

**University of Central Florida  
Department of Music**

**MUH 3211 Music History & Literature I  
Fall 2013**

**Journal Essay Assignment Examples**

1. Discuss the musical organization of the Vespers service. Include in your essay such topics as text source, organization, the place of vespers in the church day, the type of music used in the period under study and how it developed. Your essay should include all terms and musical types associated with the vespers music service. Identify some important examples/composers of the vespers from the period under study.
2. Discuss the liturgical mass of the Roman Catholic service. Include in your discussion the symbolism of the mass and the sequence of events in the service of the mass. Use correct terms. Discuss the Proper of the Mass and the Ordinary of the Mass and what distinguishes them.
3. Discuss the development of early polyphony. Include in your discussion the major extant sources of early polyphony and its musical characteristics.
4. Discuss the social and cultural history of Europe from the beginning of the Middle Ages around 450 until its end around 1450. Include in your discussion the rise of the various social classes, economic and living conditions, the overall improvement in society toward the late Middle Ages, and the events of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and their impact.
5. Discuss developments in music theory from the ancient Greeks until the early Renaissance. In your discussion identify pivotal theorists, their most important publications, and specific contributions they made to the history of music theory.
6. Discuss Renaissance instruments & instrumental music. Describe types of instruments and how they were used. Discuss the repertoire available to Renaissance instrumentalists and the development of an idiomatic instrumental repertoire. Include keyboard, string, wind, and brass instruments.
7. Discuss the organ, harpsichord, and clavichord of the late-Medieval through Renaissance periods. Include which instruments were used in various genres of music; basic principles of design and tone production; tone characteristics; and important composers, collections, and works.
8. Discuss Religious developments and conflicts during the Renaissance and their effect on sacred music. Include criticisms of Renaissance sacred music from a clerical point of view and the solutions that were offered. Identify important individuals and events.

9. Discuss the Burgundian School of Renaissance composers. Include what areas constituted the Burgundian lands, important composers, and their contributions to the development of Renaissance music.
10. Discuss the development of Renaissance madrigal from its roots in late fifteenth-century Italian popular music until 1600. Include both English and Italian madrigalists in your discussion. Include the development of musical style, text considerations, and identify important composers of Renaissance madrigals.
11. Discuss the development of early opera in the seventeenth century. Include in your discussion important characteristics of early opera, innovations, important composers and important early works.
12. Compare the seventeenth century genres opera, cantata, and oratorio. Which genre was used in certain situations? How are they different? How are they similar?
13. Discuss French opera in the seventeenth century, the *tragédie lyrique*. What are the characteristics of *tragédie lyrique* and how do they differ from Italian opera? What role did the *vingt-quatre violons du roi* play in French opera? Identify important composers and works.
14. Discuss seventeenth-century instrumental music in Italy, Germany, and France. Summarize important instruments, new genres and important composers. Also point out important regional differences in instrumental music.
15. Discuss how the requirements of J. S. Bach's respective positions influenced the type of music he composed at each place, focusing on his positions at Weimar, Cöthen, and Leipzig. Include in your discussion a summary of Bach's duties at each post and the music he composed as a result.
16. Discuss and compare the three main areas of Händel's compositional output: purely instrumental music, opera seria, and oratorio. Discuss musical characteristics of the most important examples from each of these three areas as well as their relative success in Händel's time.
17. Discuss the music of Henry Purcell, focusing on his stage music as well as his sacred and court music. Give important examples of each and describe their musical styles.
18. Describe and compare similarities and differences among opera seria, English oratorio, Lutheran choral cantata, and English opera (Purcell). That is, what characteristics do all of these genres have in common; what are important differences?