

# AP Music Theory Syllabus

## Course Overview

This course is designed to provide primary instruction for students in Music Theory as well as develop strong fundamentals of understanding of music equivalent to an entry level college music theory course. The course will challenge students to acquire new skills through discussion and analysis of Western Music and through personal composition.

## Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, the students will be able to:

- a. Recognize and define musical terms and vocabulary
- b. Notate pitches and rhythm in accordance with standard notation practices
- c. Read melodies in treble, bass and moveable C clefs
- d. Interpret and notate scales in all major, minor and modal keys
- e. Recognize by ear and sight all intervals within an octave
- f. Understand basic rules and guidelines to musical composition
- g. Analyze the chords of a musical composition by number and letter name
- h. Transpose a composition from one key to another
- i. Understand and recognize basic musical forms
- j. Express musical ideas by composing and arranging
- k. Write simple rhythmic and melodic dictation
- l. Understand and be able to use solfege

## Primary Texts

Kostka, Stefan, Payne, Dorothy and Almen, Byron. Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013

Ottman, Robert W. and Rogers, Nancy. Music for Sight Singing, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.:

Prentice Hall.

## Primary Supplemental Text

Ottman, Robert W. Elementary Harmony Theory and Practice, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.:

Prentice Hall

# Course Syllabus

## First Nine Weeks

### **Week 1-2**

Fundamentals of Theory

Staff and Clef Notation

Accidentals

Simple Meter

Key Signatures / Circle of 5ths

### **Week 3-4**

Exam #1

Review Circle of 5ths

Introduction to Major, Minor and Church modes, Whole Tone and Pentatonic Scales

Parallel and Relative Scales

Introduction to intervals

### **Week 5-6**

Continue working on Circle of 5ths

Continue working on scales

Continue working on intervals and modifiers

### **Week 7-8**

Exam #2

Introduction of Solfege

Recognizing intervals by listening and singing

Introduce transposition

Chapter 1 (*Tonal Harmony*) – *Pitch, Pitch Class, Intervals*

### **Week 9**

Review Transposition and solfege

Exam #3

Chapter 2 (*Tonal Harmony*) *Elements of Rhythm*

## **Second Nine Weeks**

### **Week 1-2**

Chapter 3 (*Tonal Harmony*) *Introduction to Triads*

Triads, Inversion, Figured Bass

7<sup>th</sup> Chords

Chapter 1 (*Music for Sight Singing*) *Rhythms*

Exam #1

### **Week 3-4**

Review triads and 7<sup>th</sup> chords and their inversions

Chapter 4 (*Tonal Harmony*) *Diatonic Chords in Major and minor keys*

Chapter 2 (*Music for Sight Singing*) *Melodies in Major Keys*

Exam # 2

### **Week 5-6**

Review chords- diatonic, inversions, Major and Minor Keys

Chapter 5 (*Tonal Harmony*) *Principles of Voice Leading*

Parallel 5ths and Octaves

Contrary Motion, Oblique, Similar and Parallel Motion

Chapter 6 (*Tonal Harmony*) *Root Position part Writing*

Part Writing

Chapter 3 (*Music for Sight Singing*) *Melody-Intervals from the Tonic Triad, Major Keys-*

Simple Meter

Exam #3

## **Week 7-8**

Continue with Chapter 6 (*Tonal Harmony*)

Instrumental Ranges and Transpositions

Chapter 7 (*Tonal Harmony*) *Harmonic Progressions and Sequence*

Harmonizing a Simple Melody with Primary Chords

Harmonizing a Simple Melody with Primary and Secondary Chords

Harmonizing using proper voice leading in all 4 parts: Bass, Tenor, Alto

Chapter 4 (*Music for Sight singing*) *Intervals from the Tonic Triad, Major Keys in Compound Meters*

## **Week 9**

Review for Semester Exam

Semester Exam

## **Third Nine Weeks**

### **Week 1-2**

Chapters 8 & 9 (*Tonal Harmony*) *Triads in First and Second Inversions*

Two Part Counterpoint using 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Inversions

Chord analyzation

Composing two part compositions

**Chapter 5 (*Music for Sight Singing*)** *Minor Keys; Intervals from the Tonic Triad*

Simple and Compound Meters

Exam # 1

### **Week 3-4**

Chapters 10-11 (*Tonal Harmony*)

Cadences, Phrases, Periods, and Sentences

Musical Forms

Motives and Phrases

Non- Chord Tones- Passing Tones, Neighboring Tones, Suspensions and Retardations

Students will Analyze Hymns and other music for Chord progressions, Cadences, non-chord tones, motivic treatment and Musical Form.

Chapter 6 (*Music for Sight Singing*) *Intervals from the Dominant Triad*

Major and minor Keys

Simple and Compound Meter

Exam # 2

### **Week 5-6**

Chapter's 11 – 12 (*Tonal Harmony*) Non Chord tones - Appoggiaturas, Escape tones, Anticipations

Continue analyzing Hymns for Cords, Non-Chord Tones and cadences

Chapter 7 (*Music for Sight Singing*) *Alto and Tenor Clefs*

Exam # 3

### **Week 7-8**

Chapters 13, 14, 15 (*Tonal Harmony*)

V7, II7, VII7 chords and Secondary Diatonic Chords

Voice Leading

Inversions

Analyzing

Chapter 8 (*Music for Sight Singing*) *Diatonic Intervals in Simple and Compound Meters*

### **Week 9**

Review previously taught material

Begin preparation for AP Exam

Exam #4

## **Fourth Nine Weeks**

### **Week 1-2**

Chapters 17-19 (*Tonal Harmony*)

Secondary Functions

Modulations

Chapter 8 (*Music for Sight Singing*) *Intervals from the Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord*

### **Week 3-4**

Chapter 20 (*Tonal Harmony*)

Musical Forms

Continue preparing for AP Exam

Begin Student Composition assignment

Chapter 10 (*Music for Sight Singing*)-*Subdividing into 4 parts*

### **Week 5-6**

Students will continue working on their composition project

Review and prepare for AP Exam

### **Week 7-8**

Review for AP Exam

AP Exam

### **Week 8-9**

Final Preparations on Composition Project

Present Composition Projects to the Class

## **Teaching Strategies/ Student Activities**

In order for students to master music theory, one must begin with fundamentals. The first weeks of class are designed to familiarize all students with general terminology; basic chordal and scalar structure; standard notation and clef studies; fundamental intervallic relationships; and fundamental part-writing and harmonic progressions. This knowledge is a pertinent necessity and pre-requisite for everything the students will learn during future lessons. After the student has mastered learning rudimentary scalar structure, the class will begin competence in aural skills as it is a difficult skill to master, especially for young musicians.

When the students have demonstrated a complete understanding of theoretical fundamentals, a considerable amount of time is spent on part-writing and harmonic progressions. For example, the student may be given an exercise in which they will be expected to demonstrate the ability to identify key signatures, harmonic progressions, cadences, part-writing considerations, and selection of appropriate chordal tendencies. The amount of material can seem overwhelming to the average student, which is why so much time is spent on this material alone.

The class will have frequent guided discussions over new topics, giving each other an opportunity to share their ideas, debate theoretical concepts and materialize their arguments or ideas on staff paper. The students will be given examples from varied texts, musical scores, and cumulative anthologies that correlate with the topic being discussed. From there, the students will hear the examples through teacher demonstration on the piano or through a professional recording according to convenience. Each example will be heard several times. The first time is for the student to receive a first listening and record their initial impressions, while the consecutive hearings are for in-depth discussion and analysis.

After the basic foundation for aural skills has been made, students will begin each class period reproducing an assigned melody using techniques learned in class. Aural skills are an important skill that cannot be ignored as it is imperative knowledge for the test and for the life of a professional musician.

The final student project of the year consists of each student composing their own work using the techniques we have learned throughout the year. The work must be at least 32 measures long. The work will be written in 4 parts and performed on the piano.

In order to prepare all students for the AP Exam in the spring semester, all students will take practice exams beginning in February. The students will receive questions from the book and past exams to assist in their preparation. Take home tests will be utilized at first, then in class exams will be given to allow for accurate use of testing strategies.

## **Student Evaluations**

Based on school policy:

Participation and Homework- 40%

Exam Grades- 60%

