

SOME ADVICE FOR THE WRITING OF YOUR PAPER

These are essential and basic notes to test the flow and content of your paper.

WRITING STYLE

- 1- Make the sentences short and direct. Use simple sentences. Avoid compound sentences unless they are absolutely necessary.
- 2- Avoid the verb “to be” and all its conjugations, i.e., is, was, has been, will be, etc. In consequence, you will prefer the active tense.
- 3- Use specific adjectives. Avoid generic adjectives like “great” or “wonderful”.
- 4- Remember: In English, the scholarly style is NOT FLORID, but brief and to the point. Simplicity and directness reveal that you know what you are talking about!
- 5- Use the spellchecker in WORD to correct all grammatical mistakes before submitting the paper to your advisor. However, still check it yourself; there are words that exist in the dictionary that would still be wrong in the context of a sentence.
- 6- Titles and foreign terms should be in italics or quotation marks. Check the Chicago Manual of Style for the specifics of usage.

PRESENTATION OF YOUR ARGUMENTS.

1. If you make a statement of fact, you have to prove it in the course of your paper, or you must acknowledge the source of your information in a footnote
2. Go from the general to the specific. Keep the “general” information short. The reader’s time should be spent mostly in the specific and original contributions of your paper.
3. Have a central idea. Ideas must flow logically into one another. Keep related topics together. Do not jump to unrelated topics without transition. The reader should not have to read anything twice or go back because something did not make sense. This counts for the organization of the paper as a whole, as well as within the chapters and paragraphs.
4. Label your chapters and sections in a logical way and remain consistent with your choice of labeling style: i.e. Chapter 1, section 1.1 etc. Use labels in lists as well. Use labels for your examples. Remember to guide the reader through the different sections with appropriate transitions.
5. This is a music research paper. **YOUR PAPER MUST INCLUDE MUSICAL EXAMPLES IN THE BODY OF THE DISCUSSION.**
6. The paper should be self-sufficient in the defense of its thesis. You will include all contextual definitions, examples, tables, footnotes and bibliographical sources that will help the reader to see, compare, and continue to consult the argument of your paper. The reader should not be startled by missing links of information.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATIONS:

1. If you assert something as being true, you must either prove it in your paper, or cite an author who has proved it elsewhere. Otherwise your assertion is a subjective opinion that you must qualify as such.
2. Make sure you check your style manuals ([The Chicago Manual of Style](#) is recommended at Notre Dame), the Library’s help sheets, and/or Bibliography Course notebooks before you submit any papers. There are very specific rules that **MUST** be followed in order to obtain approval of your paper. It is not the role of this seminar to teach you proper research writing style. Do your legwork on this issue!

