**NMSU Music Department**
**Graduate Application Process**
**Suggested Writing Assignments for Writing Sample**

Papers must be written in a scholarly format and require proper documentation of all information in any accepted major format (MLA, APA, CMS, Turabian, etc.). Papers should be 4-5 pages in length (1,200 – 1,500 words), include a minimum of three score examples and should be drawn from a mixture of sources including books, current periodicals, program notes/liner notes, and various Internet resources.

**Suggested Topics**

Option One – Composers of the Second Viennese School:  Schoenberg, Berg, or Webern. Select one of the composers from this group. Offer a brief biographical overview, discuss the composer's major compositional contributions, and provide a brief technical discussion of one of the selected composer's art songs.

Option Two – Mainstream Twentieth-Century Composers:  Stravinsky, Bartok, or Copland. Select one of the composers from this group. Offer a brief biographical overview, discuss the composer's major compositional contributions, and provide a brief technical discussion of one symphonic work or ballet suite.

Option Three – Minimalists/Post-Minimalists:  Glass, Reich, or Adams. Select one of the composers from this group. Offer a brief biographical overview, discuss the composer's major compositional contributions, and provide a brief overview and selected technical discussion of one opera.

**Goals/Objectives**
To evaluate the ability of the applicant to research a given topic and appropriately/effectively construct a scholarly paper that demonstrates an understanding of the material being presented, informs the reader, and provides substantive content in a well-organized manner within the proper style and with accepted documentation.

Evaluative Criteria for Research Paper in Music

|  | Criteria | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Purpose** | • How well does the document achieve its desired outcomes?<br>• How effectively does it inform the reader? | ▪ Document's expected outcomes are self-evident and clearly match author's purpose for writing.<br>▪ Document is significantly informative. | ▪ Document's outcomes relate to author's purpose for writing but are not clear.<br>▪ Document is weak or significantly incomplete in information. |
| **Reader/Rhetorical situation** | • How appropriate is the document to the reading circumstances? | • The document is designed for the reading circumstances. | • The document is not designed for the reading circumstances. |
| **Information** | • How credible is the information?<br>• How ethically presented is the information?<br>• How well researched is the information?<br>• When appropriate, how accurate and insightful is the analysis? | ▪ Information allows the readers to scrutinize the expected.<br>▪ Information is researched, documented, complete, accurate, and ethically presented. | ▪ Information is incomplete and/or inaccurate.<br>▪ Information is not appropriately researched, documented, or ethically presented. |
| **Organization** | • How well organized is the information for the readers?<br>• How accurate is the page design? | ▪ The presentation and sequencing of information allow for the reader to logically process the ideas.<br>• The page design meets the specified requirements. | • The reader has difficulty following and processing the flow of information.<br>• The page design visually hinders the readers' ability to access the information presented. |
| **Style** | • How effective is the author's voice and style for this writing situation?<br>• How appropriate is word choice?<br>• How well does the document follow standards of grammar, mechanics, and usage? | ▪ Voice, word choice, sentence and paragraph construction are suitable for the readers' expectations.<br>▪ Grammar, mechanics, and usage match the conventions of the genre. | ▪ Voice, word choice, sentence and paragraph construction do not meet the readers' expectations.<br>▪ Grammar, mechanics, and usage are frequently a problem, given the conventions of the genre. |