

## AP Music Theory Syllabus

### Course Overview

The class will meet daily for a 74 minute block during the first semester. Second semester, the class will meet daily for a 37 minute period. The ultimate goal of an AP Music Theory course is to develop a student's ability to recognize, understand, and describe the basic materials and processes of music that are heard or presented in a score. The achievement of this goal may be best promoted by integrated approaches to the student's development of aural skills, sight-singing skills, written skills, compositional skills, and analytical skills through listening exercises, performance exercises, written exercises, creative exercises, and analytical exercises. A lab containing keyboards is available for student use during the day, as well as after school.

### Materials Needed:

1. School Issued Laptop
2. Binder with Three Ring Punched Paper and dividers
3. Pencils and Erasers
4. Folder
5. Flash Drive
6. Index Cards

### Primary Texts

*Clendinning, Jane Piper, and Elizabeth West Marvin. The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis, with Workbook and Anthology, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2016.*

*Phillips, Joel, Jane Piper Clendinning, and Elizabeth West Marvin. The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition New York: W.W. Norton, 2016.*

### Course Objectives

Course Objectives At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- a. Notate pitch and rhythm in accordance with standard notation practices
- b. Read melodies in treble, bass, and movable C clefs
- c. Write, sing, and play major scales and all three forms of minor scales
- d. Recognize by ear and by sight all intervals within an octave
- e. Use the basic rules that govern music composition
- f. Harmonize a melody with appropriate chords using good voice leading
- g. Analyze the chords of a musical composition by number and letter name
- h. Transpose a composition from one key to another
- i. Express musical ideas by composing and arranging
- j. Understand and recognize basic musical forms: ternary, binary, rondo, and more
- k. Write simple rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic dictation

### Course Overview

First Nine Weeks - Building a Music Vocabulary, Elements of Music  
From *The Musicians Guide to Theory and Analysis*

Week 1	Chapter 1	Pitch and Pitch Class
Week 2	Chapter 2	Beat, Meter and Rhythm: Simple Meters
Weeks 3-4	Chapter 3	Pitch Collections, Scales: Major, Chromatic, Pentatonic

Week 5	Chapter 4	Compound Meter
	Chapter 5	Minor Keys and the Diatonic Modes, Whole Tone Scale (supplemented from Chapter 34)
Week 6	Chapter 6	Pitch Intervals
Weeks 7-8	Chapter 7	Triads
	Chapter 8	Seventh Chords
Week 9	Part 1 Exam	

- Along with each Chapter 1-20, we will listen to and examine for analysis a wide variety of Tonal Music that is included in the textbook, and supplemented from public and teacher resources.

### **Sight Singing and Ear Training**

From *The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills*

Weeks 1	Chapter 1	Introduction to Solfege and Simple Meter
Week 2	Chapter 2	Solfeg syllables and scale degree numbers
Week 3	Chapter 3	Pentachord, Major Scales, Intervals from the Tonic Triad
Week 4	Chapter 4	Major pentachord, major scale in compound duple meter, pentascale
Week 5	Chapter 5	Minor pentachord, minor scales, modes, whole tone scale
Week 6	Chapter 6	Intervals
Week 7	Chapter 7	Triads
Week 8	Chapter 8	Seventh Chords
Week 9	Chapters 1-8	Review for Part 1 Exam

### **Second Nine Weeks**

Weeks 1-2	Chapter 9	Intervals in Two- Point Counterpoint
Week 3	Chapter 10	Melodic and Rhythmic Embellishment in Two- Voice Composition
Weeks 4-5	Chapter 11	Note to Note counterpoint in choral Style
Week 6	Chapter 12	The Basic Phrase Style in SATB Style
Week 7	Chapter 13	Dominant Sevenths, Predominant Chord, and Chorale Harmonization, Realizing Figured Bass
Week 8	Chapter 14	Expanding the basic Tonic, Dominant and Predominant phrases; realizing Figured Bass
Week 9	Semester Exam	Chapters 1-14, structured in AP style questions

### **Sight Singing and Ear Training**

Week 1	Chapter 9	Note to note counterpoint, modal melodies
Week 2	Chapter 10	Melodic/rhythmic embellishments in two-part counterpoint
Week 3	Chapter 11	Melody: Intervals from the Tonic and Dominant Triads
Week 4-5	Chapter 12	Phrases, Melodic T-D-T progressions, Authentic and Half Cadences
Week 6-7	Chapter 13	Dominant seventh chord, harmonizing melodies
Week 8-9	Review for Midterm	

### **Third Nine Weeks**

Week 1	Chapter 14	Expanding harmonic areas with 6/4 Chords, leading tone and Predominant
	Chapter 15	Expanding the harmonic realization of cadence and diatonic progressions, and the Mediant Triad

Week 2	Chapter 16	Embellishing tones: suspensions, neighbor and passing tones
Week 3	Chapter 17	Dominant substitute voice leading chords, and 4/2 chords
Week 4	Chapter 18	Phrase structure and Motivic analysis
Week 5	Chapter 19	Diatonic Sequences
	Chapter 20	Secondary Dominant and Leading-Tone Chords to V
Week 6	Chapter 21	Tonicizing scale degrees other than V
	Chapter 22	Modulation to closely Related Keys
Week 7	Exam	Chapters 16-21
	Chapter 28	Vocal forms such as aria and strophic form
	Chapter 29	Popular Music
Week 8	Chapter 25	Variation
	Chapter 23	Binary and Ternary Forms
Week 9	Chapter 32	Sonata, Sonatina and Concerto Forms
	Chapter 33	Rondo, Sonata Rondo, and Larger Ternary Forms
	Exam	Chapters from weeks 7-9

### **Sight – Singing and Ear Training**

Week 1	Chapter 14	6/4 chord etudes and harmonizing melodies
Week 2	Chapter 15	Diatonic root progressions, modal melodies, harmonizing melodies with other cadence types
Week 3	Chapter 16	Embellished melodies
Week 4	Chapter 17	Singing diminished triads and seventh chords
Week 5	Chapter 18	Phrase structure and Harmonizing melodies
Week 6	Chapter 19	Sequences
	Chapter 20	Secondary Dominant and Leading Tone Chords to V
Week 7 -9		Teacher and Student composed melodies Chordal progressions

### **Fourth Nine Weeks**

Week 1	Chapter 21	Tonicizing Scale Degrees other than V
	Chapter 22	Modulation to Closely Related Keys
Week 2	Chapter 24	Invention, Fugue, and Baroque Counterpoint
	Chapter 30	Chromatic Harmony and Voice-Leading
Weeks 1-6	AP Exam Review	Dictation exercises, both melodic and harmonic
Weeks 1-6		Sight-singing practice, including two sessions replicating the exam experience, on the same equipment
Weeks 1-6		In-depth analysis of literature
Weeks 1-6		Completed teacher designed exams based on released AP exam materials
Weeks 1-6		Completed AP Music Theory Released Exams
Weeks 1-6		Free-response question exercises
Weeks 1-6		Exams from the <i>Musician's Guide</i> Website
Week 7-9	Student Compositions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extra study sessions will be offered afterschool and during lunch periods</li> </ul>	

### **Post AP Exam Activities**

Students will have three weeks of class after the AP exam before Finals. Students will explore 20<sup>th</sup> Century Harmony, including Popular Music and the 12 Tonen row. Students will have their choice of compositions, choosing the explore 20<sup>th</sup> century Harmony, or create an analysis of their selection of pop music. Students will present their compositions or analysis to the class, with class lead discussion and critique.

### **Teaching Strategies/Student Activities**

#### **Folk Song Anthology** (to be completed over the course of the class)

When teaching harmonic analysis, non-harmonic tones, and cadences, both visual and aural stimuli need to be presented to help students with audition. The best way to incorporate this, is to have the students complete these activities for themselves. An example of a cumulative activity, where students create a mini anthology, is to have students begin with trying to figure out the solfeggio and rhythmic patterns to basic nursery songs, such as *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, *Happy Birthday*, etc. Students will work in groups to determine the solfeggio, which will allow for students to focus on intervals, scales, and melodic direction. Once this has been achieved, the melodies will be compiled into a class anthology, and analyzed for intervallic and melodic training.

Next, students will take their choice of song, and modify the piece so that the song is in a minor key. Students may use their choice of minor scales, and may embellish the melody as necessary, incorporating neighbor tones and passing tones. These examples will be used for dictation examples in subsequent classes.

The third step in this process will be to have the students select a melody in major and a separate melody in minor from a classmate, and add a bassline, along with completing the figured bass analysis. These melodies will be taken and then used as dictation and analysis examples.

Next students will choose two compositions and create an arrangement for a choir. One composition must include a secondary dominant chord, and both must have seventh chords. Proper voice leading and melodic embellishments are expected. These will be performed and analyzed by the class for correct chords, correct part writing, musicality, and proper voice leading and harmonic resolutions.

Finally, students will take one melody and create a theme and variation composition. Students may use the following technique:

- a. Ornamentation (non harmonic tones)
- b. Retrograde (backward theme)
- c. Inversion ( mirrored contour)
- d. Diminution (compressing the note values)
- e. Augmentation (stretching out the note values)
- f. Change of meter (from simple to compound)
- g. Change of key

*Variations on America* by Charles Ives is an excellent example from literature.

A figured bass and harmonic progressions will be required from each composition. Students will perform their compositions, on their choice of instrument, and may work with a partner for performance purposes. If the structure permits, students will perform their compositions for other classes, parents, and administrators.

At the end of the project, we will have an anthology that is the culmination of what we have learned throughout the course. Throughout the process, students will be assessing and performing their own and their peer's compositions.

### **Interval training**

Students will be broken up into pairs and will be asked to write key signatures and intervals on the board. A second group of students will realize the solfeg of the notes on the board, and then write the interval. A third group of students will check the intervals on the piano to make sure the first two groups are correct.

### **Aural Training**

Students will be singing and dictating everything that is learned in terms of intervals, scales, modes, triads, seventh chords, harmonic progressions, and so forth. They will be experiencing these before writing to truly make music and understand the theory behind what they are performing.

### **GRADING POLICY**, as per the District

In class assignments, Listening Log and Aural Skills Material, Textbook material and Do-Now = 60%

Quizzes and Exams = 30%

Homework = 10%

\*Textbook Material – Textbook materials are presented in conjunction with aural skills. Students will Listen, Experience, look, and then write, to understand the entire tonal concepts. After experiencing the concepts, the written format will be examined, so all types of learners will succeed in the class. Students that miss class will look in the designated area for copies of notes and homework assignments from the classes that were missed.

\*Workbook Material – This material is used for homework assignments. The few sheets in each section are completed together to ensure that students understand the required work. Worksheets are checked for completeness daily, and will be collected and graded on occasion.

\*Aural Skills Material – Every class will begin with a dictation or a listening activity. Pop quizzes will often come from this section, to check for retention. These will be used to review the skills learned in a previous class, and to begin to introduce the material for the day.

\*Critical Listening- Students will be assigned listening examples to analyze both in class and out of class time. These will start with guided questions, and continue on with students analyzing the piece. Pieces of different styles, genres, and composers will be explored throughout the duration of the course.

\*Quizzes – Short announced quizzes are given prior to major exams. They are always open book and open-notebook quizzes. Quizzes and exams are formatted the same to help assist the students in preparing for the exams.

\*Exams – Exams are given at the end of each chapter in the textbook, as well as at the end of the marking periods. These will be in the style of the AP test, comprised of questions from previous released AP tests, as well as teacher generated questions in the AP format.

\*Students are expected to participate actively in classroom discussions and demonstration each week. In addition to completing assigned homework, they are required to keep a comprehensive theory

notebook containing all handouts as well as homework, quizzes, and exams that are returned. [SC17]  
Students also take turns demonstrating concepts using a whiteboard, overhead projector, the voice, or an instrument

### **Test Formats**

Quizzes and exams will include multiple-choice, open-response, and dictation format to help prepare for the AP Exam. Certain announced quizzes will be open notes, allowing students the optimal learning experience. Sight-singing and dictation will be given on a regular basis, often as quizzes or pop quizzes. Students can expect weekly vocabulary quizzes during the first three nine week sessions. These will be coupled with students creating or identifying examples of the highlighted words for a practical application. Starting with the fourth nine week session, Sight-singing exams are recorded in a private setting. Pop quizzes will often be short questions asking students to identify and create materials learned during the previous class sessions.

If changes occur in the syllabus, they will be announced verbally or through email or website page

### **Technology Aids**

- Web site for Musician's Guide texts at [www.wwnorton.com](http://www.wwnorton.com) (each textbook has a log-in code)
- Ricci Adams's interactive tutorials: [www.musictheory.net](http://www.musictheory.net)
- Free online composition website [www.noteflight.com](http://www.noteflight.com)
- Google Classroom, where activities will be posted daily, as well as important documents will be attached and uploaded for easy reference
- Genesis Grading portal <https://students.pemberton.k12.nj.us/ptboe/parents?gohome=true>
- <https://learningmusic.ableton.com/index.html> This website has many interactive activities from establishing a steady beat, to identify intervals, and composing basic pieces. This format is very user friendly, and gives insight into different areas of theory, with a hands on approach after a mini lesson.

### **Teacher Resources**

Kostka, Stefan, and Dorothy Payne. Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music, 8th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2018.

Ottman, Robert. Music for Sight Singing, 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2004.

Roig-Francoli, Miguel A. Harmony in Context. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.