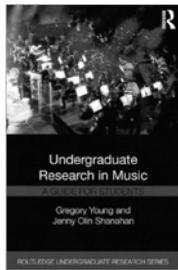


# Book Review

## Undergraduate Research in Music: A Guide for Students

By Gregory Young and Jenny Olin Shanahan



Routledge Undergraduate Research Series  
Taylor & Francis, New York, 2018. xiv, 184 pages  
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Initiating a Routledge series focusing on undergraduate research, Gregory Young and Jenny Olin Shanahan's *Undergraduate Research in Music: A Guide for Students* provides an easy-to-read primer for conducting undergraduate research in music. The volume is directed to faculty and administrators with clear examples of the types of research possible for music students but also assists students by providing clear steps for how to begin a research project and carry it through to completion.

The book begins with a gracious acknowledgment that dedicates the book to one capstone class of seniors. After an introductory overview, chapters 2–8 highlight the different scaffolding stages in a successful research project, and chapters 9–18 provide many examples of actual undergraduate research in music.

The crucial beginning stages are explained in chapter 2, “Literature Review” (providing approaches, explaining its importance, and its contribution to the project as a whole); chapter 3, “Choosing Topics and Formulating Appropriate Research Questions” (brainstorming and freewriting, narrowing topics among the choices available in music, designing the project, and setting a timetable); and chapter 4, “Working with Human Subjects” (presenting the differences between human subjects versus human participants, explaining the role of institutional review boards, and describing the types of training available to new researchers). The longest chapter in the book, chapter 5’s “Collecting Data,” helps student researchers understand the importance of appropriate research methods for the success of their projects. The chapter explains “triangulated, intentional, and impartial data collection”; “quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research”; differences between theoretical and

empirical research; and organization and crafting of “the method section of a research paper.”

The next three chapters turn to the concluding stages of a research project after the data has been collected. Chapter 6, “Analyzing and Synthesizing Data,” briefly discusses the different types of data and how the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data differ from each other but are nonetheless both legitimate forms of informative data. Chapter 7, “Citing Sources,” is the shortest chapter at just four pages. This is one area where greater detail would have benefited students. Whereas undergraduate research has a larger profile in the sciences than in the arts and humanities, it would have been helpful to have additional guidance for students in citing sources, whether in textual citations, in bibliographies/works cited lists, or in the designation of coauthors as contributors to a project. Since mentored undergraduate research in the arts and humanities is less familiar to students, faculty, and administrators, this would have been useful, as arts research and creative production become more accepted as part of student capstone projects. Chapter 8, “Dissemination of Results,” provides extensive and clear guidance regarding the various forms of undergraduate research presentations (oral, written, poster, and performance) and their venues (campus symposia, undergraduate research conferences, disciplinary academic conferences, scholarly journals, and so forth).

Chapter 9, “Music Performance,” includes specific guidance for crafting performance program notes. Chapters 10–17 primarily introduce distinct areas of possible research, along with many examples of prospective topics and actual abstracts of “interdisciplinary research capstone projects involving music.” These chapters focus on the following areas for student research: ethnomusicology and popular culture, interdisciplinary projects, music composition, music education, music history, music technology, music theory, music therapy, and the philosophy and psychology of music. The final chapter provides many online resources for undergraduate researchers and their faculty mentors.

This book provides an invaluable service as a guidebook for undergraduate research in music. As the authors make clear, once research involves the areas of the arts, it can take many forms and directions. Accordingly, this book provides the guidance needed not only for new undergraduate researchers but also for faculty and administrators interested in expanding the high-impact practice of undergraduate research across the curriculum.