

**The Entrepreneurial Musician
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Final Project: Informal Proposal

Final Project: An Overview

Working alone or in small groups, define a final project that is connected to your personal, professional or artistic goals. You have two options for the final project: planning something, or doing something.

Planning Something

Design a plan for a project, a business idea, or to move you further along a particular path. Think of this plan as a map. It will show where you've come from, where you stand now, where you'd like to go, and what steps you'll take next to get there.

Consider this option if:

- you have a strong idea or a pre-existing project and you'd like to take it to the next level
- you have a new idea that you'd like to explore before you commit to further investment
- you're evaluating different options and would like to compare different paths

Examples:

- A plan for first year out of school: a transition to professional life, a gap year, an OPT year, a year of studying abroad.
- A business plan for a new venture: a performing ensemble, a teaching studio, a cooperative performance space, an online coaching business.
- A production and marketing plan for an artistic project: a pilot of a new performance project, a debut recording, an interdisciplinary collaboration, a recital.
- Research and analysis of different options for employment in and out of music: two parallel careers, a layered career of teaching, practice, and ongoing study.
- A plan to get the most out of your remaining time at school and in New York City.
- A detailed financial and personal plan to balance time, money and work.

Doing Something

Design a project that you'll carry out during the course of the semester. You'll work closely with me to define goals, implementation, outcomes and reporting strategies.

Consider this option if:

- you thrive on collaboration
- you learn best through *doing* things
- you'd like to experience something new

Sample approaches:

- Design a new model of performance and produce a pilot performance.

- Develop a new curriculum for educational/community performance and give it a test run.
- Establish a cooperative of like-minded artists to advance one another's work.
- Reach out to successful people doing the work you'd like to be doing, and ask for informational interviews with an eye towards getting practical experience in their field (an internship,
- Get experience: design and implement a short-term internship with an individual or organization doing work you admire, "job shadow" three people you admire for a day and write about your findings,
- Do research on a question that interests you: How do artists pay off their student loans? How do conservatory students make the transition into the working world? How can the arts be used for peace-building? What does it take to start a successful non-profit?
- Make media: a video, a podcast, a website, an electronic press kit, a blog, an information packet.

Informal Proposal

Submit an informal proposal that outlines the approach you'd like to take to the final project. In 500 words or less, tell me how you think you can best use this assignment to advance your personal, professional and artistic goals.

Your proposal should succinctly and clearly answer the following questions:

1. What will you *do* for this assignment? What will the final outcome be? How does it relate to your personal, artistic, or professional goals? (*I've included some examples of clear answers to this question at the end of this assignment sheet.*)
2. Who will be involved in this project? If you're working alone, who will you reach out to help you with your project? If you're working in a group, who will you be working with, and what will each person contribute to the project?
3. What excites you about this idea? What motivates you to make it happen?
4. What skills, resources and connections do you have right now that will help you to make this happen? Which will you need to develop?
5. What are your three main goals in this project? How do they relate to your personal, professional and artistic development?

What to submit

Submit a written description of your project idea (500 words or less) clearly answering the questions above. If you're working as a group, please include all group members' names on your assignment. You'll be graded on comprehensiveness, clarity, and feasibility. The "informal" part means that you can write personally – but be sure to pay attention to clarity and comprehensibility.

Examples of Clear Answers to Question #1

Planning something:

“While I’m still in school, I want to build a strong platform so that I can support myself as a performing artist in my first years out of school. I’m going to make a plan to guide my transition from student to professional life – covering my personal goals, my artistic goals, my professional goals, and my financial goals.”

“We are a group of three students who will be graduating this May. After graduation, we plan to audition intensively for orchestras in the US and abroad, while breaking into the freelance scene in NYC. While we’re taking auditions, we want to have enough time to practice, get professional experience, and get more training. At the same time, we want to build basic financial and personal stability. We’re going to make a plan for our first year out of school that will support us, individually and as a group, in reaching this goal.”

“After I graduate, I want to spend a year in Brazil for intensive study of Brazilian music, Portuguese language, and Capoeira. I’m going to use this assignment to research different options for making this happen, and to learn about potential challenges so that I can deal with them successfully.”

Doing something:

“I want to establish a new performance series that brings together classical, jazz and world music performers in a casual setting that fosters collaboration and relationship-building. Each show will feature three acts, and conclude with an open jam session. For this assignment, I’m going to produce the pilot performance in April, at Shapeshifter Lab in Brooklyn.”

“My long-term goal is to build a successful career as a film composer. For this assignment, I’m going to reach out to five composers I admire and ask for informational interviews, possibilities for internships, and gather their advice on what I need to best get started on this career path.”

“I’m not sure about whether I want to build a life as a performer, but I know that I want music to be an important part of my life. I’m fascinated by the idea of using my working life to reduce human suffering, and right now I’m thinking about humanitarian law, educational policy, and becoming a Nurse Practitioner as possible career paths. I want to use this assignment to reach out to people working in these fields, and shadow their jobs for a day.”

“Three of us are banding together to establish a radical collective of young opera singers who will work to support one another’s ongoing artistic, financial and professional growth; change stereotypes about singers; and advocate for the voice, beyond the concert stage, as a basic tool for human growth and transformation.”