

AP® Music Theory Syllabus

Cypress Lake Center for the Arts

Gary Stroh, instructor

2023-2024 School Year

Course Overview

AP® Music Theory is a course designed to develop student skills in music theory and analysis, composition, arranging, and aural cognition. Upon completion of the course, students are prepared to take the AP® Music Theory Exam. Students who plan to major in music in college may be able to enroll in advanced music theory, depending on individual colleges' policies toward AP courses.

General Course Content

1. Review and mastery of basic music fundamentals, such as basic elements of pitches, intervals, key signatures, scales, chords, metric organization, and rhythmic patterns.
2. Building fluency in music notation skills.
3. Weekly music vocabulary worksheets.
4. Daily ear training exercises, including rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic dictation.
5. Regular sight singing practice in class.
6. Learning to compose an appropriate bass line for a given melody.
7. Practice in the realization of figured bass and Roman numeral chord progressions.
8. The study of modes.
9. Analysis of musical repertoire, including elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and texture.

Required Course Materials

1. Music Theory Notebook – 3 Ring Binder: including ALL of the following:
 - Course syllabus.
 - Plenty of music manuscript. (Printable for free at blanksheetmusic.net)
 - Some regular notebook paper.
 - All handouts given to you by the instructor
 - Tests and quizzes.
2. *Access to MusicTheory.net and Sightreadingfactory.com (\$2.00)*
3. Textbooks supplied by school system
 - Clendinning, Jane Piper and Elizabeth West Marvin. 2016. *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*, text and workbook. New York: W.W. Norton.

Course Objectives

The objectives below have been adapted from the Expanded Course Specifications posted on the AP Music Theory Home Page on AP® Central.

I. Fundamental Terminology and II. Fundamental Notational Skills

1. Notate and identify 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 forms of the minor.
5. Name and recognize scale degree terms, e.g., tonic, supertonic, etc.
6. Notate, hear, and transpose the following modes: Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian (authentic forms only).
7. Notate, hear, and identify whole tone and pentatonic scales.
8. Notate, hear, and identify all perfect, major, minor, diminished, and augmented intervals inclusive of an octave.
9. Notate, hear, and identify triads including inversions.
10. Define and identify common tempo and expression markings.

III. Compositional Skills

1. Compose a bass line for a given melody to create simple two-part counterpoint in seventeenth-and/or eighteenth-century style; analyze the implied harmonies.
2. 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 and seventh chords, inversions, nonharmonic tones, and secondary-dominant and dominant seventh chords.
3. Realize a four-part chorale-style progression from Roman and Arabic numerals.

IV. Score Analysis

1. Notate, hear, and identify authentic, plagal, half, Phrygian half, and deceptive cadences in major and minor keys.
2. Identify in score the following nonharmonic tones: passing tone (accented and unaccented), neighboring tone, anticipation, suspension, retardation, appoggiatura, escape tone, changing tone (cambiata), and pedal tone.
3. Small-scale and large-scale harmonic procedures, including:
 - A. identification of cadence types
 - B. Roman-numeral and figured-bass analysis, including nonharmonic tones, seventh chords, and secondary-dominant chords
 - C. identification of key centers and key relationships; recognition of modulation to closely related keys
4. Melodic organization and developmental procedures:
 - A. identify in score scale types and modes

- B. identify melodic patterning
- C. identify motivic development and relationships (e.g., inversion, retrograde, D. sequence, imitation)
- 5. Rhythmic/metric organization:
 - A. identification of meter type (e.g., duple, triple, quadruple) and beat type (e.g., simple, compound)
 - B. hear and identify rhythmic devices and procedures (e.g., augmentation, diminution, hemiola)
- 6. Texture:
 - A. hear and identify types (e.g., monophony, homophony, polyphony)
 - B. hear and identify types devices (e.g., textural inversion, imitation)

V. Aural Skills

1. Detect pitch and rhythm errors in written music from given aural excerpts.
2. Notate a melody from dictation, 6 to 8 bars, MAJOR key, mostly diatonic pitches, simple or compound time, treble or bass clef, 3 to 4 playings.
3. Notate a melody from dictation, 6 to 8 bars, MINOR key, chromatic alteration from harmonic/melodic scales, simple or compound time, treble or bass clef, 3 to 4 playings.
4. Sight-sing a melody, 4 to 8 bars long, major or minor key, duple or triple meter, simple or compound time, treble or bass clef, using solfege, pitch names, numbers, or any comfortable vocal syllable(s).
5. Hear the following nonharmonic tones: passing tone (accented and unaccented), neighboring tone, anticipation, suspension, retardation, appoggiatura, escape tone, changing tone (cambiata), and pedal tone.
6. Notate the soprano and bass pitches and roman and Arabic numeral analysis of a harmonic dictation, in eighteenth-century chorale style. Features may include seventh chords, secondary dominants, major or minor key, 3 to 4 playings.
7. Identify processes and materials in the context of music literature representing a broad spectrum of genres, media, and styles:
 - A. melodic organization (e.g., scale-degree function of specified tones, scale types, mode, melodic patterning, sequences, motivic development)
 - B. harmonic organization (e.g., chord function, inversion, quality)
 - C. tonal organization (e.g., cadence types, key relationships)
 - D. meter and rhythmic patterns
 - E. instrumentation (i.e., identification of timbre)
 - F. texture (e.g., number and position of voices, amount of independence, presence of imitation, density)
 - G. formal procedures (e.g., phrase structure; distinctions among literal repetition, varied repetition, and contrast; small forms)

Expectations of Students

1. Students are expected to participate fully in all classroom activities
2. Students will complete all assignments. Homework assignments will average three hours per week.
3. Students will maintain a Music Theory class notebook. See below for details.
4. The students will participate in a practice AP® Music Theory exam given in spring.
5. Students will take the AP® Music Theory Exam in spring.

Grading by Semester

Tests and Quizzes

There will be one major aural/written test for each chapter in the texts.

These include written music theory topics, melodic dictation, harmonic dictation, and terminology. There will also be numerous quizzes throughout each chapter that will focus on one single concept in the chapter. Tests will be worth 100 points each. Quizzes will range from 5 to 25 points.

Homework

There will be written homework exercises given every class meeting that include basic music skills, practice sheets to improve skills in clef reading and chord recognition, harmonic analysis using figured bass notation, student compositions and arrangements. Homework assignments are worth 25 points.

Ear training and Class Notebook

The student is responsible for doing significant outside work on MusicTheory.net and www.sightreadingfactory.com. There will be weekly assignments on both platforms.

The AP Test is 50% listening, so ear training is a huge focus. Ear Training assignments are worth 25 points.

The student is required to maintain a notebook which is to be brought to every class meeting. The notebook includes all work done throughout the year, and includes sections for the syllabus, tests, quizzes, handouts, notes, and in-class work.