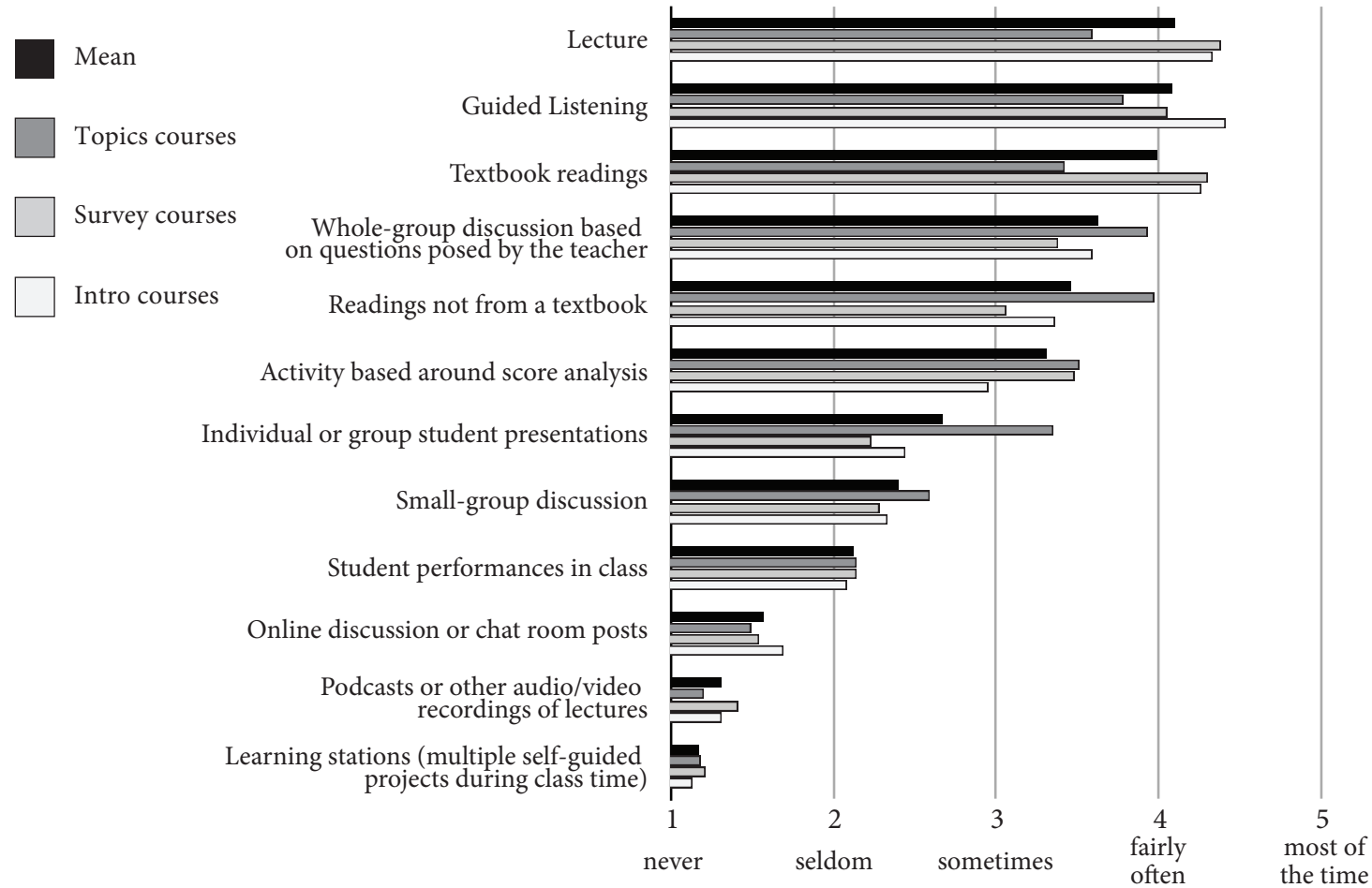
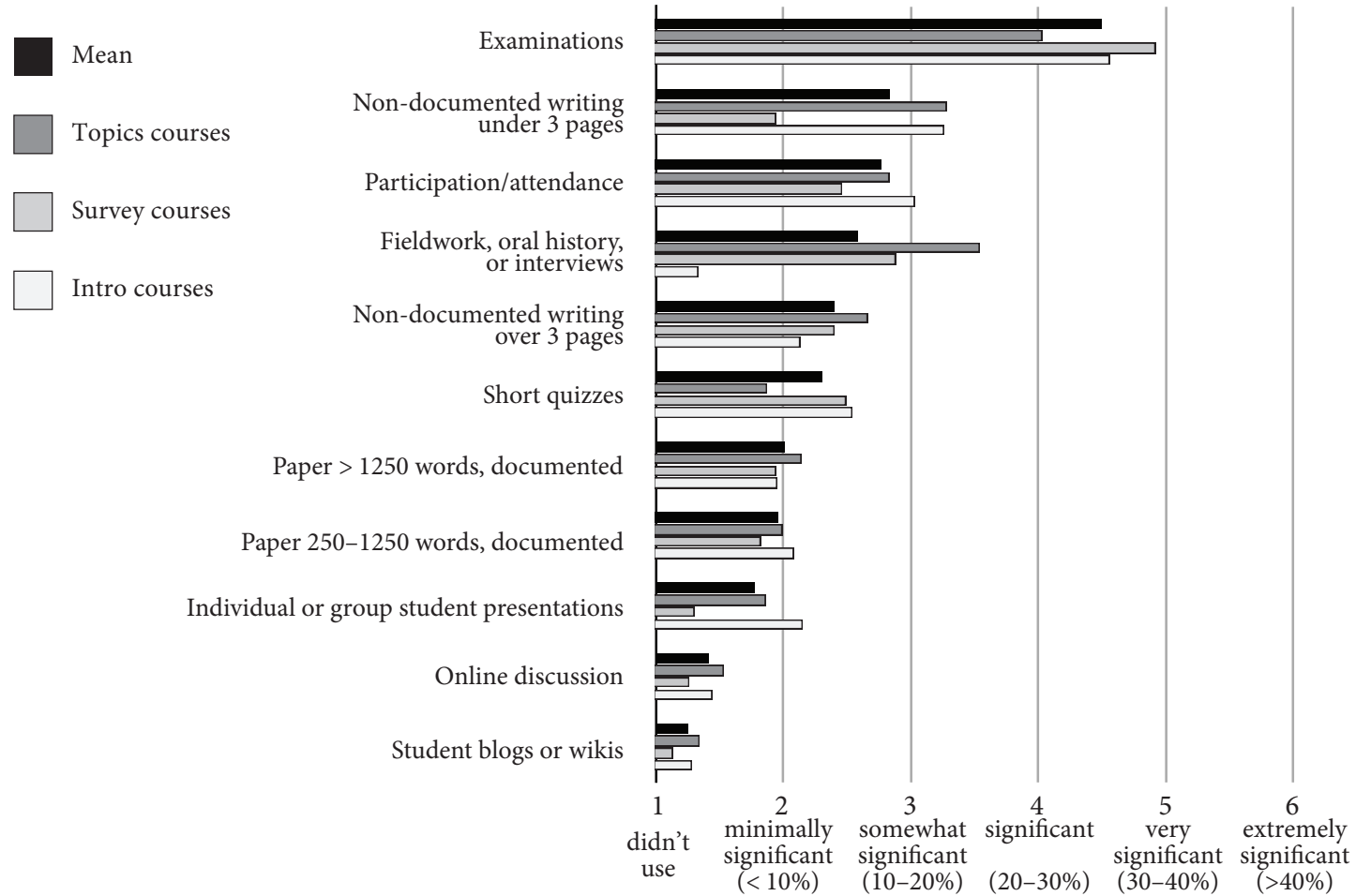


Figure 12: Significance of assessments as percentage of student final grades



institutions acknowledged that any of the music history curriculum for majors was available online. Averaged over the 204 institutions, less than one credit, or a quarter of a class, was available online. Two institutions did have 12 credits and four classes online, but most of the 33 had only one course online. This does not account for courses that have an online learning management system or use online resources, but still meet in a classroom.

Findings: Objectives

The final section of the survey addressed the question of what objectives music history teachers consider to be most significant. The survey presented 26 sample objectives, divided onto three separate pages to make the task more manageable. The objectives on each page appeared in a random order for each respondent. While I might have looked for published objectives in music history textbooks or course catalogs, I chose to write my own, with the goal of representing the entire range of views about what might be important in an undergraduate music history curriculum. I recognized that I would never capture every objective that exists in the field, and that I might omit some widely held ones. For this reason I allowed respondents to add objectives that they felt were “very important” but not represented in the list, and 69 people chose to do so. Many of these “other” responses revealed some areas that I neglected, while some restated aspects of my objectives in other words or with a different emphasis.

Respondents rated the significance of each objective on a five-point Likert scale from “not at all significant” to “extremely significant.” In each objective I emphasized a few key words in bold to help respondents quickly locate the main concept. The first two pages addressed the overall coverage of the curriculum. Page one listed seven objectives in a random order; in **Figure 13** they are sorted by the mean.

The data show a clear preference for three of the seven choices. On a five-point scale where “Not at all Significant” equals a score of one and “Extremely Significant” equals a score of five, the objectives relating to chronology, cultural context and composers all received a mean score above four, meaning that a majority of respondents ranked them as Very Significant or Extremely Significant. The four remaining objectives, which focused on world music, organology, popular music, and performers, received a mean ranking between 2.35 and 2.82, indicating that most respondents placed them in the “somewhat significant” or “minimally significant” category.

While the objectives on the first page address the basic questions of what a music history curriculum covers, the nine objectives on page two focus on more specific concerns, such as depth versus breadth, reception history, or analysis (**Figure 14**). These objectives elicited less decisive responses, and all

Figure 13: Significance of objectives for a music history curriculum as a whole. Responses to prompt “After completing an undergraduate music degree, students should be able to . . .”

1 = not at all; 2 = minimally; 3 = somewhat; 4 = very; 5 = extremely

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	MEAN
1. trace the basic chronology of Western art music , including the dates of the style periods and of the major composers and works	1	5	33	87	99	225	4.24
2. discuss how the music of the Western art tradition fits into the larger cultural context of its day	0	5	36	91	93	225	4.21
3. identify and describe the most significant composers in each of the six traditional periods of music history	1	6	39	95	84	225	4.13
4. identify and describe several music cultures from outside of the Western popular or art music traditions	33	51	79	47	15	225	2.82
5. describe the development of the major families of musical instruments	12	94	80	29	10	225	2.69
6. identify and describe the significant musicians, styles, and cultural contexts of Western popular music from 1800 to the present	36	68	74	34	13	225	2.64
7. identify and describe the most significant performers in each of the six traditional periods of music history	30	102	82	6	5	225	2.35

Figure 14: Significance of objectives for a music history curriculum as a whole. Responses to prompt “After completing an undergraduate music degree, students should be able to . . .”

1 = not at all; 2 = minimally; 3 = somewhat; 4 = very; 5 = extremely

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	MEAN
1. identify how musical works reflect the major intellectual trends of their time in philosophy, religion, society or aesthetics	1	5	53	102	64	225	3.99
2. apply music-analytical methods within the context of music history	0	13	47	106	59	225	3.94
3. discuss a few representative works in considerable detail	1	10	68	98	48	225	3.81
4. identify the cultural function for which a given musical work was designed, and explain how this function is reflected in the work	0	12	64	107	42	225	3.80
5. describe and analyze how political or cultural events affected the reception of musical works	2	20	95	86	22	225	3.47
6. discuss the most salient aspects of a large number of works	3	34	81	82	25	225	3.41
7. describe the cultural aspects that affected women or minority composers, performers, patrons or critics	5	36	99	67	18	225	3.25
8. identify the historical performance practice considerations for performing a given work.	3	38	102	64	18	225	3.25
9. compare and contrast the economic aspects of music in different times and places, including patronage and the marketplace.	4	43	108	58	12	225	3.14

had a mean score of between three and four, indicating that most people ranked them just above the midpoint on average.

Highest on the scale was to identify how musical works reflect the major intellectual trends of their time, closely followed by “apply music-analytical methods.” The first of these correlates well with the cultural context objective from page one, while the second is a staple of textbooks and anthologies. Respondents showed a small preference for depth over breadth, ranking “discuss a few representative works in considerable detail” four tenths (0.4) of a point higher on average than “discuss the salient aspects of a large number of works.” Next in importance are the cultural function of works and reception history, with historical performance practice, women and minority musicians, and economic aspects of music at the bottom of this list.

The third page of objectives focused specifically on critical thinking and writing (**Figure 15**). I separated these from the rest because writing has traditionally been a major part of the music history/ethnomusicology curriculum. Writing was the focus of the Fall 2013 issue of this *Journal*, and several other articles have addressed writing in previous issues.²⁸ I also included some objectives on this page that target key skills for musicological writing, such as constructing a thesis or source criticism.

Figure 15: Significance of critical thinking and writing objectives for a music history curriculum as a whole. Responses to prompt “After completing an undergraduate music degree, students should be able to . . .”

1 = not at all; 2 = minimally; 3 = somewhat; 4 = very; 5 = extremely

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	MEAN
1. find and evaluate sources, including books, scores, journals, recordings, and websites, for a given research topic in music history.	6	21	41	90	66	224	3.84
2. write a compelling description of a musical work that explains its significance.	6	8	61	108	41	224	3.76
3. articulate a sound critical judgment of a musical work, based on knowledge of its aesthetic and cultural context.	4	12	68	100	40	224	3.71

28. <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/issue/view/16>

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	MEAN
4. construct a compelling thesis about a musical topic.	7	18	63	84	52	224	3.70
5. write a substantial research paper using scholarly sources documented by footnotes and a bibliography.	11	21	45	94	53	224	3.70
6. evaluate historical statements for credibility, accuracy, bias, etc.	6	19	80	78	41	224	3.58
7. synthesize information from primary sources in music history, such as letters, treatises, and music criticism.	10	25	72	86	31	224	3.46
8. write historically accurate, informative program notes for a recital program.	14	31	62	81	36	224	3.42
9. accurately list bibliographic sources in a standard format such as Chicago–Turabian.	10	45	65	68	36	224	3.33
10. identify the historiological assumptions and paradigms of a music history textbook.	24	68	85	39	7	223	2.72

Here again, the variance between the highest and lowest rankings was not as large as on page one, with a range from 2.72 to 3.84. The top objective in this category was to find and evaluate sources, a skill that the Internet revolution has only made more crucial. This ranked slightly higher than constructing a thesis, writing a description or critical judgment of a musical work, or writing a complete paper including documentation, but all of these were in the top tier.

In the bottom half of the list were two objectives I expected to rank higher, those dealing with primary sources and with bibliography. The lowest-ranked objective, “to identify the historiological assumptions and paradigms of a music history textbook,” ranked half a category lower than the rest of the group, at 2.72. However, a very similar objective, “evaluate historical statements for credibility, accuracy, bias, etc.,” was ranked higher at 3.58.

Figure 16: Respondents' additional objectives

Objective	# responses	Objective	# responses
comments	12	music of the present	2
listening	11	teaching	2
style	10	score study	2
writing	7	source criticism	2
critical thinking	6	breadth	1
appreciation	5	intellectual trends	1
performance	4	musical criticism	1
analysis	3	notation	1
historiography	3	research	1
chronology	2	synthesis	1
graduate study	2	world music	1
methods	2		

Respondents had much to say to the question, “If there is an objective that you feel is very important but is not reflected in the list above, please write it here.” Omitting a few “nos” or “not applicables,” there were 64 substantive responses to this question (**Figure 16**). In order to make sense of the variety in these responses, I coded them according to the main topic they proposed. Some responses included more than one objective, so I assigned 80 codes in total. Under the code of “comment” I placed 12 statements that did not propose objectives, but rather commented on other aspects of the curriculum or the survey.

The two most frequent codes were listening and style. Under “listening” I included such proposed objectives as “improve listening skills,” and “listening to masterworks with mindfulness and basic theoretic skills.” I must admit that listening is not well represented in my list of objectives. The term itself does not occur in my list, although many of my objectives would require listening, or would build listening skills as well. Under the term “style,” I coded any proposed objective that mentioned the word, such as “aural recognition and visual recognition of styles and genres” or “identify salient stylistic characteristics from examining a score or listening to a recording.” As exemplified by Jan LaRue’s *Guidelines for Style Analysis*, published in 1970 and revised in 1992 and 2011,²⁹ style has been a mainstay of music history teaching, and the frequency of this term in the comments indicates its continuing relevance. While the term “style”

29. Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis* (New York: Norton, 1970); Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 1992); and Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis*, expanded 2nd ed., ed. Marian Green LaRue (Sterling Heights, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2011).

did occur twice in my list, both times on page one, style would also play a large role in such objectives as “discuss a few representative works in considerable detail,” or “apply music-analytical methods within the context of music history.” Still, I might have focused more directly on this category.

Another topic that did not appear in my objectives was one that I coded as “appreciation,” exemplified by the comment, “become a lifelong lover and appreciator of music.” While this is familiar as an objective for non-major classes, it did not occur to me to include it for music majors.

Discussion: Curriculum and Assessment

In my view the most significant statistic in this study is the “music history/ethnomusicology” percentage of 8.5%, or roughly nine credits (three classes) in a 120-hour degree program. I had feared that the percentage might be lower, closer to 5%, given the many pressures from education certification programs, state system mandates, efforts to limit credits to 120, and so forth. I suspect that for many, this space seems far too limited to do justice to either the depth or the breadth of music we would like to teach. However, most college curricula are a zero-sum game, and the expansion of music history/ethnomusicology generally requires a contraction of something else. For programs that enjoy the average amount or more, this data may provide leverage to maintain music history/ethnomusicology credits; for those who do not, it may provide leverage for expansion.

For most of us, a more realistic question is how to use the time we already have. Taken as a whole, these findings show that music history teaching to undergraduate music majors remains rather traditional not only in its curriculum (as Seaton found), but also in its methodology and assessment. The strongest evidence for this is the finding that the chronological survey of European art music is the most common element of the curriculum. While 37 institutions combine the survey with an introductory course and 21 combine it with a menu of topics courses, 81 of 204 feature only the survey. As useful as the survey may be, one would expect that adding or substituting a menu of topics courses would allow for a broader diversity of music, cultures, and approaches.

Despite efforts to de-center traditional music history by adding coursework on world music and popular music or departing from the chronological approach, these remain on the periphery at most institutions. It might appear that our curriculum has failed to adapt to the globalization of American culture and the concomitant decline in the cultural cachet of the traditional music history canon. One counter-argument to this claim might be the relatively high importance of cultural context in the list of objectives, which could demonstrate that emphasis has shifted from composers and styles to a broader cultural view. It would be more difficult to judge the extent to which topics related to gender and

sexuality have entered the curriculum, because the survey did not specifically ask about those topics, as it did about popular and world music. Surely many will be disappointed to learn that less than half of the institutions surveyed require a course devoted to world music or ethnomusicology. While world music is sometimes included in the survey, it comprises only 5% of the total instructional time on average.

The fact that lecture, textbooks, and examinations are still so important, despite widespread doubts about their effectiveness, will give some people pause, as will the very low availability of music history courses online.³⁰ More troubling is the fact that neither formal, documented research nor informal writing such as short essays or blogs were very significant forms of assessment. This seems like a missed opportunity, to say the least. Writing, along with its attendant skills of research and critical thinking, is highly valued both in liberal studies curricula and the world at large. No other musical discipline is better suited to develop writing than music history and ethnomusicology. Unfortunately, introductory and survey courses frequently include such large numbers of students that writing and other grading-intensive teaching methods become impractical.

Discussion: Objectives

Common pedagogical wisdom suggests that good teaching starts with clearly defined and achievable objectives. Every time I teach our two-semester survey, the scope of what I would like to teach vastly exceeds the time allotted. With only three or four semesters to teach music history, we need a solid set of objectives to guide our choices. Naturally our objectives will be informed by what our students need for their professional careers, the requirements of liberal studies curricula, and other practical concerns, but they also reflect what we deem important for students to know about our discipline.

Here again, teachers responded most positively to the traditional aims of the music history curriculum. On the first page of objectives, “Trace the basic chronology of Western art music” received the highest mean score of any objective, closely followed by “discuss how the music of the Western art tradition fits into the larger cultural context” and “identify and describe the most significant composers.” The emphasis on cultural context may reflect the rising prominence of this area in musicology since the 1980s. The relatively low rankings of world music, popular music, and performers align with what the survey showed about the content of the curricula, and suggest that the increasing importance of those concepts in musicological scholarship has yet to make a significant impact on music history for undergraduates. These figures may justify (or, on the contrary,

30. See for example José Antonio Bowen, *Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology Out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

reflect) the fact that world music, popular music, and performers receive far less attention in music history textbooks than do composers.

The second and third pages of objectives, which did not yield much variance between the responses, lead to a second observation. Music history teachers have many, perhaps too many, objectives to accomplish within the three or four courses of an undergraduate curriculum. In focusing on such a vast expanse of history and on so many different skills and domains, we risk failing to do justice to any of them. We may wish to concentrate on specific objectives in certain classes, leaving others to be addressed at different points in the curriculum. Perhaps some courses really do need to focus on memorization of composers' names and dates, leaving other courses to investigate cultural context or develop research skills. In curricula that feature a one-semester survey plus period courses, we might do well to postpone the research project until one of the period courses, for example. In a multi-semester survey, perhaps one semester could focus on the mechanics of style analysis while another semester delves deep into the cultural context of a place, repertory, or people. There are surely many possible structural possibilities, but it seems that music history teachers may need to prioritize our objectives for the undergraduate curriculum more intentionally.

The goal of this study has been to establish what exists in music history teaching today. Even if the data largely confirm what many of us already know about the field from our experiences and our discussions with colleagues, there is food for thought in some areas. With a "music history/ethnomusicology percentage" of 8.5%, we enjoy the privilege of influencing a significant portion of an undergraduate's education, even if three or four courses often seems woefully inadequate. Decisions about what to cover and what to omit will continue to be difficult. World music does occupy a portion of the curriculum, but is it enough? Considering the importance of popular music in our culture, does it receive enough emphasis in our curricula?

There is much more to interpret here, such as correlations between the type and size of institution and its curriculum, teaching methods, or assessments. There are also areas I omitted from the survey to make it less taxing for respondents. For example, I would like to know the percentage of music history classes that are being taught by performers rather than (ethno)musicologists, but I removed those questions when I recognized that they were more appropriate for administrators than faculty. Of course the million-dollar question is the degree to which we are succeeding as a discipline in helping our students to achieve the outcomes we set for them, but that is a much greater challenge to determine. On a smaller scale, I hope to repeat this survey in five or ten years in order to see how the field continues to grow and change. I will conclude by thanking everyone who responded to the survey for their help in collecting this valuable information.