

Nicholas J. Shea, Ph.D.  
**Curriculum Vitae**

**Academic appointments**

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2020 – Assistant Professor of Music Theory, Arizona State University  
Director, Music Theory Pedagogy Graduate Certificate program  
Coordinator, first-year undergraduate music theory and aural skills sequence  
Co-founder and Principal Investigator, CACTUS Music Lab

**Publications**

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- Published      **N. Shea**, C. White, B. Hughes, and D. Vuvan. 2024. "Metric Accent Affects Perception of Key Center in Pop-Music Chord Loops." *Music Perception* 42, no. 3. [\[link\]](#)
- \* **N. Shea**, N. Reymore, C. White, B. Duinker, L. VanHandel, M. Zeller, N. Biamonte. 2023. "Diversity in Music Corpus Studies." *Music Theory Online* 30.1. [\[link\]](#)
- N. Shea**. 2023. "'Guitar Thinking' and 'Genre Thinking' among an Online Community of Guitarists." *IASPM Journal* 13, no. 1. [\[link\]](#)
- N. Shea**. 2022. "A Demographic Sampling Model and Database for Addressing Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Bias in Popular-music Empirical Research," *Empirical Musicology Review* 17, no. 1. [\[link\]](#)
- K. Knowles & **N. Shea**. 2022. "From Counterpoint to Small Forms: A Cross-Stylistic Approach to Centering Black Artists in the Theory Core," chapter in *Expanding the Canon: Black Composers in the Music Theory Classroom*, ed. M. Hoag.
- S. Gardner & **N. Shea**. 2022. "Gestural Perspectives on Popular-music Performance," *Music Theory Online* 28.3. [\[link\]](#)
- N. Shea**. 2022. "The Feel of the Guitar in Popular Music Performance," *SMT-V* 8.3. [\[link\]](#)
- N. Shea**. 2020. "Descending Bass Schemata and Negative Emotion in Western Song," *Empirical Musicology Review* 14, no. 3. [\[link\]](#)
- M. Markel & **N. Shea**. 2016. "Report on the 2016 Workshops in Music Theory Pedagogy at the University of Massachusetts Amherst," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 30, no. 1.
- In press        **N. Shea**. 2026. "Open Strings: Manipulations of Time, Distance, and Pitch Space." *Music Theory Spectrum* Vol. 28, Issue 2. Accepted July 19, 2024.
- N. Shea**. 2025. "A Flexible Approach to a New Standard: A Review of *The Practice of Popular Music* by Trevor de Clercq, Routledge University Press." *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*.
- N. Shea**, N. Reymore, C. White, B. Duinker, L. VanHandel, M. Zeller, N. Biamonte. 2025. "Response to de Clercq." *Music Theory Online* 34.4.
- In progress    **N. Shea**. Book proposal: *Fretboard Grammars: Musical Understanding and Guitarists Against the Traditional Music Theory Ethos*. Expected submission Dec. 30, 2025.

## Higher education

- 2020 Doctor of Philosophy in Music Theory, *Ohio State University*  
Dissertation, “Ecological Models of Musical Structure in Pop-Rock, 1950–2019”  
Anna Gawboy & Nicole Biamonte, directors; Daniel Shanahan, advisor
- 2017 Master of Music in Music Theory, *University of Massachusetts Amherst*  
Thesis, “Meter in French and Italian Opera, 1809–1859”  
Christopher Wm. White, director
- 2013 Bachelor of Education in Music, *Univ. of Missouri-St. Louis, Pierre Laclède Honors College*

## Awards

- 2025 \* Outstanding Publication Award, *Society for Music Theory* Awarded  
“Diversity in Music Corpus Studies.” *Music Theory Online* 30.1
- 2023 ASU Professor of Impact Award, Music Theory 1 Awarded
- 2022 Outstanding Mentor to Master’s Students, Arizona State University Nominated
- 2020 Helmholtz Award for Excellence in Music Cognition Awarded  
Graduate Teaching Associate Award for Excellence in Teaching Awarded
- 2019 Hayes Graduate Research Forum, Ohio State University 2nd place  
“Addressing Issues of Representation in Popular-music Research.”

## Grants and other funding

USD unless otherwise noted

- 2025 **N. Shea**, S. Gardner, J. De Souza, K. Lewis, N. Biamonte, N. Condit-Schultz. declined  
“Kinesthetic Models of Musical Organization in Popular Genres”  
*National Science Foundation Perception Action and Cognition area.*
- 2024 McGill ACTOR consortium. “Interactions of Timbre, Texture, and Form in a \$157,222  
Multi-Genre Popular Music Corpus.” *Social Sciences and Humanities Research*  
*Council of Canada Insight Grants* CAD
- 2022 **N. Shea**. “Guitar Performance Practices in Popular Music Styles.” \$4,985  
*Herberger Institute Research Building Investment, Arizona State University*
- 2020 K. Knowles & **N. Shea**. “Hearing in time: Continuous temporal processing of \$14,910  
musical structures in classical and popular music.”  
*Herberger Institute Research Building Investment, Arizona State University*
- 2019 **N. Shea**. “Ecological Models of Communication in Vernacular Music Styles.”  
*OSU Center for Cognitive and Brain Sciences Summer Research Fellowship* \$5,500  
*OSU Alumni Grants for Graduate Research and Scholarship* \$2,120

## Invited talks

- 2024 “Computational Models of Fretboard Grammar,” *Research Computing Showcase* – Tempe, AZ
- 2022 “Research-backed Strategies for Building Musical Fluency in Diverse Populations of  
Undergraduate Music Majors.” *National Association of Schools of Music* – St. Louis, MO. [[talk](#)]

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- 2018      “Empirical Measures of Style in Popular Music.”  
              *Society for Music Theory*, Music Informatics IG – San Antonio, TX  
              “Instrumental Texture and Function in Popular Music.”  
              *Research in Music Series*, University of Massachusetts Amherst

### Conference presentations

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- 2025      **N. Shea**. “Some Real-Time Pressures of Music Making.”  
              *Practitioner-Centered Music Theory* – Columbus, OH  
  
              **N. Shea**. “Fretboard-driven Models of Genre Thinking.”  
              *Music Theory/Genre Theory Conference* – Austin, TX  
  
2022      **N. Shea**, C. White, B. Hughes, & D. Vuvan. “Meter vs. Harmony as Key Determinant in  
              Popular Music.” *Society for Music Theory Annual Meeting* – New Orleans, LA  
  
              **N. Shea**, C. White, B. Hughes, & D. Vuvan. “Meter and harmony, but not musical training  
              style, impact tonic perception in rock music.”  
              *Society for Music Perception and Cognition* – Portland, OR  
  
2022      L. Reymore, M. Zeller, L. VanHandel, B. Duinker, **N. Shea**, C. White, J. Tatar, J. Roth,  
              & N. Biamonte. “Encoding and Analyzing a New Corpus of Popular Songs.”  
              *Music Encoding Conference* – Halifax, Canada  
  
2021      **N. Shea**. “Open Strings as Lorentzian Wormholes: Traversing Parallel Universes in  
              Fretboard Space.” *Society for Music Theory Annual Meeting* – online due to Covid-19  
  
              **N. Shea**. “Cartesian Segmentation of Fretboard Space and Form by Style”  
              *International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition* – online due to Covid-19  
  
2020      **N. Shea**. “Inclusive Methods of Popular Music Performance Analysis.”  
              *Music Theory Midwest* – Madison, WI  
              *Music Theory Society of New York State* – Hempstead, NY  
  
2019      **N. Shea**, L. Glowacki, & D. Shanahan. “Performer-Generated Aspects of Musical Structure  
              in Pop-rock.” *Society for Music Perception and Cognition* – New York, NY  
  
              **N. Shea**. “Addressing Issues of Representation in Popular Music Research.”  
              *Edward F. Hayes Graduate Research Forum* – Columbus, OH  
  
2018      **N. Shea**. “Do Descending Bass Lines Signal Sadness?”  
  
              C. White & **N. Shea**. “Some Influences of Chord Progressions on Accent.”  
              *Society for Music Perception and Cognition* – San Diego, CA  
  
              **N. Shea**. “How Guitar (Hero) Performance Can Convey Function in Pop-rock.”  
  
              N.C. Hansen & **N. Shea**. “‘Too Fast for Comfort’: A Historical Performance Analysis of  
              Tempo Choice in Piano Recordings.”  
              *Music Theory Society of New York State* – New York, NY  
  
2017      **N. Shea**. “Meter in French and Italian Opera, 1809–1859.”  
              *Society for Music Theory* – Arlington, VA

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- 2017    **N. Shea.** “Meter in French and Italian Opera, 1809–1859.”  
          *New England Conference of Music Theorists* – Amherst, MA  
          *Music Theory Society of New York State* – Geneva, NY

## Teaching experience

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### Arizona State University

Coordinator of first-year undergraduate core curriculum. Graduate-level instructor.  
Director of Music Theory Pedagogy Graduate Certificate.

- Undergraduate    Basic Music Theory (F: 2020, 2021, 2022, 2024, 2025)  
                          18th Century (S: 2021, 2022)  
                          Popular Music Analysis (S: 2023, 2025, 2026)  
                          Advanced Form and Analysis (S: 2024)
- Graduate        Computational Analysis of Music (S: 2022)  
                          Pedagogy of Theory (F: 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025)  
                          Performance Analysis (S: 2021, 2023, 2026)  
                          Analytical Techniques (F: 2020)  
                          Music Theory Pedagogy Internship (ad hoc 2020–2025)
- Supervisor      5–8 aural skills and music theory teaching assistants  
                          1–2 faculty associates  
                          3–4 music theory tutors

### Ohio State University

Graduate teaching associate, instructor of record.  
                          Music Theory I, II, III & IV (2017 – 2020)  
                          Aural Skills I, II, III & IV (2017 – 2020)

### University of Massachusetts Amherst

Teaching assistant.  
                          Aural Skills I & II (2014 – 2017)  
                          Music Theory I, II & III (2014 – 2017)

### Parkway School District

Primary and secondary strings ensemble director. Suzuki-method instructor.  
2013–2014    Barretts and River Bend Elementary. Director, 3rd–5th grade  
2012–2013    Parkway West Middle. Teaching assistant, 6th–8th grade

## Peer reviewing

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*Theory and Practice* (2025, 2023, 2021)  
*Music Theory Online* (2024)  
*Music and Science* (2023)  
*Journal of Music Theory* (2023)  
*Indiana Theory Review* (2023, 2022)  
*Oxford University Press* (book proposal) (2022)  
*Canadian Association of Music Libraries Review* (2021)

## Committees and service

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### *Field-level positions*

2023–	Chair	Music Informatics Interest Group, <i>Society for Music Theory</i>
2022–	Member	McGill ACTOR Project → TONE Project
2020–	Ed. board	<i>Indiana Theory Review</i>
2023–2024	Member	Anti-Racism and Equity Committee, <i>Society for Music Perception and Cognition</i>
2023–2024	Co-chair	Music Cognition Interest Group, <i>Society for Music Theory</i>

### *Dissertations, theses, and comprehensive exam committees*

Chair	Jaclyn Connor. <i>Popular Music Program Capstone Project</i> . Taylor Simpson. <i>Barrett Honors Undergraduate Thesis</i> .	
Co-chair	Jessica Dodge. <i>DMA Saxophone Perf</i> . Benjamin MacDonald. <i>DMA Saxophone Perf</i> . Shuxiao Zhang. <i>DMA Piano Perf</i> .	
Member	Hugo Bauer-Bedrick, Luke Hinderaker. <i>Barrett Honors Thesis</i> . Ryan Matejek. <i>DMA Tuba Perf</i> . Kemi Chen. <i>DMA Percussion Perf</i> . Sarah Core. <i>Barrett Honors Thesis</i> . Joshua Oxford. <i>DMA Composition</i> . Isaac Brady. <i>DMA Guitar Perf</i> . Alicia Castillo. <i>MM Composition</i> . Riley Braase. <i>DMA Clarinet Perf</i> . Shiyu Liu. <i>DMA Piano Perf</i> . Chun-Ya Pien. <i>DMA Piano Perf</i> . Gabbie Wong. <i>MM Oboe Perf</i> . Mikaela Hannon. <i>DMA Flute Perf</i> . Eunbin Ko. <i>DMA Piano Perf</i> .	Shi Ge. <i>DMA Piano Perf</i> . Patrick Rice. <i>DMA Organ Perf</i> .

### *Barrett Honors College contracts*

2025	Steven Ryden. Music and emotion.
2024	Cammie Roberts. Music and cross-domain mapping. Ruth Wu. Music and disability studies.
2022	Corinne Kisicki. Musical semiotics in 19th century vocal music. Zachary Brown. Temperament and non-Western tuning systems.
2021	Abigail Berg. Rhythm and meter in musical theater. Taylor Simpson. Mathematical approaches to jazz harmony.
2020	Corbin Cowan. Timbre and musical meaning in popular music. Zachary Scrobeck. Topic theory and film music.

### *Arizona State University committees*

2023	Member	Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor of Music Theory search
2022		Assistant Professor of Music Theory search.
2020		Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

## Advisee achievements and other mentorship

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Academic appointments by former music theory teaching assistants and Theory Ped students

Jacob Chesney	Adjunct Professor of Music Theory, Lipscomb University. 2022–
Daniel Taborda-Higuita	Adjunct Professor of Music, Grand Canyon University. 2022–
Laura Brackney	Adjunct Professor of Music Theory, Texas State University. 2022–
Devin Arne	Assistant Professor of Composition, West Chester University. 2021– Adjunct Professor of Music, Cape Cod Community College. 2020–2021.
Ziyu Wang	VAP of Composition, SUNY Potsdam. 2023–2024. Adjunct Professor of Theory-Composition, Texas State University, 2024–
Jessica Dodge	Adjunct Professor of Music Theory, Mesa Community College. 2023–2024.
Riley Braase	Adjunct Professor of Music Theory, Chandler-Gilbert CC, 2024–
Mikaela Hannon	Faculty Associate, Music Theory 1–2, Arizona State University, 2024–
Alicia Castillo	Faculty Associate, Music Theory 1–2, Arizona State University, 2022–
Deanna Rusnock	Faculty Associate, Music Theory 1–2, Arizona State University, 2024–

Research assistant supervision for CACTUS Music Lab

<u>Graduate</u>	<u>Undergraduate</u>
Nicholas G. Jordan	Mizuki Asano      Jaclyn Connor
Kah Yan Lee	Sarah Core      Alex Meixner
Anna Williams	Nicholas Botz      Brett Page

## Outreach and volunteer activities

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2022–	St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, various community support activities: Mexico Youth Backpack Program, Angel Tree, Family Promise, choir (bass)
2023	Graduate Student Performance Analysis Showcase at Arizona State University. Public music theory forum hosted by students in MTC 591 Performance Analysis.
2021	“Popular-music Guitar Performance: Interdisciplinary approaches.” Guest lecture to MHL 394, instructor Dr. Christi Jay Wells
2020	“Audio transcription techniques.” Guest lecture to MTC 223, instructor Dr. Kristina Knowles “Using the terminal to scrape text and links from websites.” Open-access tutorial presented to the SMT Music Informatics Interest Group
2018	Graduate Music Student Association – Ohio State University “What is Music Cognition?” Second-Year Transformational Program
2017 – 2020	Capital Pride Band, volunteer – Columbus, OH
2018	“Guitar (Hero) Performance and Musical Space.” Franklinton Friday at the OSU STEAM Factory
2015 – 2017	Graduate Music Research Symposium – Amherst, MA Creator and founder; Co-chair for Music Theory
2014	El Sistema String Instructor, Demetrious Johnson Foundation – St. Louis, MO

## Professional development

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- 2023 Workshops in Music Theory Pedagogy — Vancouver, BC, Canada
- 2021 Project Spectrum Guest Speaker Workshops — online  
“Critical Perspectives on Diversity Committees”
- 2018 Society for Music Theory Graduate Student Workshop – San Antonio, TX  
“Issues in Popular-Music Analysis,” with Nicole Biamonte  
Engaging Students Un-conference @ OSU STEAM Factory – Columbus, OH  
Diversity and Implicit Bias Awareness Program – Ohio State University  
“Open Doors” “Implicit Bias” and “Race/Ethnicity” workshops
- 2017 MTSNYS Graduate Student Workshop on Music Theory Pedagogy – Geneva, NY  
“Preparing music theory instructors of the (very near) future,” with Anna Gawboy
- 2016 Society for Music Theory Graduate Student Workshop – Vancouver, BC  
“Meter and Form in 19th Century Music,” with Richard Cohn

## References

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|--------------------------|---|
| Anna Gawboy, Ph.D.       | Associate Professor of Music Theory<br>Ohio State University<br>Email: gawboy.2@osu.edu                     |
| Nicole Biamonte, Ph.D.   | Associate Professor, Music Theory<br>McGill University<br>Email: nicole.biamonte@mgcill.ca                  |
| Christopher White, Ph.D. | Associate Professor, Music Theory<br>University of Massachusetts Amherst<br>Email: cwmwhite@music.umass.edu |
| Daniel Shanahan, Ph.D.   | Associate Professor of Music Theory<br>Northwestern University<br>Email: daniel.shanahan@northwestern.edu   |

Additional contact information available upon request.