



Course Catalogue

Updated
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Vision, Mission, & Beliefs

VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision is to lead an improved higher education paradigm for the evolving future by offering a practical and affordable alternative to conventional university degrees.

MISSION STATEMENT

To offer unparalleled interdisciplinary instruction for all seeking to further their education and become active professionals within the organbuilding and performance industries.

BELIEF

Honoring the Past.

Embracing the Present.

Creating the Future.

We believe in:

- Honesty, Integrity, Pragmatism
- Valuing Every Student as a Whole Person
- Taking Students Where They are and Helping Them Grow Beyond Self-Imposed Limitations
- Providing Every Student with Tools for Professional Success
- Allowing Every Student to Have Input on Their Individual Curriculum
- Fostering Professional Connections and Community
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Professionalism, Camaraderie, Civility

From the Executive Director & Director of Education

DR. JOHN D. SCHWANDT

Welcome to the American Organ Academy! We hope your time with us will be both educational and enjoyable.

The AOA is a place where the ideals of socratic learning are put into practice. Diversity is strength. Our inclusive group of professionals are dedicated to providing relevant, interactive pedagogy. Our goals are educate, inform, and promote awareness of the art and craft of the pipe organ through technology and performance. You will be encouraged to fully participate and to ask questions frequently.

The AOA is committed to fostering compassion, community, and integrity. This handbook lays out our expectations of you as a student and what you can expect from the staff and instructors.

The American Organ Academy is a new educational model for a changing world. We offer accessible education in multiple formats: Full-Time, Part-Time Intensive, Seminars, & Individual Lessons.

Learn much, laugh often, and enjoy the camaraderie!



Course Catalogue

COURSES

Organizational rationale: the following AOA catalog courses are based on a credit-hour system similar to community colleges, colleges, and universities. The credit hours indicate how many contact hours the student will have with the instructor(s) per week. There is also an expectation of at least 2 hours of homework/preparation on average for every credit hour per week. Courses are typically 15 weeks in duration but could be compressed as desired for scheduling/availability. For example, a 1 credit course (1 contact hour per week over 15 weeks) could be taught over a two-week period, assuming the class met 5 days per week for 1-2 hours each day. A compressed class is based on the availability of the instructor.

AOA 1000 Applied Organ Lessons (1 credit hour, online or in-person)

Performance level and specific goals to be assessed on an individual basis. This level is for beginning organ students. Students are expected to practice a minimum of 6-10 hours per week regardless of the frequency of their lessons.

AOA 1001* Personal Development (1 credit hour, online or in-person)

This course helps students strengthen executive functioning skills, improve communication, and learn to become successful in their personal and professional life. Curriculum is interspersed with one-on-one guidance and mentorship with the instructor.

AOA 1002 Survey of National Organ Building Schools (2 credit hours)

A more detailed study into the design elements, evolution, and technical innovations of the major national schools of organbuilding: USA, France, Germany, England, Netherlands, Spain/Italy.

COURSES (CONT.)

AOA 1003* History and Fundamentals of Organ Construction & Design (3 credit hours)

A survey course covering the mechanical and tonal evolution of the pipe organ from antiquity to the modern era. The course objective is to develop vocabulary and basic understanding of action, pipe construction, and design elements.

AOA 1004* Field Work Lab (4 credit hours)

This course number covers the activity students will need to perform each semester or study period. Each unit of field work activity (repair, tuning, etc.) will begin with a certain number of hours of observation of a working professional, then assisted work, followed by supervised "solo" work. Students are expected to accrue an average of 40 hours of field lab work per semester enrolled.

AOA 1010* Technology Lab (1-3 credit hours)

This course number will cover various hands-on and practical topics including, but not limited to: leathering, action repair, pipe scaling, usage and procurement of tools (and how to sharpen them!), management/sales, building relationships with suppliers, workplace safety, etc. In certain cases, these course hours may be applied to work on a student's Capstone Project. Students are expected to accrue at least 250 hours of technology lab hours per semester.

AOA 2000 Applied Organ Lessons (1 credit hour, online or in-person)

Performance level and specific goals to be assessed on an individual basis. This level is for intermediate organ students.

AOA 2001* Personal Development (1 credit hour, online or in-person)

This course helps students strengthen executive functioning skills and learn to become successful in their personal and professional life. Curriculum is interspersed with one-on-one guidance and mentorship with the instructor. This course is offered after successfully completing the 1001 course.

COURSES (CONT.)

AOA 2002* Pipe Organ Systems (2 credit hours)

A comprehensive and interactive course designed to educate students about the history and evolution of winding systems, control systems, and consoles. Early wedge bellows to schwimmers, wind conductors, blowers, and design/calculation elements will be studied along with articulated modern installation standards for winding systems. Best wiring practices, NEC requirements, and a detailed study of control systems—from early 20th Century switching, diode matrix, to all contemporary available systems. Last is a detailed study of the organ console, from mechanical key desks to contemporary examples, all associated hardware (keyboards, stops, stop actions, pedalboards, swell shoes, combination actions, etc.).

AOA 2003 Historical Survey of Organ Literature (3 credit hours, online)

A musical survey course designed for the organ technician and organbuilder. The course objective is to achieve basic understanding of 16th Century to the present periods and national schools of organ literature. Students need to pass the AOA Applied Lessons 1000 course as a pre-requisite for this course.

AOA 2012* Music Theory 1 (2 credit hours, online)

This online course is intended for students interested in deepening their understanding of how music is organized and created. Fundamental language of musical structure will be covered from basic scales, harmonies, through common practice tonality. Contextual listening and exercises geared towards understanding and retention will be emphasized. Aural and written skills will be emphasized.

AOA 2022 Music History & Organ Literature 1 (2 credit hours, online)

This online course is open to full-time and part-time students who have previously taken music theory courses in college, or at the AOA. This is a survey course exploring the intersection of vocal, instrumental, and organ literature from medieval through the Classical periods. Reading assignments, score study, aural and written exams will be key components of the course.

AOA 3000 Applied Organ Lessons (1 credit hour, online or in-person)

Performance level and specific goals to be assessed on an individual basis. This level is for undergraduate level study.

AOA 3003* Fundamentals of Tuning & Tonal Regulation (3 credit hours)

Ear training, technique, temperaments, and tuning devices will be studied for the tuning component of this course. The course objective for tonal regulation is to develop a fundamental understanding of pipe organ tonal architecture, aural balance, and to learn basic corrective treatments for flues and reeds.

AOA 3012 Music Theory 2 (2 credit hours, online)

This online course is a continuation of AOA 2012, which is prerequisite. Extended tonality, more complex structures, and post-tonal concepts will be examined, compared, and contrasted. Similar to AOA 2012, aural and written skills will be emphasized.

AOA 3022 Music History & Organ Literature 2 (2 credit hours, online)

This online course is open to full-time and part-time students. Music theory courses and AOA 2022 are prerequisites. This is a survey course exploring the intersection of vocal, instrumental, and organ literature from the Romantic through modern periods. Reading assignments, score study, aural and written exams will be key components of the course.

AOA 4000 Applied Organ Lessons (1 credit hour, online or in-person)

Performance level and specific goals to be assessed on an individual basis. This level is for graduate level study.

AOA 4002 History of the American Theatre Pipe Organ (2 hours)

An historical survey of the development of the theatre pipe organ, a distinct and unique American musical instrument studied contextually as a medium for entertainment as well as its social impact on American culture and beyond.

AOA 4013 Church Music Practicum (3 credit hours)

An interactive course designed to provide real-world experience with the goal of preparing students for church employment. Skills such as preparing a resume, job interviews, maintaining healthy professional relationships, administering a modern church music program, and development will be included. The practical necessities of learning how to rehearse, organize, and inspire volunteer musical groups will also be emphasized. Also included will be creative service-playing skills at the organ and the piano.

* = required course for full-time students

Part-Time/Applied Study & Seminars

COURSEWORK

Part-Time & Applied Study is any time frame from one-hour to six-months. As a non-profit institution, we have the freedom to allow our students to work with us by creating custom curriculum to meet their goals. We offer continuing education in the fields of organ building, maintenance, and organ performance. Students have the flexibility to specify areas of study as their schedule allows.

Classroom instruction takes place in a classroom setting. The credit hours are listed next to the course in the course catalog listed earlier in this handbook. Unless otherwise noted, classes are in-person and must be attended in-person. The expectation is that 2-hours of homework will be expected for every in-person credit hour.

16-hours per week of Technology Lab is prescribed for this program. This lab time will be a time for students to put their working knowledge into practice on an AOA project or their Capstone project. The technology lab tasks must be approved by the course instructor.

Field Lab work will occasionally be part of the curriculum. This will be as field work is identified. Students will dress professionally for this work.

Professional Service Technician Certificate

COURSEWORK

The Professional Service Technician Certificate is designed to be a full-time educational program structured similarly to a Master's program at an institution of higher education. This can be completed in as little as two-years. Required courses are noted in the course catalog by an asterisk (*). The goal of this certificate track is to combine learning with experience so students can have core tools and understanding of the pipe organ and how to service them upon graduation. Unique aspects of this educational track is classroom learning, field work, technology lab, organ lessons, and an optional work study program. A timesheet detailing class time, practice time, lessons, homework, etc. is expected to be kept and turned in monthly.

Students are required to take at least four semesters of organ lessons. Knowledge and experience in playing an organ is an essential element in becoming an excellent organ builder. Just as performers must know how the instrument they play works, a builder should be familiar with how the instrument is used.

Classroom instruction takes place in a classroom setting. The credit hours are listed next to the course in the course catalog listed earlier in this handbook. Unless otherwise noted, classes are in-person and must be attended in-person. The expectation is that 2-hours of homework will be expected for every in-person credit hour.

16-hours per week of Technology Lab is prescribed for this program. This lab time will be a time for students to put their working knowledge into practice on an AOA project or their Capstone project. The technology lab tasks must be approved by the course instructor.

Field Lab work will occasionally be part of the curriculum. This will be as field work is identified. Students will dress professionally for this work.

COURSEWORK (CONT.)

Students are expected to attend a minimum of 3 events per semester pertaining to the pipe organ outside of their normal course work. One will be focused in the local community (ex. local AGO chapter event), one national/global (national or global organist), and a third that has an educational focus (AIO seminar). We strongly encourage all students to join their local AGO chapter and to get involved with the Organ Historical Society (OHS) as well as the American Institute of Organbuilders (AIO).

An optional component of this course is a work study opportunity. This is an opportunity to work part-time for a local organbuilder, supplier, or service company. Students must excel in their coursework and be recommended for the work study program. The benefit is the student can actively work and earn money to offset their expenses while gaining valuable experience that can be included on their resume.

The final component to this certificate is a Capstone project, document, and defense of the final document in front of the Executive Members of the Board of Trustees plus one additional Board Member.

CAPSTONE PROJECT

The Capstone project is the final project in the professional service technician certificate program. The purpose is to give students an analogous real-world project that demonstrates the core skills needed in the pursuit of servicing and repairing pipe organs. releathering, repair, electrical, comprehensive experience. This task should address taking the organ apart, cleaning it, re-leathering, electrical components, tuning, voicing, and repairing or recreating parts as needed. In addition to doing the actual work, the student gains experience in writing a project proposal, establishing a budget, and other business aspects of organ building.



Service Technician Curricular Advisement Plan

SEMESTER 1

AOA 1-4000 Applied Organ Lessons	1
AOA 1001 Personal Development	1
AOA 1010 Technology Lab	1
AOA 1003 History & Fundamentals of Organ Construction and Design	3
AOA 2012 Music Theory 1	2

Total Credit Hours: 8

SEMESTER 2

AOA 1-4000 Applied Organ Lessons	1
AOA 1002 Survey of National Organ Building Schools	2
AOA 1004 Field Work Lab	4
AOA 1010 Technology Lab	1
AOA 2001 Personal Development	1
AOA 2003 Historical Survey of Organ Literature	3

Total Credit Hours: 12

SUMMER AFTER SEMESTER 2

AOA 1004 Field Work Lab	4
AOA 2022 Music History & Organ Literature 1	2
Optional Work Study	

Total Credit Hours: 6

SEMESTER 3

AOA 1-4000 Applied Organ Lessons	1
AOA 1010 Technology Lab	1
AOA 1004 Field Work Lab	4
AOA 2002 Pipe Organ Systems	2
AOA 3003 Fundamentals of Tuning & Regulation	3
AOA 3012 Music Theory 2	2

Total Credit Hours: 13

SEMESTER 4

AOA 1-4000 Applied Organ Lessons	1
AOA 1004 Field Work Lab	4
AOA 1010 Technology Lab	1
AOA 3022 Music History & Organ Literature 2	2
AOA 4003 History of the American Theatre Pipe Organ	3

Total Credit Hours: 11

SUMMER AFTER SEMESTER 4

AOA 1004 Field Work Lab	4
Optional Work Study	

Total Credit Hours: 4



Application Process

COURSEWORK

Our application process is simple and straight forward. Please fill out our student application form by scanning the QR code below, clicking [here](#), or visiting <https://forms.gle/GpJDW6hYNkzTVSrB6>

After filling out the application form, please email us your resume, educational transcripts, and a cover letter to the email below. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at info@americanorganacademy.com.

The last step is to schedule a visit. We will spend a full day showing you the American Organ Academy which includes our many partners in the area. We will have time where you can play a hymn and repertoire for us so we get an idea of where you are in terms of organ lessons. It is ok to be a complete novice, as well. Throughout the day, we will also elaborate on our program and get to know one another.

We look forward to meeting you!

