

Dear Aspiring Future Music Major:

Congratulations on your decision to major in music at Northwestern State University! NSU has a wonderful array of courses for you to take to hone your craft as a musician and music teacher. One of the MOST IMPORTANT areas of your subject that you should know well is MUSIC THEORY. The study of music theory is a basis from which you will grow as a performer, conductor, scholar, and pedagogue.

The music theory courses at NSU are designed as a 4-semester track that should be completed in the first four semesters of residency. These courses are prerequisites to upper level courses, such as conducting, form and analysis, and music education courses. It is important that you take these courses seriously—if you drop or fail one of these courses, it may set your graduation date back by a semester or more.

With that in mind, we want you to be well prepared for the music theory diagnostic exam, which you will take during Freshman Connection. The following skills will be tested on this exam:

- Reading notes in both treble and bass clef.
- Note/rest values.
- The order of sharps and flats.
- Identifying and constructing major key signatures.
- Writing scales on a staff in both treble and bass clef.
- Time signature identification.

In order to do well in the music theory courses, all entering freshmen should have a basic knowledge of these skills. In order to help you prepare, I encourage you to visit one of the following web sites, which have drills in music theory. These web sites will help you learn more and more about music theory, and will also provide the drills necessary to commit the information to memory. The web sites are:

www.musictheory.net

www.emusictheory.com

www.teoria.net

In addition to these web sites, there are two iOS apps put out by musictheory.net:

1. **'Tenuto'**(\$3.99) provides students with aural and written drills for practicing everything from note identification all the way up to complex seventh chord constructions.

2. **'Theory Lessons,'** (\$2.99) is basically a theory e-textbook with step-by-step breakdowns of material from spelling scales, part writing, all the way up to the Neapolitan (including audio files built into the app).

Both apps work in iPhone and iPad. You may discover some other music theory web sites that will help you, or you may wish to purchase some software with music theory concepts and drills. Good luck on your diagnostic theory test this summer, and if you need any help, please do not hesitate to contact me at coreilk@nsula.edu, or Dr. Malena McLaren at mclarenm@nsula.edu.

Have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Dr. Kristine Coreil
Music Theory Coordinator
And Horn Professor

A Member of the University of Louisiana System