

# **COURSE SYLLABUS – MUSIC THEORY**

**GRADES: 9-12**

**PERIOD 3, M-F**

**INSTRUCTOR: MR. JACOB MOON**

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Music Theory is the study of how music works. We will study elements of composition, including melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, form and orchestration. We will analyze music to understand its mechanics, study the creative processes and works of artists, and hone our perception of pitch through ear training. A series of guiding questions will organize the course and will facilitate an inquiry-based approach to understanding music.

## **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

First Nine Weeks

- What are the foundational components of Western composition?
- How do they help us to understand musical phenomenon?

Second Nine Weeks

- What are different ways and levels of organizing and planning music?
- How does musical organization help us to make compositional choices?

Third Nine Weeks

- How can I maximize expressivity in my composition

Fourth Nine Weeks

- How do I realize my creative potential?

## **GOALS OF MUSIC THEORY**

The goals of music theory include:

- Understanding the fundamental “mechanics” of music
- Appreciating the process and product of music composition
- Developing the skills to write music effectively
- Exploring the creative process
- Fostering critical thinking, listening and decision making skills
- Cultivating work ethic

## **EXPECTATIONS**

Students should come to class prepared. They are responsible for bringing the following to class:

- Book (when applicable)
- Manipulatives (when applicable)
- 3 Ring Binder with Staff Paper and Notebook paper
- Pencil

Each student is fully responsible for their own learning in this class. The student should take the initiative to ask questions and seek out resources so they can fully understand the material and participate at their highest personal level.

The pace of the class will be driven by student work and comprehension. Each student should try to learn about each subject before it is covered in class.

Students are expected to be understanding and respectful of the various aptitudes of students in the class. The classroom will be a safe and nurturing environment for each student to grow and learn at their own pace.

Part of the learning process will include peer criticism of projects, compositions, etc. Students are expected to be respectful and constructive in their critique and receptive to constructive criticism.

The students will not be permitted to do work for other classes unless given permission in special circumstances. The use of cell phones and other electronic devices is prohibited.

The students will be responsible for accessing online resources off-campus, including theory tutorials and websites. Each student should make arrangements to access online resources at least once a week.

## **GRADING**

The students will receive their grade based on the following:

- Assignments
- Assessments (Quizzes and Tests)
- Participation
- In-Class Assignments
- Final “Big” Project

## **CONTACT**

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Guiding Questions: What are the foundational components of Western composition? How do they help us to understand musical phenomena?	First Nine Weeks	September	Content	Essential Questions	Assignments
			1) Instinctive music production	a) How are sounds combined to create a desirable musical texture? b) What is your instinctual mode of composition?	Using multiple instruments in GarageBand, write a 32+ bar musical texture.
			2) Technical conventions of composition	a) What are the Western conventions of notating musical symbols? b) How did musical symbols develop?	Notate 16 measures from the GarageBand assignment and make 12-16 deliberate errors for your partner to detect and correct.
			3) Time signatures	a) What kinds of time signatures are there? b) What do time signatures do?	a) Identify the time signatures in four songs of your choice b) Write a melody for a partner without a time signature. Exchange melodies and determine time signatures for each other.
		October	4) Rhythm	a) How do rhythm and time interact? b) What kinds of rhythms are there? c) How is rhythm used to convey energy and ideas?	a/b) Write and perform four, four-measure rhythms in simple and compound times. c) Identify and analyze two musical selections that have interesting rhythmic effects.
			1) Keys/Scales	a) What is tonality? b) What do key signatures do? c) what is a scale?	a) Identify the key signatures in four songs of your choice. Present a hypothesis on why the artist chose the key of the song. b) Write a short piece for another student to identify the key signature. c) Using "smart" instruments on GarageBand, select a scale palate and write a thirty-two measure song.
			2) Intervals	a)What are intervals? b) How do intervals help us to understand music? c) How do we identify intervals through sight(1) and sound(2)?	a) Write a melody using a preselected palate of intervals. b) Using intervals, do a pitch dictation on the refrain of a song of your choosing c1) Design an activity or method to help your partner identify and practice intervals c 2) Create your own list of songs to help you aurally identify intervals
			3)Triads	a) What are triads? b) How do triads help us to understand music? c) How do we identify intervals through sight and sound?	a) Using root position triads, write a chordal accompaniment for the melody from the interval subunit. b) Using GarageBand, identify the chord progression in a song of your choice. c) Write your own melody that fits the chord progression from the previous assignment.
			4) 7th Chords	a) What kinds of 7th chords are there? b) What affect does the 7th have on a chord?	a) Create a list of songs that use different types of 7th chords. b) Using Audacity, create a 7th chord audio quiz for your partner.

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<p>Guiding Questions: What are different ways and levels of organizing and planning music? How does musical organization help us to make compositional choices?</p>	<p>Second Nine Weeks</p>	<p>November</p>	Content	Essential Questions	Assignments
			1) Creative Process	a) What is the purpose of a creative process? b) What kinds of creative processes are there?	Investigate and compare/contrast the creative processes of two musicians and an additional artist in another field (theatre, fine art, etc.)
		<p>December</p>	2) Chord Progression	a) How do chords move from one to another? b) What is the expressive potential of chord progressions? c) How do Roman Numerals help us to understand the relationships between chords?	a) Identify the chord progressions of three popular songs or pieces of music. b) Create evocative progressions through GarageBand and transcribe to paper. c) Perform Roman Numeral analyses on a popular song and on a chorale by Bach
			1) Harmonic Rhythm	How does harmonic rhythm impact musical energy?	Identify the harmonic rhythm of three popular songs or pieces of music. Compare and contrast the role of harmonic rhythm in each.
		<p>January</p>	2) Cadences	How are chord progressions punctuated and terminated?	a) Perform Roman Numeral Analyses on chorales by Bach b) Write a four-phrase chorale in the style of Bach
			1) Motives	a) What is a motive? b) How do motives help us to organize music?	a) Develop a bank of 8-10 motives for future use. b) Identify a common motive in a piece of music and write a short essay on the motive's introduction and development.
			2) Phrases	a) What is a phrase? b) How do phrases help us to organize music?	Identify and show phrasing in a Bach chorale.
			3) Larger Forms	What are the various levels of form and organization to consider when writing music?	Plan a large work of music on multiple levels, including motive, theme, phrasing, key relationships, tempo, orchestration, form, etc.
			4) Synthesis: Writing Music	a) What are the systems and processes of musical planning? b) What is the importance of a creative process?	

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Guiding Question: How can I maximize expressivity in my composition?	Third Nine Weeks	February	Content	Essential Questions	Assignments
			1) Non-Chord Tones	a) What are non-chord tones? b) How are NCT's used to create melodic contour?	a) Identify non-chord tones in a Bach Chorale b) Utilize four types of non-chord tones in a two phrase chorale in the style of Bach.
			2) Voice Leading	a) What is the value of voice leading? b) What principles of voice leading are the most valuable c) How do inversions facilitate voice leading d) What are special considerations for certain types of chords?	Use deliberate poor voice-leading while writing a two-phrase chorale in the style of Bach. Trade chorales with a partner and edit their chorale to permit better voice-leading.
		March	1) Secondary Functions	a) What are secondary functions? b) How do composers use secondary functions?	Utilize secondary functions in two, two-phrase chorales.
			2) Borrowed Chords	a) Why do composers borrow chords from other keys? b) How can borrowed chords be used effectively in composition?	Utilize borrowed chords in two, two-phrase chorales.
			3) Neapolitan and Augmented 6th Chords	a) What purpose do the neapolitan and augmented 6th chords serve? b) How are neapolitan and augmented 6th chords treated?	a) Write two, two-measure phrases that prepare a neapolitan chord and resolve to a dominant chord. b) Write three, two-measure phrases that prepare each of the augmented sixth chords and resolve to a dominant chord
			4) Using compositional tools	a) How can I use compositional tools to maximize my expressivity? b) How do I solve difficult compositional problems? c) What is my creative process?	a) Write a four to six-phrase chorale that synthesizes the compositional tools learned in class thus far. b/c) Write a short essay on the compositional choices you made and the creative process that you used for the previous assignment.

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Guiding Question: How do I realize my creative potential?	Fourth Nine Weeks	April	Content	Essential Questions	Assignments
			1) Ear Training	a) What techniques facilitate the process of melodic, harmonic and rhythmic dictation? b) How do we synthesize theoretical knowledge with perception and intuition to understand a piece of music?	Perform a full dictation on a piece of music or song of your own choosing. Incorporate aspects such as lyrics, instrumentation, dynamics, articulation, structure, etc.
			2) Orchestration or 3) Research	What are the conventions and aspects that need to be considered when writing for various instruments and performers?  What are the conventions and aspects that need to be considered when conducting research and writing a research paper?	Choose a large-scale project to plan and execute. The project can fit into one of two categories, or you can choose another project at the discretion of the teacher.
		May	1) Writing Music or 2) Writing About Music	a) How do I realize my creative potential? b) How do I solve creative problems? c) What is my creative process?	1) Plan, compose and perform a piece of music in any style for the ensemble of your own choosing.  2) Write and present a research paper on a topic of your own choosing that is related to music.

