

AP Music Theory Syllabus

Course Overview

Students in AP Music will be introduced to the elements of music theory and composition, and will learn how these elements are used in music. The emphasis will be on rules of theory and composition, ear training, sight singing, analysis, and keyboard skills. The course is designed both for students who desire to prepare for music as a career as well as those who desire it for personal enrichment. While the main emphasis is placed on music of the Common Practice Period (1600-1750), music of other stylistic periods will also be studied. Students will be prepared for, and encouraged to take the AP Music Theory Exam in May.

Course Objectives

The objectives below have been adapted and expanded from the May, 2007/May, 2008 AP Music Theory Course Description provided on the AP Music Theory Home Page on AP Central.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Read melodies in all clefs including movable C clefs
2. Notate rhythm and pitch in accordance with standard notation practices
3. Be able to sing, write, play at the keyboard, and recognize by sight and sound major scales and all three forms of minor scales in all keys
4. Be able to sing, write, play at the keyboard, and recognize by sight and sound all simple and compound intervals
5. Be able to sing, write, play at the keyboard, and recognize by sight and sound all triads and 7th chords in all positions and inversions
6. Use correct music theory terminology and vocabulary
7. Analyze the chords of a musical composition by number and letter name
8. Transpose a composition from one key to another
9. Write rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic dictation featuring simple and complex melodies
10. Part write harmonic progressions in major and minor keys which employ non-chord tones, and secondary dominant and secondary leading tone chords
11. Realize Roman numeral and figured bass progressions
12. Harmonize a melody with appropriate chords using proper voice leading
13. Successfully sight sing diatonic and chromatic melodies
14. Understand and recognize basic musical forms such as binary, ternary, rondo, etc.
15. Express musical ideas through composition and arranging by applying the basic rules that govern music composition

Primary Textbooks

Benward, Bruce, and Maureen A. Carr. *Sightsinging Complete*. 5th ed. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1991.

Berkowitz, Sol, Gabriel Fontrier, and Leo Kraft. *A New Approach to Sight Singing*. 4th ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997

Kostka, Stefan, and Dorothy Payne. *Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*. 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004

Other Resources

- Arlin, Mary. I. *Music Source: A Collection of Excerpts and Complete Movements*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ; Prentice Hall, 1997.
- Benjamin, Thomas, Michael Horvit, and Robert Nelson. *Techniques and Materials of Music from the Common-Practice Period Through the Twentieth Century*. 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education, 2008.
- Benjamin, Thomas, Michael Horvit, and Robert Nelson. *Music for Analysis: Examples from the Common-Practice Period and the Twentieth Century*. 6th ed. New York: Oxford, 2006.
- Burkhart, Charles. *Anthology for Musical Analysis*, 6th ed. New York: Schirmer, 2003.

The Kostka/Payne textbook addresses the elements of basic music theory such as functional harmonic progressions and Roman numerals in an orderly and sequential manner, and features numerous examples from Western art music of the Common Practice Period. The first comprehensive unit establishes the fundamental rudiments of music literacy. The text features Self-Tests, which are student-graded drills with answers provided in the back of the book. The workbook which accompanies the Kostka/Payne textbook provides extensive written practice, opportunities for creative expression, and abbreviated examples for analysis. Numerous creative exercises are provided through the workbook exercises. The Arlin, Benjamin, et al, and Burkhart anthologies are used throughout the course for repertoire analysis and study of topics encountered in class. In addition to music of the Common Practice Period, elements of twentieth-century music such as chordal structures, twentieth-century scales, and compositional procedures are also introduced in classroom instruction.

Homework

Students can expect an average of about 2 hours of homework for each class period. Depending on the student's grasp of the material, this may vary. Attendance at 2 concerts each quarter with a written evaluation of each concert is also required. Prior to the AP Exam in May, study sessions are held to assist students who desire extra help prepare for the exam.

Course Outline (2012-2013)

The class meets every other day for 81 minutes. The outline provided below may be adjusted to accommodate the level of mastery of the class. Students can expect the following to occur during each class period: a review quiz, sight singing, listening and ear training, correction and discussion of written homework, and reading assignments presenting new material. A short review quiz is given at the bell. Sight singing is practiced every class period at the beginning of class immediately following the review quiz. Approximately 20-25 minutes of each class period are devoted to ear training, usually addressed at 2 or 3 different times during the period. As part of ear-training, melodic, rhythmic, and/or harmonic dictation practice and evaluation will occur weekly. Other activities include speed drills; occasional group work and evaluation; listening, analysis and discussion of recorded music; and, taking (and discussing) released AP exams. Usually a test will be given at the conclusion of each chapter of the Kostka/Payne text.

Weeks 1-3 (6 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapter 1 (Elements of Pitch)

Written Skills*; notation, key signatures, major and minor scales and key signatures, modes, scale degree names, intervals, including P, M, m, +, and ° intervals, simple and compound intervals, inversions of intervals

Ear Training Skills; 3-6 note melodic dictation (conjunct motion in treble clef and major mode, with emphasis on developing a strategy for dictation), scale and interval identification

Sight-Singing Skills; melodies featuring conjunct motion in major mode and treble clef, with emphasis on developing a strategy for sight singing

Keyboard Skills: major/minor scales, intervals

Other Activities: Melodic Dictation Journal (ongoing assignment), melodic error detection; Test Ch.1 Pt.1 (keyboard, octave registers, C clefs, major and minor scales, key signatures); Test Ch 1 Pt. 2 (scale degree names, P, M, m, +, and ° intervals, inversion of intervals); Recorded Music Log (ongoing assignment)

Week 4 (3 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapter 2 (Elements of Rhythm and Metric Organization)

Written Skills; symbols of duration, beat, tempo, meter, simple time signatures, compound time signatures, syncopation, rhythmic notation and patterns

Ear Training Skills; rhythmic dictation, melodic dictation (conjunct motion in treble and bass clefs, some smaller skips with continued emphasis on developing strategies for dictation), scale and interval identification

Sight-Singing Skills: melodies featuring conjunct motion with smaller intervallic leaps, melodies in major mode and treble and bass clefs

Keyboard Skills: major/minor scales, play melodies in both simple and compound meters

Other Activities: Test Ch 2 (simple/compound meter, symbols of duration, rhythmic notation)

Weeks 5-6 (5 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapter 3 (triad and 7th chord construction)

Written Skills; triads/7th chords and inversions, inversion symbols and figured bass, lead sheet symbols, various chord textures

Ear Training Skills; melodic dictation (mostly conjunct motion, some larger skips, simple rhythms, treble and bass clefs, major and minor modes), scale and interval identification, triad and 7th chord identification

Sight-Singing Skills: melodies featuring conjunct motion with larger intervallic leaps, melodies in major and minor modes, simple meter, and treble and bass clefs

Keyboard Skills: triads and 7th chords in root position and inversions in all major and minor keys

Other Activities: recorded music presentation and discussion (ongoing assignment); Test Ch 3 (triad and 7th chord construction)

Weeks 7-9 (6 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapter 4 (diatonic chords in major and minor keys, Roman numerals, figured bass)

Written Skills; triads and 7th chords, diatonic chords in major and minor keys, Roman numerals, figured bass, realization of a figured bass, and of a Roman numeral progression

Ear Training Skills; melodic dictation (some larger skips, simple and compound meters, treble and bass clefs, major and minor modes), scale and interval identification, triad and 7th chord identification

Sight-Singing Skills: melodies featuring conjunct motion with larger intervallic leaps, melodies in major and minor modes, simple and compound meters, and treble and bass clefs

Keyboard Skills: triads and 7th chords in root position and inversions in all major and minor keys

Other Activities: melodic and rhythmic error detection; Test Ch 4 (diatonic chords in major and minor keys, Roman numerals, figured bass)

Weeks 10-12 (7 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapter 5 (Principles of Voice Leading), Chapter 6 (Root Position Part Writing)

Written Skills; melodic line (including contour, harmonization of the melody, rhythm, appropriate leaps, and tendency tones), notating chords, voicing a single triad, spacing, parallel motion, unequal fifths, direct 5th and octaves, root-position part writing in 4-voice texture

Ear Training Skills; short harmonic dictation (S-B framework only, with chord symbols), develop a strategy for harmonic dictation

Sight-Singing Skills: melodies featuring conjunct motion with larger intervallic leaps, melodies in major and minor modes, simple and compound meter, and treble and bass clefs

Keyboard Skills: triads and 7th chords in root position and inversions in all major and minor keys

Other Activities: soprano-bass counterpoint, compose a bass line to a given melody with appropriate harmony implied, create an original 8-measure melody; Test Ch 5 (Principles of Voice Leading)

End of 1st Term (after week 10)

Weeks 13-15 (6 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapter 7 (Harmonic Progression), Chapter 8 (Triads in First Inversion), Chapter 9 (Triads in Second Inversion)

Written Skills; sequences and the Circle of Fifths progressions, part writing triads in first and second inversions, realization of Roman numeral progressions

Ear Training Skills; simple harmonic dictation in major and minor keys, continued identification of intervals, triads, and 7th chords

Sight-Singing Skills: longer diatonic melodies, larger intervals (M6, m6), major and minor keys, simple and compound meters, in treble and bass clefs

Keyboard Skills: harmonizing a simple 4-measure melody with 3 chords (I, IV, and V)

Other Activities: part write the original 8-measure melody (from above), analysis of Bach Chorales, art songs, chamber music, Test Ch 7 (Harmonic Progression)

Weeks 16-17 (5 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapter 10 (Cadences, Phrases, and Periods)

Written Skills; cadences, phrase structure, motives, part-writing practice in groups, part-writing, practice minor key, harmonization practice

Ear Training Skills; 2-phrase melodic and harmonic dictation in major and minor keys, identification of cadences, phrase structure

Sight-Singing Skills: 2-voice sight-singing melodies, major and minor, authentic

melodies from music literature

Other Activities: analysis of music literature, harmonization project

Weeks 18-20 (6 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapters 11 and 12 (Non-chord Tones)

Written Skills; passing tones, neighboring tones, suspensions, retardations, appoggiaturas, escape tones, neighbor groups, anticipations, pedal point

Ear Training Skills; melodic dictation featuring non-chord tones

Sight-Singing Skills: melodies featuring non-chord tones

Keyboard Skills: chord progressions with added non-chord tones

Other Activities: examples of non-chords in literature collected, analyzed, and discussed

End of 2nd Term

Weeks 21-24 (9 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapters 13-15 (Diatonic Seventh Chords)

Written Skills: the V7 chord in root and inverted positions, voice leading considerations, the ii⁷ and vii^{°7} chords, and other remaining diatonic seventh chords

Ear Training Skills; harmonic dictation featuring V7, ii⁷ and vii^{°7} chords

Sight-Singing Skills: melodies with chromatic alterations

Keyboard Skills: chord progressions featuring V7, ii⁷ and vii^{°7} chords

Other Activities: Test Ch. 13-15, take and discuss the 1989 Released Exam

Weeks 25-27 (7 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapters 16-17 (Secondary Functions)

Written Skills: secondary dominant chords (spelling and recognizing), secondary leading-tone chords (spelling and recognizing), deceptive resolutions of secondary functions

Ear Training Skills; harmonic dictation featuring secondary dominant chords and

secondary leading-tone chords

Sight-Singing Skills; authentic melodies from music literature, featuring treble and bass clefs, major and minor modes, simple and compound meters, and diatonic and chromatic non-chord tones

Keyboard Skills: Chord progressions featuring a variety of secondary dominant chords

Other Activities: Test Ch. 16 and 17, take and discuss the 1993 Released Exam; final project assignment (composition**)

Weeks 28-30 (7 meetings)

Written Skills: part-writing packet (from previous AP exams) distributed, with regular assignments made for completion

Ear Training Skills; melodic dictation from student-generated original melodies

Sight-Singing Skills; student-generated original melodies

Other Activities: Music Theory vocabulary, take and discuss the 1998 Released Exam; study sessions outside of class to begin final preparations for the AP Exam

End of 3rd Term

Weeks 31-32 (5 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapters 18 (Modulations Using Diatonic Common Chords)

Written Skills; modulation and change of key, modulation and tonicization, key relationships, common-chord modulation, analyzing common-chord modulation

Ear Training Skills; harmonic dictation featuring common-chord modulation

Sight-Singing Skills; sight-singing melodies from previous AP Exams

Other Activities; harmonization packet (from previous AP exams) is distributed, with regular assignments made for completion; study sessions outside of class

Week 33-34 (4 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapter 20 (Binary and Ternary Forms)

Written Skills: Formal terminology, binary forms, ternary forms, rounded binary forms, 12-bar blues, other formal designs including rondo, strophic, theme and variations

Ear Training Skills; practice/review interval, triad, 7th chord identification, melodic and harmonic dictation

Sight-Singing Skills; sight-singing melodies from previous AP Exams

Other Activities; Test Ch. 20, take and discuss the 2003 Released Exam; study sessions outside of class

Weeks 35-36 (6 meetings)

Intensive review for AP Exam (Practice part-writing, harmonization, error detection, vocabulary, non-chord tones, etc. as students consider necessary for review); take and discuss the 2008 Released Exam

Weeks 37-38 (5 meetings)

Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne); Chapter 28 (An Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music)

Written Skills: scales, chordal structures, and compositional procedures, in-class exercises selected from Self-Tests

Ear Training Skills; none

Sight-Singing Skills; none

Other Activities; present final projects

*Written Skills are assigned in every chapter studied throughout the course through the Workbook Exercises which accompanies the Kostka/Payne textbook. The workbook exercises provide extensive written practice, opportunities for creative expression, and abbreviated examples for analysis. In addition, numerous creative exercises are provided through the workbook exercises

** The final project is an extended composition wherein I set the basic parameters and requirements. It is due after the AP exam, when all compositions will be performed in class.