

Connecticut College Department of Music
Academic Year 2026-2027

Music Theory Self-Placement Guide

These descriptions should help you to select a course that's right for you. Please feel free to email Midge Thomas, music department chair, at metho@conncoll.edu with general questions, or email the course instructor(s) directly. We look forward to seeing you in the music department!

If you'd like to brush up on your theory, teoria.com is a great website for review and practice.

Course	Description	Recommended Student Background
MUS 123: Making Music at the Keyboard <i>Offered fall '26 and spring '27</i> Contact: Sam Oram, soram@conncoll.edu or Midge Thomas, metho@conncoll.edu	An introduction to basic piano keyboard skills, fundamentals of music theory, and music notation. Topics include intervals, time signatures, key signatures, and chord construction. Weekly lab sessions involve hands-on learning at the keyboard, including creative applications.	Intended for students with little or no background in reading musical notation or playing a keyboard instrument.
MUS 206: Theory I: Harmony, Melody, Rhythm <i>Offered fall '26</i> Contact: Midge Thomas, metho@conncoll.edu	An integrated approach to music theory and musicianship, focusing on how harmony, melody, and rhythm operate in a diverse repertoire of musical styles and traditions. Creative, analytical, and theoretical work provides a framework for exploring diatonic harmonic practices, rhythmic organization, and formal structures.	Intended for students who have completed MUS 123, who have some musical background and are able to read music fluently in at least one clef, or who have studied music theory in high school.
MUS 323: Post-Tonal Theory <i>Offered spring '27</i> Contact: Midge Thomas, metho@conncoll.edu	This course focuses primarily on 20th- and 21st-century music that operates outside of the tonal tradition, focusing on innovations in the areas of pitch, rhythm, texture, form, and notation. Theoretical and musicianship work is balanced with listening, analytical, and creative projects.	Intended for students who have completed MUS 206 or MUS 223, or who took AP music theory in high school.