



ST. PATRICK'S SEMINARY & UNIVERSITY

MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA
ESTABLISHED 1898

Catholic Institute of Sacred Music

SM-4500

Fall 2026

Mondays, 4:00-5:00 p.m. Pacific Time

0 credits

Instructors: Jennifer Donelson-Nowicka and Christopher Berry
Contact: jennifer.donelson@stpsu.edu and christopher.berry@stpsu.edu
Office Hours: By arrangement

I. Course Description

Students will meet weekly via Zoom for 1 hour to discuss topics of spiritual, musical, theological, professional, and pastoral interest not discussed in classes. Topics will be covered by professors themselves, or by invited guests. Students may also elect to perform pieces they are working on in Applied Lessons in preparation for juries. Advising about upcoming course enrollments may also take place during this period. Students will be expected to invite their pastors to come to the meeting once per semester on one of several dates throughout the semester.

II. Course Overview

This course will require steady progress in musicianship, and present to you topics of professional interest via discussion, presentations, and guest lectures.

III. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Engage in professional dialogue about matters related to the nature and professional field of sacred music;
2. Grow in ease at performing for other listeners;
3. Engage with clergy and other professionals in understanding and advocating for the Church's vision for Her sacred music.

IV. Credit Hour Statement

St. Patrick's has adopted the Carnegie Unit as its definition of a credit hour. One credit hour entails one hour of classroom time and two hours of outside-of-class preparation (including reading, homework, examination study) per week over a 15-week semester. More information can be found in the Academic Catalog. If an instructor needs to miss a scheduled class day, the class will either have a guest lecturer or it will need to be made up later in the semester.

V. Attendance

Academic success depends on regular class attendance and participation.

Punctual attendance at all Saint Patrick's Seminary classes is mandatory. All absences must be communicated by the student to the professor before the class session takes place. If a student is ill and cannot attend class or notify the instructor before the class session, the student must inform the instructor as soon as possible.

If a student misses 20% or more of the required class sessions, they will not be permitted to complete the course. Thus, students under these circumstances will receive a failing grade for the course. Exceptions to this policy due to very extraordinary circumstances must be submitted as a request in writing to the Program Director, Dr. Jennifer Donelson-Nowicka, who will evaluate whether an accommodation is feasible or possible.

Instructors will not be expected to record classes to send archived versions to students who were absent, and students should not feel entitled to this courtesy.

Attendance via Zoom must be with a continuous video feed from the student, with the student present throughout the class period. Failure to turn on the video or absence from the camera will be counted as an absence.

VI. Course Requirements and Assignments

Attendance and Participation – Weekly, beginning August 24, 2026 – 40% of grade

Students are required to attend all 15 lessons. Failure to attend 12 or more lessons will result in automatic failure of the class. A continuous video feed is required to count for attendance.

Students will be graded on the following scale for their participation throughout the semester.

- **10 Points:** Exemplary contribution; consistently responds to discussion with theological and musical insight, actively responds to peers, and attends 15/15 sessions fully engaged.
- **8 Points:** Strong contribution; frequently offers meaningful thoughts on readings and repertoire, engages respectfully with classmates, and attends 15/15 sessions fully engaged.
- **6 Points:** Satisfactory contribution; occasionally speaks up or responds when prompted, demonstrates basic preparation, and attends 14/15 sessions.
- **4 Points:** Marginal contribution; rarely speaks, shows limited preparation for seminar discussions, and attends 13/15 sessions.
- **2 Points:** Minimal contribution; passive presence with no active engagement, rarely prepared, and attends 12/15 sessions.
- **0 Points:** Non-participation; absent from most sessions or completely disengaged throughout the course, and attends fewer than 12 sessions.

Musicianship Progress – 60% of grade

Students will need to carve out time in their schedules for regular practice of essential musicianship skills. This class aims to help students keep on track, especially in preparation for a retake of portions of an entrance exam, or in view of the exit exam.

Weekly preparation and progress are required in the semester's musicianship curriculum as outlined below. Each week will include progress in each of the following areas of musicianship. Sample repertoire and exercises will be presented each class, and will include both a more elementary and a more advanced suggestion. Repertoire suggested each week will include a chant, a hymn, a choral piece, and a harmonization/improvisation. Students may choose to do the sample exercise/repertoire, or they may choose something different for any of the areas.

Students must submit a weekly practice log via Populi, due by Friday evening at midnight. In the log, students will list the exercise/repertoire they did in each of the five areas below. No long descriptions are required; just a list using whatever names/descriptors sum up the activity. An example could be:

- Mode 1 warm-up emphasizing final and dominant
- Solfèged Introit from 4th Sunday of Advent
- Practiced Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending on the organ
- Harmonized Rorate Introit, starting note C
- Count sang through Rorate Introit

In addition, student will submit a video or audio clip of them doing one of the activities described, once per month. Due dates are given on the course calendar. Video/audio submission must ensure access for the professor through direct upload to Populi. Weekly logs are due even on weeks with no class.

Warm-ups/Teaching

- Invent and practice a warm-up related to one of the other areas of musicianship

Solfège

- Modal solfège (primarily chant, but also classical polyphony)
- Tonal solfège (primarily modern music)

Organ

- Hymn/service playing
- Chant accompaniment
- Other accompaniment
- Solo repertoire
- Improvisation

Keyboard

- Playing a chant melody
- Harmonizing a chant melody

- Playing a part(s) from a choral score
- Play one part and sing a different one

Directing

- Count sing a chant at sight
- Direct a chant at sight
- Prepare a choral score
- Direct a portion/complete polyphonic composition

This portion of the class will be graded according this rubric:

- **10 Points:** Exemplary progress; submits all weekly practice logs on time with complete 5-area descriptions, and submits all monthly audio/video recordings demonstrating strong execution and exam-level preparation.
- **8 Points:** Strong progress; submits nearly all weekly logs on time with minor gaps, and submits monthly recordings that show solid musicianship and steady preparation.
- **6 Points:** Satisfactory progress; submits most weekly logs (missing 1–2), and submits monthly recordings late or with basic preparation showing room for growth.
- **4 Points:** Marginal progress; misses multiple weekly practice logs, and submits incomplete or late monthly recordings with limited evidence of regular practice.
- **2 Points:** Minimal progress; rarely submits weekly logs, and fails to submit required monthly audio/video clips on time.
- **0 Points:** Non-participation; fails to submit practice logs or monthly recordings throughout the semester.

Technology: Sound and video are required to be in good working order, and no distortion of the sound. Teachers must be able to hear the singer and any accompaniment with clarity.

VII. Grading Procedures

St. Patrick's Seminary & University uses the following grading scale:

A	100-93	B-	82-80	D+	69-67
A-	92-90	C+	79-77	D	66-63
B+	89-87	C	76-73	D-	62-60
B	86-83	C-	72-70	F	59 and below

The STPSU Writing Skills Rubric will be used when grading any formal written assignments. This Rubric may be found in Appendix III of the Academic Catalog.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, St. Patrick's Seminary & University provides services and accommodations to students who experience barriers in the educational setting due to learning, emotional, physical, mobility, visual or hearing disabilities. For more information please contact the Academic Dean.

In Sacred Music programs, courses fulfill requirements toward degree or certificate completion only when a grade of C- or higher is earned.

VIII. Required Texts/Magisterial Documents

Students must purchase scores of all required repertory.

IX. Recommended Texts

Please consult your studio teacher for additional recommended texts.

X. Academic Integrity

1. Academic Honesty Policy: Each student in this course is expected to abide by St. Patrick's Seminary & University's Academic Honesty Policy: written work must be the student's own, and each student must take care to give full documentation for all material quoted or paraphrased from other sources, including the Internet. Consult the seminary's Style Guide for proper citation rules. The use of generative AI is forbidden, unless explicitly permitted by the instructor.
2. Plagiarism Policy: We define plagiarism as the use of another person's ideas or words without appropriately indicating them as such.
3. Consulting Policy: You are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture and the sections with other students. You can give "consulting" help to or receive "consulting" help from such students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e-mail, an e-mail attachment file, a diskette, or a hard copy. Should copying occur, both the student who copied the work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this policy can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. If you have a paper read and corrected by someone outside of class, you must use the St. Patrick editing form. Have the "editor" fill it out. You should turn in the original paper, the rewrite, and the form to the instructor. This is a safeguard for you, the student. The use of generative AI is forbidden, even for consulting/proofreading, unless explicitly permitted by the instructor.
4. Examination Policy: During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion is not permitted during the examinations, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any collaborative behavior during the examinations will result in failure of the exam and may lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

XI. Class Schedule

Course schedule is subject to change according to the discretion of the instructor.

Class Meeting Date, Assignments Due	Topic
August 24	Introduction, overview
August 31	How to practice for the musicianship progress in this class
September 7	NO CLASS – Labor Day
September 14	Pedal exercises at the organ, silence in the life of the musician

September 21	Studying Applied Voice as a Chanter – Karen Clark
September 28, Video/Audio 1 due Friday	Chant analysis
October 5	Resources for Responsorial Psalms, spiritual topic
October 12	Hymn playing, harmonic analysis
October 19	Sequences
October 26, Video/Audio 2 due Friday	What to listen for as a conductor
November 2	NO CLASS – All Soul's Day
November 9	Pedal and left hand at the organ, chant analysis
November 16	Chant harmonization, keyboard skills
November 23, Video/Audio 3 due Friday	Vocal faults leading to intonation problems, chant analysis
November 30	Hymn playing, semiological analysis

Please note the following deadlines for drop/add and withdrawal.

Please note that telling a professor that you wish to drop a course does not affect your registration status and will not trigger a tuition refund. Official notice of an intention to change registration status must be sent to the Registrar at registrar@stpsu.edu and copy info@catholicinstituteofsacredmusic.org.

Monday, August 17 th	Last day to drop, 100% tuition refund
Thursday, October 15 th	Last day to drop the course, 50% tuition refund
Friday, October 30 th	Last day to withdraw, 0% tuition refund
Friday, October 30 th	Last day to change from credit to audit or vice-versa, 0% tuition refund