

# AP Music Theory

## Course Syllabus

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### Course Overview

AP® Music Theory is designed for students who need it for career study as well as those who desire it for enrichment. While the main emphasis is placed on music of the Common Practice period (1600–1900), music of other stylistic periods is also studied. Students will be engaged in a variety of musical exercises including, rhythm & melody dictations, playing piano, composing, analyzing, and sight singing.

### Course Objectives

This course is designed to develop musical skills that will lead to a thorough understanding of music composition and music theory. Students are prepared to take the AP® Music Theory Exam when they have completed the course. Students planning to major in music in college may be able to enroll in an advanced music theory course, depending on individual colleges' AP policies.

### General Course Content

1. Review of music fundamentals, including: scales, key signatures, circle-of fifths, intervals, triads, and inversions
2. Daily ear training, including rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic dictation
3. Weekly Sight-Singing using numbers for pitches
4. The study of modes
5. The study of figured bass
6. The study of two-part counterpoint
7. The study of four-part harmony
8. The study of seventh chords
9. The study of secondary-dominant functions
10. The study of musical form
11. The study of common compositional techniques

## Primary Texts

- Clendinning, Jane Piper, and Elizabeth West Marvin. 2005. *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*, with *Workbook* and *Anthology*. New York: W. W. Norton. The textbook in conjunction with the Anthology includes a wide range of music literature from standard Western tonal repertoires. The study of the Anthology works and the companion Recordings is integral to learning music theory. Every chapter has listening exercises that students will have specific listening prompts. Examples include Mozart, Sousa, German Leider, Schoenberg, Scott Joplin, Jazz, and many more.
- Phillips, Joel, Jane Piper Clendinning, and Elizabeth West Marvin. 2005. *The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills*, Vol. 1. New York: W. W. Norton.

## Course Planner

*Each class will be divided into three parts:*

1. *Textbook/Workbook/Anthology*
2. *Aural Skills – Sight-Singing/Melodic Dictation*
3. *Vocabulary*

### **Part I – Musician's Guide to Theory & Analysis (textbook & Anthology)**

#### **FIRST NINE WEEKS**

Students complete the sample free-response questions as a class, including the sight-singing exercises. Sight-singing exercises are used in each class. We have an AB block schedule, so class meeting times differ from week to week. One week we will have class three times, the other week we will have class only twice.

Week 1	Chapter 1	Pitch and Pitch Class
Week 2	Chapter 2	Simple Meters
Weeks 3–4	Chapter 3	Pitch Collections, Scales, and Major Keys
Week 5	Chapter 4	Compound Meters
	Chapter 5	Minor Keys and the Diatonic Modes
Week 6	Chapter 6	Pitch Intervals
Weeks 7–8	Chapter 7	Triads
Week 9	Part 1 Exam	End of Quarter 1

#### ***Aural Skills/Sight-Singing***

Phillips, Joel, Jane Piper Clendinning, and Elizabeth West Marvin. 2005. *The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills*, Vol. 1.

This book coincides with the chapters from the Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis textbook. Each part is divided into two sections: sight-singing and rhythm reading

## **PART 1 – Elements of Music**

Week 1	Part 1A	Introduction to solfege Major Keys, Simple Meters
Week 3	Part 1B	Major & Minor Keys, Simple and Compound Meters
Week 5	Part 1C	Major & Minor Keys, Simple & Compound Meters, Beat Subdivisions.
Week 7-9	Part 1D	Modal Melodies and “Triplets”

## **SECOND NINE WEEKS**

Week 1	Chapter 8	Seventh Chords
Week 2	Chapter 9	Connecting Intervals in Note-to-Note Counterpoint Species Counterpoint
Week 3-4	Chapter 10	Melodic and Rhythmic Embellishment in Two-Voice Composition Writing 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , and Free Species Counterpoint
Week 5	Chapter 11	Soprano & Bass Lines in 18 <sup>th</sup> Century Style
Week 6	Chapter 12	The Basic Phrase in SATB Style
Week 7-8	Chapter 13	Dominant Sevenths, the Predominant Area, and Melody Harmonization. V7 and its inversions Realizing figured bass
Week 9	Chapter 14	Expanding the Tonic and Dominant Areas Using 6/4 chords. Cadential, Neighboring, Pedal, Arpeggiating, Passing 6/4 chords

*Mid-Term Exam for full year courses are given at this time period.*

## ***Aural Skills/Sight-Singing***

### **PART II – Diatonic Harmony & Tonicization**

Students will also be using pre-released AP Free Response Questions for sight-singing

Week 1	Part 2A	Phrases
Week 3	Part 2B	Embellishing Phrases
Week 5	Part 2C	Phrase Organization
Week 7	Part 2D	Tonicization, Hemiola, Triplets, Duplets

## **THIRD NINE WEEKS**

Week 1	Chapter 15	Diatonic Harmonies and Root Progressions
Week 2	Chapter 16	Embellishing Tones in Four Voices
Week 3	Chapter 17	Dominant Substitutes and Other Voice Leading Chords
Week 4	Chapter 18	Phrase Structure and Motivic Analysis Phrase Analysis, Parallel and Contrasting Periods
Week 5	Chapter 19	Diatonic Sequences

Week 6-7	Chapter 20	Secondary Dominants and Leading-Tone Chords to V
Week 8	Chapter 21	Tonicizing Scale Degrees Other than V
Week 9	Chapter 22	Modulations to Closely Related Keys

### ***Aural Skills/Sight-Singing***

#### **PART III – Chromatic Harmony & Form**

Students will also be using pre-released AP Free Response Questions for sight-singing

Week 1	Part 3A	Tonicizations, Modulations, and Small Forms, Changing Meters
Week 3	Part 3B	Contrapuntal Music, Super-Subdivided Beats in Slow Tempos
Week 5	Part 3C	Chromatic Harmonies, Syncopation: Ragtime & Jazz
Week 7	Part 3D	Variations, Rondo, and Sonata Form

#### **FOURTH NINE WEEKS**

Week 1	Chapter 23	Binary & Ternary Form
Week 2	Chapter 24	Invention, Fugue, and Other Contrapuntal Genres
Week 3-9	Review for AP Exam:	

- Dictation Exercises – Melodic & Harmonic
- Free-Response questions exercises
- Recorded sight-singing exercises
- In depth aural analysis of literature
- Students complete teacher-designed exams based on AP Released Exam materials.
- Complete AP Music Theory Released Exams – all students are administered two recorded sight-singing tests comparable to those used on the AP Exam.

### **Student Activities**

I encourage my students to work together in problem solving. A quarter of each class involves drill work, depending on the topic/unit we are studying. Students will have the opportunity to sing in small groups and alone, as well as work on harmonic analysis of given examples in groups and alone.

We have a computer music lab available for us each class. Students are exposed to music writing software for their writing assignments, as well as basic piano skills for sight-singing and ear training. Students will also be required to use the “STUDYSPACE” feature of their textbook, which allows them to take online quizzes and submit to me.

Students will also submit 6 compositions. The compositions will include:

1. A 16 measure composition for their own instrument or voice, using specific guidelines
2. A 24 measure composition for their own instrument or voice to be performed in class.
3. A composition involving counterpoint, using multiple movements using the 5 species.
4. A quartet using SATB in chorale form.

5. A quartet that shows binary form (major/minor)
6. A composition for a small ensemble to be performed.

### **Expanded Course Objectives**

1. Identify and notate pitch in four clefs: treble, bass, alto, and tenor.
2. Notate, hear, and identify simple and compound meters.
3. Notate and identify all major and minor key signatures.
4. Notate, hear, and identify the following scales: chromatic, major, and the three minor forms.
5. Name and recognize scale degree terms, for example: tonic, supertonic, mediant, subdominant, dominant, submediant, subtonic, leading tone.
6. Notate, hear, and transpose the following modes: Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian.
7. Notate, hear, and identify whole-tone and pentatonic scales.
8. Notate, hear, and identify all major, minor, diminished, and augmented intervals inclusive of an octave.
9. Transpose a melodic line to or from concert pitch for any common band or orchestral instrument.
10. Notate, hear, and identify triads, including inversions.
11. Notate, hear, and identify authentic, plagal, half, and deceptive cadences in major and minor keys.
12. Detect pitch and rhythm errors in written music from given aural excerpts.
13. Notate a melody from dictation, 6 to 12 bars, in a major key, mostly diatonic pitches, simple or compound time, three to four repetitions.
14. Notate melody from dictation, 6 to 12 bars, in a minor key, chromatic alteration from harmonic/melodic scales, simple or compound time, three to four repetitions.
15. Sight-sing a melody, 4 to 8 bars long, major or minor key, duple or triple meter, simple or compound time, using solfege, numbers, or any comfortable vocal syllable(s).
16. Notate and analyze simple 2-bar counterpoint in sixteenth- and/or eighteenth-century styles.
17. Realize a figured bass according to the rules of eighteenth-century chorale style, major or minor key, using any or all of the following devices: diatonic triads, seventh chords, inversions, nonharmonic tones, and secondary-dominant and dominant seventh chords.
18. Analyze a four-part chorale style piece using Roman and Arabic numerals to represent chords and their inversions.

19. Notate, hear, and identify the following nonharmonic tones: passing tone (accented and unaccented), neighboring tone, anticipation, suspension, retardation, appoggiatura, escape tone, changing tone (cambiata), pedal tone.
20. Notate the soprano and bass pitches and the Roman and Arabic numeral analysis of a harmonic dictation, eighteenth-century chorale style, seventh chords, secondary dominants, 4 to 8 bars in length, major or minor key, three to four repetitions.
21. Compose a melody or expand a motive with or without text, 6 to 12 bars long, given specific directions about key, mode, phrasing, rhythm, and harmonic language. Harmonize a 4- to 12-bar melody by writing a bass line, chords and/or chord symbols, given specific directions about key, mode, phrasing, rhythmic and harmonic language.
22. Define and identify common tempo and expression markings.
23. Identify aurally and/or visually the following: modulation, transposition, melodic and harmonic rhythm, sequence, imitation, ostinato, augmentation, diminution, inversion, retrograde, and fragmentation.
24. Recognize standard musical algorithms, i.e., standard melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic idioms that occur in music.

### **Expectations of Students**

1. Students will participate in all classroom discussions and activities.
2. Students will complete all assigned exercises and readings.
3. Students will keep and maintain a Music Theory notebook, which will include class notes, handouts, assignments, and listening logs.
4. Students will study the released AP Exams and take practice tests to prepare for the exam.
5. Each student is required to complete a five-page music research paper, subsequently presenting a 15-minute outline of the research in class.

### **Student Evaluation / Grading**

Daily Assignments	20%
Homework	10%
Sight-Singing	10%
Dictation	10%
Unit Tests/Quizzes	30%
Compositions/Papers	20%