

AP MUSIC THEORY COURSE SYLLABUS
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Course Overview

AP Music Theory will cover the content of a college freshman theory course. It includes written and aural music theory as well as sight singing and basic music composition. In this course, students will become fluent in how vocal and instrumental music is constructed – primarily music written in the Common Practice Period (c. 1600 – c. 1900), but other style periods will also be discussed and studied in class.

Course Objectives

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

1. Notate pitch and rhythm in accordance with standard notation practices
2. Sight-sing and play melodies in treble, bass, and movable C clefs
3. Write, sing, and play major scales and all three forms of minor scales
4. Recognize by ear and by sight all intervals within an octave
5. Use the basic rules that govern music composition
6. Harmonize a given melody with appropriate chords using good voice leading
7. Analyze the chords of a musical composition by number and letter name
8. Transpose a composition from one key to another
9. Express musical ideas by composing and arranging
10. Understand and recognize basic musical forms: ternary, binary, rondo, etc.
11. Write simple rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic dictations
12. Compose for small ensembles involving transposing instruments

Textbooks¹

Written Theory Harmony and Comprehensive Text:

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

Anthology for Music Analysis and Study:

Burkhart, Charles. *Anthology for Musical Analysis*. 6th ed. Belmont, C.A.: Thomson Schirmer, 2004.

Aural Skills: Sight Singing, Ear Training, Keyboard, and Rhythmic Reading:

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

¹ Additional resources will be used to supplement the core content demonstrated in the texts listed here. Please see the instructor resources at the end of the syllabus for additional items.

Throughout the Kostka-Payne textbook, *Tonal Harmony*, basic music theory elements such as roman numerals and functional harmonic progressions are addressed in the context of a variety of Western art music. These elements are addressed in classroom instruction in conjunction with the utilization of the textbook. Furthermore, elements of twentieth-century music are addressed in classroom instruction in conjunction with the utilization of Chapter 28 of the textbook.

Course Planner

Written homework and reading assignments are given at each class meeting.

In addition to reading assignments and written homework assignments, students will spend class time on their computer using ear training software from www.musictheory.net to help identify basic diatonic and chromatic intervals and major and minor scales (all forms). Every day, students will have at least one melodic dictation and one sight singing exercise to complete in class.

This schedule is only approximate, as classes may move slower or faster from one year to another. All chapter references come from *Tonal Harmony* (Kostka). Below, each week is broken into the three core elements of the course: Text Work, Ear Training, Sight Singing.

First Nine Weeks

Part 1: Fundamentals

Week 1

Chapter 1 – Elements of Pitch – Keyboard and Octave Registers; Notation of the Staff; Major Scale; Major Key Signatures; Minor Scales; Minor Key Signatures; Scale Degree Names; Intervals; Perfect, Major, and Minor Intervals; Augmented and Diminished Intervals; Inversion of Intervals; Consonant and Dissonant Intervals.

Chapter 28 – An Introduction to Twentieth-Century (1900-1977) – Diatonic Church Modes; Pentatonic Scale; Whole-Tone Scale; Octatonic Scale.

www.musictheory.net - Major and Minor Scale Identification; major and Minor Interval Identification (2nd and 3rd)

Ear Training: Simple Rhythmic Dictations (1-2 Measures)

Sing Stepwise Exercises on Scale Degree Numbers (Berkowitz Pages 3-5)

Week 2

Chapter 2 – Elements of Rhythm – Rhythm; Durational Symbols; Beat and Tempo; Meter; Division of the Beat; Simple Time Signatures; Compound Time Signatures.

www.musictheory.net - Major and Minor Scale Identification; Perfect Interval (Unisons, 5th, and Octaves)

Ear Training: Simple Melodic Dictations (1-2 Measures)

Sing Major and Minor Scales (B. P10); Teach Solfege Syllables; Sight Sing Stepwise Solfege Exercises (B. PP3-5)

Weeks 3-4

Chapter 3 – Introduction to Triads and Seventh Chords – Triads; Seventh Chords, Inversions of Chords; Inversion Symbols and Figured Bass; Lead Sheet Symbols; Recognizing Chords in Various Textures.

www.musictheory.net -- Interval Identification (all chromatic intervals within an octave)

Ear training: Stepwise Melodic Dictations (3-4 Measures)

Sight major and Minor Scales; Sight Sing Skips in the Tonic Triad (B. PP5-6); Sight Sing Minor Melodies (B. PP11-13)

Weeks 5-6

Chapter 4 – Diatonic Chords in Major and Minor Keys – Minor scales; Diatonic Triads in Major; Diatonic Triads in Minor; Diatonic Seventh Chords in Major/Minor

Ear Training: Recognize Triad Quality and Inversion

Stepwise Melodic Dictations (3-4 Measures)

Sight Sing in 6/8 time and with rests (B. PP13-14)

Part 1 Quiz

Part 2: Diatonic Triads**Week 7**

Chapter 5 – Principles of Voice Leading – The Melodic Line; Notating Chords; Voicing a Single Triad; Parallel Motion

Ear Training: Drill Scales, Triad Quality, and Intervals (up to an octave); Short, Stepwise Melodic Dictations

Sight Sing Starting on Scale Degree 5 (B. P15); Sight Sing Starting on an Anacrusis (B. P17)

Week 8

Chapter 6 – Root Position Part Writing – Root Position Part Writing with Repeated Roots; Root Position Part Writing with Roots a 4th (5th) Apart; Root Position Part Writing with Roots a 3rd (6th) Apart; Root Position Part Writing with Roots a 2nd (7th) Apart; Instrumental Ranges and Transpositions. (Includes exercises to write bass lines for given melodies and Roman numeral progression realization)

Ear Training: Drill Scales, Triad Quality, Intervals (up to an octave); Short, Stepwise Melodic Dictations

Sight Sing Skips in a Dominant Triad (B. PP22-24)

Week 9

Review Chapters 1-6

Ear Training: Drill Scales, Triad Quality, and Intervals (up to an octave); Short, Stepwise Melodic Dictations

Sight Sing Melodies with Octave Leaps (B. P32)

Midterm 1 Test

Second Nine Weeks

Week 10

Chapter 7 – Harmonic Progression – Sequences and the Circle of Fifths; The I and V Chords; the II Chord; The VI Chord; The III Chord; The VII Chord; The IV Chord; Common Exceptions; Differences in the Minor Mode; Progressions Involving Seventh Chords; Harmonizing a Simple Melody (including exercises to realize Roman Numeral Progressions)

Ear Training: Drill Scales, Triad Quality, and Intervals (up to an Octave); Short, Stepwise Melodic Dictations

Sight Sing with Chromatic Alterations (B. P49)

Week 11

Chapter 8 – Triads in First Inversion – Bass Arpeggiation; Substituted First Inversion Triads; Parallel Sixth Chords; Part Writing First Inversion Triads; Soprano-Bass Counterpoint

Ear training: Drill Scales, Triad Quality, and Intervals (up to an octave); Short, Stepwise Melodic Dictations

Sight Sing with Piano Accompaniment, Stepwise (B. PP142-146)

Week 12

Chapter 9 – Triads in Second Inversion – Bass Arpeggiation and the Melodic Bass; The Cadential Six-Four; The Passing Six-Four; The Pedal Six-Four; Part-Writing for Second Inversion Triads.

Ear Training: Test Basic Skills on Triad and Scale Identification; Identify all Intervals; Short Melodic Dictations

Sight Sing with Piano Accompaniment, Stepwise (B. PP147-150)

Weeks 13-14

Chapter 10 – Cadences, Phrases, and Periods – Musical Form; Cadences; Cadences and Harmonic Rhythm, Motives and Phrases, Mozart: “An die Freude”; Period Forms

Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under Melodies (using I and V); Short Melodic Dictations

Sight Sing in Minor with Piano Accompaniment, Stepwise (B. PP156-157)

Week 15

Chapter 11 – Non-Chord Tones 1 – Classification of Non-Chord Tones; Passing Tones; Neighboring Tones; Suspensions and Retardations; Figured Bass and Lead Sheet Symbols; Embellishing a Simple Texture

Ear Training: dictate Harmonies played under Melodies (using I and V); Short Melodic Dictations

Sight Sing with Non-Chord Tones, Stepwise (B. PP175-176)

Week 16

Chapter 12 – Non-Chord Tones 2 – Appoggiaturas; Escape Tones; The Neighbor Group; Anticipations; The Pedal Point; Special Problems in the Analysis of Non-Chord Tones
 Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under melodies (using I, V, and IV); Short Melodic Dictations
 Sight Sing with Non-Chord Tones, Stepwise (B. PP177-179)
 Part 2 Quiz

Part 3: Diatonic Seventh Chords**Week 17**

Chapter 13 – the V⁷ Chord – General Voice-Leading Considerations; The V⁷ in Root Position; the V⁷ in Three Parts; Other Resolutions of the V⁷; The Inverted V⁷ Chord; The V^{6/5} Chord; the V^{4/3} Chord; the V^{4/2} Chord; The Approach to the 7th
 Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under melodies (using I, V, and IV); Short Melodic Dictations
 Sight Sing Skips in a Dominant Ninth Chord (B. P66); Sight Sing Double Shrops and Sixteenth Notes (B. P69)

Week 18

Review Chapters 1-13
 Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under Melodies (using I, V, and IV); Short Melodic Dictations
 Sight Sing Triplets (B. PP30-31)
 Semester 1 Exam

Winter Break**Third Nine Weeks****Week 19**

Review Chapter 13
 Chapter 14 – The II⁷ and VII⁷ Chords – The II⁷ Chord; The VII⁷ Chord in Major; The VII⁷ Chord in Minor
 Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under Melodies (Using I, IV, V, and V⁷ and inversions)
 Sight Sing (B. PP28-29)

Week 20

Chapter 15 – Other Diatonic Seventh Chords – The IV⁷ Chord; The VI⁷ Chord; The I⁷ Chord; The III⁷ Chord
 Part 3 Quiz
 Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under melodies (Using I, IV, V, and V⁷ and inversions)
 Sight Sing Ties, Staccato, and Accents (B. PP33-34)

Part 4: Chromaticism 1

Week 21

Chapter 16 – Secondary Functions 1 – Chromaticism and altered chords; secondary functions; secondary dominant chords; spelling secondary dominants; recognizing secondary dominants; secondary dominants in context

Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under Melodies (using I, IV, V, and V⁷ and inversions)
Sight Sing Secondary Dominants (B. P56)

Week 22

Chapter 17 – Secondary Functions 2 – Secondary Leading-Tone Chords; Spelling Secondary Leading-Tone Chords; Recognizing Secondary Leading-Tone Chords; Secondary Leading-Tone Chords in Context; Sequences Involving Secondary Functions; Deceptive Resolutions of Secondary Functions; other Secondary Functions.

Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under melodies (using I, ii, IV, V, and V⁷ and inversions)
Sight Sing Syncopations (B. PP35-36)

Week 23

Chapter 18 – Modulations Using Diatonic Common Chords – Modulation and Change of Key; Modulation and Tonicization; Key Relationships; Common-Chord Modulation; Analyzing Common-Chord Modulation

Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under melodies (using I, ii, IV, V, and V⁷ and inversions)
Sight Sing (B. PP37-38)

Week 24

Chapter 19 – Some Other Modulatory Techniques – Altered Chords as Common Chords; Sequential Modulation; Modulation by Common Tone; Monophonic Modulation; Direct Modulation

Ear Training; Dictate Harmonies played under melodies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions)
Sight Sing Chromatic Neighbor Tones (B. PP39-40)

Week 25

Chapter 20 – Binary and Ternary Forms – Formal Terminology; Binary Forms; Ternary Forms; Rounded Binary Forms; 12-Bar Blues; Other Formal Designs

Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under Melodies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions)
Sight Sing in Relative Keys (B. PP41-42)
Part 4 Quiz

Week 26

Review Chapters 13-20

Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under Melodies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions)

Sight Sing (B. PP43-44)

Part 5: Chromaticism 2**Week 27**

Chapter 21 – Mode Mixture – Borrowed Chords in Minor; The Use of $b6$ in Major; Other Borrowed Chords in Major; Modulations Involving Mode Mixture

Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under Melodies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions)

Sight Sing Modulations to the Dominant (B. PP45-46)

Fourth Nine Weeks**Week 28**

Chapter 22 – Neapolitan Chord – Conventional Use of the Neapolitan; Other Uses of the Neapolitan

Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under Melodies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions); Listen to a piece of music literature and list all the elements you hear (rhythmic style, motive, register, dynamic, orchestration, etc.)

Sight Sing (B. PP47-48)

Week 29

Chapter 23 – Augmented Sixth Chords 1 – The Interval of the Augmented Sixth; The Italian Augmented Sixth Chord; The French Augmented Sixth Chord; The German Augmented Sixth Chord; Other Uses of Conventional Augmented Sixth Chords

Ear Training: Dictate Harmonies played under Melodies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions); Listen to a piece of music literature and list all the elements you hear (rhythmic style, motive, register, dynamic, orchestration, etc.)

Sight Sing (B. PP49-51)

Week 30

Chapter 24 – Augmented Sixth Chords 2 – Other Bass Positions; Resolutions to Other Scale Degrees; Resolutions to Other Chord Members; Other Types of Augmented Sixth Chords

Ear Training: Dictate Melodies and Harmonies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions) – use varied instrumentation; Listen to a piece of music literature and list all the elements you hear (rhythmic style, motive, register, dynamic, orchestration, etc.)

Sight Sing Skips to Chromatic Notes (B. PP52-53)

Week 31

Chapter 25 – Enharmonic Spellings and Enharmonic Modulations – Enharmonic Spellings; Enharmonic Reinterpretation; Enharmonic Modulations Using the Major- Minor Seventh Sonority; Enharmonic Modulations Using the Diminished Seventh Chord; Other Examples of Enharmonicism

Chapter 26 – Further Elements of the Harmonic Vocabulary – The Dominant with a Substituted 6th, The Dominant with a Raised 5th; Ninth, Eleventh, and Thirteenth Chords; The Common-Tone Diminished Seventh Chord; Simultaneities; Coloristic Chord Successions

Ear Training: Dictate Melodies and Harmonies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions) – use varied instrumentations; Listen to a piece of music literature and list all the elements you hear (rhythmic style, motive, register, dynamic, orchestration, etc.)

Sight Sing (B. PP54-55)

Week 32

Chapter 27 – Tonal Harmony in the Late Nineteenth Century – Counterpoint; Treatment of Dominant Harmony; Sequence; Expanded Tonality

Ear Training: dictate Melodies and Harmonies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions) – used varied instrumentation; Listen to a piece of music literature and list all the elements you hear (rhythmic style, motive, register, dynamic, orchestration, etc.)

Sight Sing in Secondary Dominants (B. PP56-57)

Week 33

I will administer the first practice AP Exam

Class will consist of AP style free response problems, vocabulary review, and sight singing in preparation for the AP Music Theory Exam

Ear Training: Dictate melodies and Harmonies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions) – use varied instrumentation; Listen to a piece of music literature and list all the elements you hear (rhythmic style, motive, register, dynamic, orchestration, etc.)

Sight Sing in Asymmetric Meters (B. PP58-59)

Week 34

I will administer the first practice AP Exam

Class will consist of AP style free response problems, vocabulary review, and sight singing in preparation for the AP Music Theory Exam

Ear Training: Dictate melodies and Harmonies (using all diatonic chords, sevenths, and inversions) – use varied instrumentation; Listen to a piece of music literature and list all the elements you hear (rhythmic style, motive, register, dynamic, orchestration, etc.)

Sight Sing in Asymmetric Meters (B. P65)

Week 35-37

Chapter 28 – An Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music – Impressionism; Polyharmony; Quartal and Secundal Harmony; Parallelism; Pandiatonicism; Atonal Theory; The Twelve-Tone Serialism; Total Serialization; Aleatory or Chance Music, Texture and Expanded Instrumental Resources; Electronic Music
Students will work on their Final Composition Projects

Teaching Strategies

I take Music Theory out of the classroom and into the context of actual music. Most students who take AP Music Theory are going to be in, or have taken, band or choir at our school. Our goal is to relate theoretical music theory to the real world music making happening every day. Students in my theory class are constantly being challenged to look at the music they are preparing for the next concert or audition and discover elements we've learned in class. I will ask students to identify particular rudiments or part-writing guidelines exhibited in their music. When they can apply their knowledge from a book in class to music literature outside of the class, I know they are learning.

Music is a skill which is why daily homework is the best tool for students to sharpen their analysis recognition. Keeping up with homework will be crucial to succeed in this class. I spend 25% of the class going over homework, helping students identify errors, and reassuring correct responses. This is when questions are answered, clarity happens, and mastery is formed.

I spend 50% of each class period composing and analyzing melodies and harmonies on the board. Students get to hear part-writing rules and practice using them. I give students specific chords to voice or analyze until everyone has had an opportunity to participate. If not on the board, then students analyze motive treatment and harmony in excerpts from Common Period music literature from the Burkhardt Anthology for Musical Analysis.

The remaining 25% of each class is spent on ear training, dictations, sight singing, and using online aural skill building aids (www.musictheory.net). Ear Training exercises are played on the piano or voice from *A New Approach to Sight Singing* (Berkowitz). I select excerpts similar to our sight singing level to perform for the students to dictate. We will practice ear training every day, but only one in-class dictation per week will count toward with dictation grade.

Student Evaluation

Students will be assessed daily with homework, weekly with sight singing, and weekly with dictations. Quizzes will be administered at the end of every Unit ("Part") and Tests will be given at every midterm and semester's end. Your final test grade for the second semester will be accounted for by a composition project. We will use class time to work on these projects.

Grades will be given on a weighted scale, as follows:

- 50% Daily Work
- 10% Sight Singing
- 10% Dictations (In-Class)
- 10% Quizzes
- 20% Tests (2 Midterms, 1 Semester Final, 1 Composition Final)

Final Composition Project

A majority of the skills learned in this class apply to tonal music. However, in Chapter 28 of *Tonal Harmony* students will discover Atonal Music, Aleatory Music, and the Twelve-Tone Series. Using a tone row matrix, students will compose a twelve-tone composition. Students will have access to notation software to write out their composition. Students may use any instrumentation they like, but the piece must be written for at least 4 voices and must be 3 minutes in length. Details and rubric will be given to the students as the project approaches.

Student Materials

All students should have the following items each day of class.

- Three Ring Binder (1 ½ inch recommended)
- Staff paper (loose leaf if available from the teacher, however you are free to purchase spiral bound manuscript books on your own)
- Pencils
- Ear buds or headphones for computer work
- At least 3 tab dividers for your binder (your notebook should be divided into the following sections: 1. Text Work and Worksheets, 2. Ear Training and Dictations, 3. Sight Singing)