



Film Writing: Script and Score

An Original Major

Created by Benny Goetting, Class of 2020

Major Advisor: Justin Merritt, Music

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Section I: Introduction and Required Courses

Description: This major covers a wide area of experience and knowledge in the field of creating media for film, TV, and theatre, with emphasis on two areas: script/screenwriting and scores. Through this major, I will learn the many components of writing/scoring for film in areas including, but not limited to, music theory, composition, creative writing, screenwriting, and directing. In addition to film, I will be able to create for theatre, TV, and literary fiction.

What are the big ideas?

1. What effect will an integrated study have on the quality of produced content of writings and music? What about my set of knowledge and skills will make me the preferred hire?

2. With my education, I will learn how music affects film and writing and what effects it can have on an audience.

3. How will integrating music and writing assist my interest in careers in film more effectively than emphasizing in just one specific area?

4. What opportunities of an integrated study will allow opportunities to work with students of other majors or interests to create an immersive final project?

5. What makes this major a good liberal arts major, in terms of integrating different departments and focusing on the resources St. Olaf has to offer?

What are the specific questions?

1. How will focusing on creatively writing in different genres and forms enhance my capabilities of writing for film, television, and literature?

2. How will my current musical compositions be improved through education in courses such as Music Theory and Composition?

3. With courses such as Dance and Theatre, how will my understanding of actors and performers improve along with my education as a creator?

Class Requirements for the Major

Area I: Skill Foundation - A foundational level that contains courses that serve as building blocks for higher levels of courses. For example, Theory I is a foundational course for Composition I and II, Creative Writing is the foundation of Screenwriting and Advanced Fiction Writing, etc.

1. Theory and Aural Skills I (Music 112): Provides the basic understandings of musical structure necessary for composition and arrangement. **Completed:** Fall Semester, 1st Year

2. Craft of Creative Writing (English 150): Assists in development of creating original ideas and learning to create coherent written compositions. Will be followed up with Screenwriting and Advanced Fiction Writing. **Planned:** Spring Semester, 2nd Year

3. Intro to Film Studies (Film 101): Teaches skills for analysis/critiques of film from various lenses, which improves my skills of creating my own films. **Planned:** Fall Semester, 3rd Year

4. TV Studio Production at Carleton College (177): This course will focus most on the production side of film projects, drawing from all areas of production, such as sound recording, scripting, directing, etc. **Planned:** Fall Trimester, 3rd Year

Area II: Skill Development - These courses are the more advanced follow-up courses to the knowledge and skills founded in the previous level. This area contains more 200 and 300 level courses and serve the purpose of refining certain skills in the major.

1. Composition I (Music 223): Emphasis of the "score" part of the major title, moving from general music theory to the specific building blocks of composition, with recommended composition lessons. This class will also be used to improve the musical compositions I already create. **Planned:** Spring Semester, 2nd Year

2. Electronic Music (Music 225): Focusing most heavily on the process of creating music in the modern era, this course will cover recording and producing music on various mediums, such as MIDI, synthesizers, and other digital softwares that have become the norm in modern music production. **Planned:** Interim, 3rd Year

3. Advanced Fiction Writing (English 372): As a continuation/follow-up course to Creative Writing, this course provides advanced education in original written compositions with more advanced plots, characters, etc. **Planned:** Spring Semester, 3rd Year

4. Intermediate Stage Direction (Theatre 338): The pinnacle course of the Theatre and Film section, this offers hands-on experience in the art of directing original projects through the use/assistance of a cast and crew; a necessity in assistance of completing the Senior Project. **Planned:** Fall Semester, 4th Year

Area III: Synthesis and History - This level contains courses that deal with creation and completion of ideas and projects while learning about the mechanisms behind each course and how different facets of the major work.

1. Film History (Film 240): Similar to Film Studies, this course shows students the evolution of film and how ideas change over time. This helps students learn about what ideas of their own can be most impactful, relevant, and important to the time. **Planned:** Fall Semester, 4th Year

2. Composition II: Orchestration (Music 324): Serves as a combination of knowledge and experience gained from Electronic Music and Comp. I; provides education in an environment most similar to a professional setting, allowing me to orchestrate my own compositions. **Planned:** Spring Semester, 3rd Year

3. Screenwriting (English 296): Emphasizing the "script" area of the major, this course will cover the most essential area of writing for film, which will prove helpful for both possible senior

projects. Additionally, I will learn how to adapt my own creations into screenwriting form. **Planned:**
Fall Semester, 3rd Year

4. Drama and Moral Choice (English 393): Being the final course centered around writing, this course will serve as a finishing touch to a well-rounded education in writing. The course will focus on dramatic situations and the nature of human choice, which will make writing such situations more realistic.

Total Major Class Requirements: 13 Courses (Not Accounting for Senior Project)

Other Classes Recommended for the Major: Music Theory II, Modern Dance I and II, Acting Lyric Stage

Section II: Rationale and Completion

How is the plan coherent and how will it relate to other areas of study?

In order to build a curriculum for an integrative and intersectional major, I focused my major on drawing from multiple areas which I viewed as helpful or necessary. As previously discussed in the description of Film Writing, the major contains education in numerous areas all at once, meaning the key was to find which courses aligned well enough to be taken in the same semesters as one another while keeping focus on the two main areas of the major—music composition and writing. Logically, introductory courses to these areas must be completed first; courses such as Music Theory and Craft of Creative Writing should be taken early, as soon as the first semester of the first year to as late as the first semester of sophomore year. Once these first-level classes are completed, this opens the door to numerous advanced-level classes, such as Screenwriting and Adv. Fiction Writing in the writing concentration and Composition/Orchestration in the music concentration. Although writing and music are the "script and score" parts of the major itself, you most likely noticed the addition of the third area, which focuses on theatre and film. Even though the title of the major focuses on "script and score," it is important to note the importance of a well-rounded set of skills. This major is the all-inclusive education of how to create a film, not *just* the music for a film nor *just* the script for a film. With this major, I will be learning how to create an entire film, play, or even a TV show. By including the Theatre and Film section, it will provide an understanding of the worlds for which I will one day create and compose. Despite the major focusing on individuals like myself who are composers, writers, and all-around creators, I still feel it is necessary to gain knowledge and hands-on experience in these fields.

What are the opportunities of a focused study?

One of the largest opportunities that can arise from my focused study will be the impact it will have when I one day enter the world of film. As opposed to having studied just one area of expertise, such as purely writing or only composition, I will have entered the field equipped with knowledge and practical experience in nearly every field possible. Just as I could be hired to score a film, I could just as easily be hired to write or direct as well. In the already hyper-competitive film and music industry, I must be better prepared than my competition. Another opportunity of focused study is the improvement

it could have on the creations, both writing and musical. For example, as I currently compose music for various online projects/podcasts, classes like Composition and Electronic Music will further my ability to work independently and with other creators. The projects I already compose for are assisting me greatly in terms of experience and exposure to the amateur/online world of creating and collaborating, and this focused study can work hand-in-hand with the real life experience I am currently gathering.

How is the study integrative and what makes it a good major for the college?

Although Film Creation has aspects of multiple disciplines, the major's main focus lies with composition of literature and music. To ensure focus remains on this topic, the majority of courses within the major come from the English and Music departments, while also using two of the three planned courses to be taken at Carleton to support this focus. Classes in the departments of theatre and film history are included to create a more well-rounded understanding of the major, but in practice are only used as supporting classes since they do not focus on composition. An integrative major such as Film Creation would be useful major at St. Olaf because it utilizes what I feel to be some of St. Olaf's greatest strengths. Before I decided to pursue an individual major, I chose to come to St. Olaf for the music program, similar to hundreds of other students before me. Although the music major did not quite suit my talents/interests as a composer, the music department still proved to be vital to the construction of my major, along with the majority of classes within the English department. St. Olaf as a college possesses every necessary qualification to help make my major a reality, and for future students who want to combine passions of writing and music. Finally, there is no major like this at St. Olaf that can focus on my specific passions as well as an individual major could achieve.

Why does the major appeal to me? What experience has prepared me for this major?

Since a young age, I have devoted my talents to playing the piano and writing music. As I grew up, I discovered my passion for acting and musical performance. Eventually I began to practice my own craft of creative writing. Ever since these passions became of importance in my life, I have dedicated my high school career, extracurriculars, and independent projects to gain proficiency in these skills. I have been involved in dozens of musical and theatrical productions in high school plays and community theatre. In addition to acting on stage, I have also begun a career in voice acting for online podcasts. As for music, I have been creating compositions along with continuous piano lessons since age six and have recently composed music for various online podcasts. Along with experience, I have been educated in all the areas that compose my major. Lessons and classes that have helped towards my preparation for my major have included improvisation classes, piano and voice lessons, two semesters of Music Theory in college, and numerous English classes in high school, including Speech, World Literature, and AP Lit. I also chose to take Great Conversation in college to work on literature composition as well as criticism and analysis. Because of St. Olaf's wide availability of courses and because of my years of experience in the areas described by my major, I have the utmost confidence in my ability to carry out my individual study with efficiency.

Section III: Senior Projects

Senior Project 1: Stage Creation

I would create, write, and direct an original stage production to perform at the end of my senior year, casting and hiring students to assist me in this production. The play will be in one-act form with an original script. I would hope to receive assistance in technical production and advertising from the Deep End Theatre Company and additional assistance from various music/theatre staff, listed here:

- James McKeel
- Todd Edwards
- Brian Bjorklund
- Dona Freeman

Important resources for this project would include rehearsal/performance space and technical equipment. Thanks to the Pause Stage, the Kelsey Theatre, and the Center for Arts and Dance, there would be no shortage of rooms and theaters available for rehearsals, auditions, and performances. As for technical equipment, the theatre department is clearly capable and equipped to handle lights, sound, and other technical components necessary for a show. I feel this is a useful and integrative capstone project for the major because it would bring together the different areas of the major, mainly drawing from the writing section. This project also involves the supporting major subjects of theatre, acting, and production. While music is not a necessity for most stage productions, I plan to compose and record original music to be played electronically during the show. For evaluation, a staff of theatre faculty, including board members of the CIS and my major advisor. In addition to evaluating the quality of the production itself, they may also consult with the cast, crew, and faculty involved with the show to determine my adequacy and capability in handling a stage production.

Senior Project 2: Original Short Film

The more independently creative of the two proposed senior projects, creating an original film would most likely take more time and resources than a stage production. Together with a cast and crew entirely of students, I will write a script and score an original 20 minute (minimum) film. This project is similar to the stage production project except it relies more on using the St. Olaf campus as a set for the film. I believe there would be enough technical equipment available to assist in producing a fairly minimalist student film. I would also need access to student musicians and recording equipment. Since composing music and orchestrating it can take a considerable amount of extra time and energy, I would think it wise to be able to cast musical directors to help with the process. In contrast to the stage production, the film project would be more integrative and focuses more on the core studies of the major: writing and scoring for film. I would also seek assistance in hiring student directors, editors, and technical crew. Some faculty that may be involved of the production of the film include:

- Justin Merritt
- Kent McWilliams
- Linda Mokdad

This project would be the most similar to my envisioned career. The writing and music courses come into play the most in this project, while still drawing from minor supporting classes that focus on smaller details of films, such as drama, editing, and acting/directing. Out of the two proposed projects, the Original Film would be the better choice for the most integrative and independent capstone project that can truly show how well my education has come together to create a real film. Along the lines of presenting the finished project, I think the best method of presentation is to have a public screening in the Viking Theatre for all students to see. The film would also be uploaded online to YouTube and onto my portfolio for the major so that it can be shown to future employers and other people of the sort. For review, it can be fairly similar to the review of the stage production; CIS board members and other faculty can consult with my cast/crew and all those involved in the film, including the availability to read the script/screenplay of the film and to consult with the orchestra for how well-managed and professional the production of the film was.

Section IV: Consultation/Peer Review and Web Portfolio

Since this is the eighth draft of my proposal, certain sections have been altered due to peer reviews and critiques. The section containing these contributions can be found below in the first post section. Those who contributed to this proposal fall into the following categories: college professors/faculty, college classmates/acquaintances, and previous high school/music instructors. As for faculty consultation, I met with James McKeel, a faculty member of the music/theatre department. Together I went through each aspect of my original major, explaining the classes I chose to include, and how the major matters to me. You should expect a written review of our consultation from James including his thoughts and impressions of our consultation.

An online portfolio of my original major can be found at the following link: <http://filmwritingmajor.weebly.com/> The following information can be found on my portfolio:

- PDFs of each edition of my major proposal
- Original music and writing compositions to have on sample
- PDFs of scripts/screenplays and sheet music for when I begin the senior project
- Information about myself, including my college career/education, independent work, etc.

I hope this proposal has given you all the information and descriptions you would need to properly evaluate the quality of my proposed major. I am very excited and determined to be undergoing this project with you, and I know that the creation and completion of this individual major will open doors and create new pathways in my life. In this major is everything in life that I am passionate about, and I am so honored that the CIS and St. Olaf College are here and willing to help my passions become my reality. Thank you for your consideration.

- Benjamin James Goetting, St. Olaf Class of 2020

Post Section I: Feedback and Peer Critiques

Name: Bruce Benson

Occupation: Pastor (Retired), Professor of Great Conversation (St. Olaf College)

Relationship: Professor - Student

Feedback/Critique: "You've been working! This is a very ambitious proposal. I have not followed up on all your items but I have three quick responses.

1. You probably aren't surprised that there are a few (but not many!) grammatical or typo issues. You just need to proof read.
2. If I counted courses correctly, you are proposing a 17 course major. That's huge. Music is only 10. English is only 9. Etc. You might be asked to pare this back a bit. You can always take more courses than the major requires. Or, for an individual major proposal are you supposed to list everything?
3. Have you confirmed that the Carleton schedule will work? I noticed you have at least one Carleton interim. Is that one of their five week courses so you know it will work OK, or is it actually a winter term course at Carleton? Carleton, you know, isn't on the 4-1-4 like St. Olaf.

Even if you have to pare back, and even if you have to limit your Carleton courses because of schedule conflicts, this looks like a serious proposal, worthy of faculty consideration. Well done."

How This Feedback Was Used:

- Course load was reduced from 17 to 12 courses (at the time of draft #2).
- Proposal was reworked for grammatical, spelling, and syntax errors.
- Backup courses will be presented if Carleton courses don't end up fitting into the curriculum.

Name: Mickaylie Bade

Occupation: English Major at St. Olaf College (Class of '20), Journalist for the Manitou Messenger

Relationship: Friend and Classmate

Feedback Critique: Mickaylie was kind enough to provide a large and in-depth critique of my major, so to save paper: Mickaylie recommended fixing primarily contextual and grammatical blemishes, with additional clarity around the senior projects.

How This Feedback Was Used:

- Specific sections were rewritten for clarity.
- Senior Project sections were rethought and organized with more details.

Name: Justin Merritt

Occupation: Prof. of Music and Co-Chair of the Music Dept. at St. Olaf College

Relationship: Academic Advisor and Professor

Feedback Critique: Suggestions included removing Instrumental Conducting and substituting for Electronic Music, and replacing the Comp. Studio at Carleton with a film class.

How This Feedback Was Used:

- Electronic Music was added to the required Music courses, Conducting was removed.
- Comp. Studio at Carleton was replaced with TV Studio Production at Carleton.

Name: Paige Dahlke

Occupation: Environmental Film Making (Individual) Major, Class of 2018 at St. Olaf

Relationship: Short Film Director, Close Acquaintance

Feedback Critique: Adding graphics to title page for a more professional and personalized feel, add a chart of course projection to display GE fulfillment and other required courses.

How This Feedback Was Used:

- Title page was given graphics
- Course projection chart was added onto the end (Post Section II)

Name: Susan Carlson

Occupation: CIS Assistant Director at St. Olaf College

Relationship: Assists in Advising for Individual Major

Feedback Critique: Rework the required class areas, change specific major questions.

How This Feedback Was Used:

- Specific questions were changed
- Class sections were changed from Music, Writing, and Theatre/Film to Skill Foundation, Skill Development, and Synthesis and History

Name: Dana Gross

Occupation: CIS Director at St. Olaf College

Relationship: Assists in Advising for Individual Major

Feedback Critique: Add more questions to the "Big Question" section

How This Feedback Was Used:

- More questions were added in the first section under "What are the big questions?"

CRF Meeting Critiques

- Provide descriptive sentences describing each course category
- Add department names to each course
- Move Acting For Lyric Stage to "Recommended" category
- Re-focus Big Questions on how this major is good for St. Olaf and as a liberal arts major

Post Section II: Course Projection

First Year

Fall Semester	GE	Interim	GE	Spring Semester	GE
Beginning French (111)	FOL (¼)	Romans and Christians (115)	BTS-B (1/1) WRI (¼)	Principles of Econ (121)	HBS (2/2)
GCON (113)				Beg. French 2 (112)	FOL (2/4)
Psychopathology (247)	HBS (½)			GCON (116)	FYW (1/1) HWC (½)
Theory and Aural Skills 1 (112) <i>Major</i>				Theory and Aural Skills 2 (114)	
Piano	ALS-A (1/1)			Piano Voice	ALS-A ALS-A

Second Year

Fall Semester	GE	Interim	GE	Spring Semester	GE
Queer Lit. and Theory (280)	ALS-L (1/1)	Philosophy and Feminism (245)	MCD (1/1)	Craft of Creative Writing (150) <i>Major</i>	WRI (¾)
Intermed French 1 (231)	FOL (¾)			Intermed French 2 (232)	FOL (4/4) MCG (1/1)
GCON (217)	ALS-L WRI (2/4)			GCON (218)	ALS-A HWC (2/2) ORC (1/1) WRI (4/4)
Acting Lyric Stage (131) <i>Major</i>	ALS-A			Composition 1 (223) <i>Major</i>	
Voice	ALS-A			Voice	ALS-A

Third Year

Fall Semester	GE	Interim	GE	Spring Semester	GE
Film Studies (101) <i>Major</i>	ALS-A	Electronic Music (225) <i>Major</i>	ALS-A	Principles of Statistics (110)	AQR (1/1)
Screenwriting (296) <i>Major</i>	WRI			Philosophical Theology (241)	BTS-T
Composition 2 (324) <i>Major</i>				Advanced Fiction Writing (372) <i>Major</i>	WRI
Modern Dance 1 (111)	SPM (½)			Modern Dance 2 (210)	SPM (2/2)
TV Production Studio at Carleton <i>Major</i>				Bio Science	IST -or- SED

Fourth Year

Fall Semester	GE	Interim	GE	Spring Semester	GE
Drama and Moral Choice (393) <i>Major</i>		Exploring Literary Publishing (290)		Film History (240) <i>Major</i>	
Intermed Stage Direction (338) <i>Major</i>				Instrumental Conducting (253)	
(Open Option for either IST or SED)				(Open Option for either IST or SED)	
Senior Project				Senior Project	