

AP[®] Music Theory

Syllabus 4

Course Overview

The AP[®] Music Theory class meets during “0 hour” (6:45 to 7:30 a.m.) four days per week, excluding Thursday. Because of the limitations of a six-period day, this schedule allows students in all performing ensembles, as well as others who are taking a full course load, to enroll in a seventh class for credit without the need to curtail participation in the performance ensembles. Sixty-minute conference periods on Tuesday and Thursday mornings provide an opportunity for tutoring and independent lab work (e.g., keyboard and sight-singing practice, computer applications, etc.). A lab containing 16 Casio CT-670 keyboards is also available during the week, and students use it periodically to review scales, chords, progressions, and cadences. I encourage students to avail themselves of a variety of music theory websites for extra drill and practice.

Primary Texts:

Harder, Paul, and Greg A. Steinke. *Basic Materials in Music Theory: A Programmed Course*, 10th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Steinke, Greg A. *Harmonic Materials in Tonal Music: A Programmed Course—Parts 1 and 2*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2002.

Charles Burkhart’s *Anthology* (see below) is used throughout the course for study of repertoire analysis, small forms, and other topics using a wide range of music literature. [C10, C15]

C10—The course also teaches: small forms (e.g., rounded binary, simple ternary, theme and variation, strophic).

Other Resources:

Burkhart, Charles. *Anthology for Musical Analysis*, 6th ed. New York: Schirmer, 2003.

Horvit, Michael, Timothy Koozin, and Robert Nelson. *Music for Ear Training*, with workbook and CD-ROM, 2nd ed. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 2005.

C15—The course includes, but is not limited to, study of a wide variety of vocal and instrumental music from the standard Western tonal repertoires.

MacGAMUT 2003 (for Mac and Windows). Columbus, Ohio: MacGAMUT Music Software. www.macgamut.com

Ottman, Robert. *Music for Sight Singing*, 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2001.

Ottman, Robert W., and Paul E. Dworak. *Basic Ear Training Skills*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991.

Ricci Adams’ Music Theory website: www.musictheory.net

Course Objectives

My goal is that at the conclusion of the AP Music Theory course, students will be able to:

- Define basic musical terms and theoretical concepts.
- Understand and construct major, minor, chromatic, whole tone, and modal scales.
- Demonstrate the ability to construct and analyze major, minor, augmented, and diminished intervals and triads.
- Recognize, audiate, and sing or play scales, intervals, triads, rhythms, and melodies.
- Sing simple conjunct and disjunct diatonic melodies at sight.
- Construct compositions in four-part texture.
- Analyze harmonic structure utilizing Roman numerals and figured bass.
- Identify basic form and cadences.

Although the curriculum described in the *AP Music Theory Course Description* is followed, students are also introduced to valuable information that is not covered on the AP Music Theory Exam, such as acoustics, overtone series, dodecaphonic music, transposition, composition, and arranging. This information is critical for achieving success in higher education music study, as well as for enhancing students' study of music.

Course Planner

BMMT = *Basic Materials in Music Theory*

HMTM = *Harmonic Materials in Tonal Music*

Other = Other Resources

The following outline is based on a 36-week school year:

Week	Content	Chapter/Activities
1	Time, Sound, Acoustics, and Overtone Series	BMMT Chapter 1
2	Notation, Clefs, and Enharmonics	BMMT Chapter 2
3	Meter, Divisions, and Subdivisions	BMMT Chapter 3
4	Note and Rest Values, Tempo, and Expression	BMMT Chapter 4
5	Time Classification and Rhythm	BMMT Chapter 5

[C1]

C1—The course enables students to master the rudiments and terminology of music: notational skills, intervals, scales, keys, chords, meter, and rhythm.

Week	Content	Chapter/Activities		
6–7	Harmonic and Melodic Intervals (Quality and Quantity)	BMMT Chapter 6		C6 —The course includes the following scales: major, minor, modal, pentatonic, and whole tone.
8	Basic Scale Structure	BMMT Chapter 7		
9	Major Scales and Tetrachords with Accidentals	BMMT Chapter 8		C7 —The course covers the following concepts or procedures based in common-practice tonality: functional triadic harmony in traditional four-voice texture, including non-harmonic tones, seventh chords and secondary dominants.
10–11	Minor Scales, Diatonic/Chromatic Intervals, modes, pentatonic and whole-tone scales	BMMT Chapter 9	[C6]	
12–13	Key Signatures, Relative and Parallel Keys/Circle of Fifths	BMMT Chapter 10		
14–15	Triads and Tertian Sonority	BMMT Chapter 11	[C7]	
16	Definition of Tonality and Chord Structure	HMTM Chapter 1		C9 —The course also teaches: phrase structure.
17	Structure of Tonality	HMTM Chapter 2		
18	Root Position Triads, Doubling and Spacing	HMTM Chapter 3		C2 —The course progresses to include more sophisticated and creative tasks: writing a bass line for a given melody or harmonization of a given melody in four parts.
19	Voice Leading	HMTM Chapter 4		
20–21	First and Second Inversion Triads	HMTM Chapter 5		
22	Motives, Phrase Structure, and Cadences	HMTM Chapter 6	[C9]	
23–24	Harmonic Progression; Introduction to Roman Numeral Analysis, Realization of Roman Numeral Progressions, and Figured Bass Realization	HMTM Chapter 7	[C2, C4, C5, C8]	C4 —The course progresses to include more sophisticated and creative tasks: realization of a Roman numeral progression.
25–26	Techniques of Harmonization	HMTM Chapter 8	[C3]	
27	Nonharmonic Tones	HMTM Chapter 9	[C8]	C5 —The course progresses to include more sophisticated and creative tasks: analysis of repertoire, including analysis of motivic treatment and harmonic analysis.
28–29	Seventh Chords and Inversions	Other		
30–31	Secondary Triads and Quadrads, Simple Modulation	Other	[C8]	
32	Practice AP Exam	Other		
33–34	Music Research Paper and Class Presentation	Other		C8 —The course covers the following concepts or procedures based in common-practice tonality: Modulation to closely related keys.
35–36	Original Composition Performance	Other	[C14]	C3 —The course progresses to include more sophisticated and creative tasks: realization of a figured bass.
				C14 —Musical skills are developed through the following types of musical exercises: creative exercises.

Approximately 30 minutes of sight-singing are incorporated on a weekly basis and sight-singing is tested at midterm and at the end of each quarter. [C12] Listening activities are also completed each week, appropriate to the unit being studied. Students practice single-line, two-part, and four-part dictation independently, utilizing CDs, and I also give them class practice on the piano. [C11] Quizzes are administered at the end of each concept or unit. Exams are given at the end of the quarter and semester.

C12—Musical skills are developed through the following types of musical exercises: sight-singing.

C11—Musical skills are developed through the following types of musical exercises: listening (discrete intervals, scales, etc.; dictations; excerpts from literature).

Each student is required to complete a five-page music research paper, subsequently presenting a 15-minute outline of the research in class. Students are also required to create an original composition that is performed for the class at the end of the second semester, utilizing live soloists and ensembles when possible.

[C13, C14]

C13—Musical skills are developed through the following types of musical exercises: written exercises.

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. Students also take turns demonstrating concepts using a whiteboard, overhead projector, the voice, or an instrument.

C14—Musical skills are developed through the following types of musical exercises: creative exercises.

Teaching Strategies/Student Activities

When I teach harmonic analysis, nonharmonic tones, and cadences, I incorporate both visual and aural stimuli to help students with recognition and audiation. The chorals (or chorales) of J. S. Bach are useful for this purpose. I select chorals that are pertinent to the topic being studied. Often, I'll place the music on a transparency and project it on a large screen for the entire class to view. The chorals are played on the piano or by student quartets, or I use a recording. Individual work and class discussion follow. This technique assists students in hearing what they see. [C7, C11]

C7—The course covers the following concepts or procedures based in common-practice tonality: functional triadic harmony in traditional four-voice texture, including nonharmonic tones, seventh chords and secondary dominants.

Examples of resources for this type of activity include:

371 *Four-Part Chorals*, Vol. I (nos. 1–198) by J. S. Bach. (New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, 1985).

Four-Part Chorales (Chorales 1–50), by J. S. Bach. Available from: www.virtualsheetmusic.com/score/Chorales1.html

This website offers MIDI keyboard recordings that may be played from the computer or recorded to other media.

Demonstration of Overtones:

Because knowledge of overtones assists in the understanding of tuning and vocal and instrumental timbre, as well as the concept of the tonic triad, I use the following demonstrations:

- a) The small c is depressed silently on a piano while the great C is struck. Sympathetic vibration will activate the first overtone without it actually being played. The process is repeated, depressing the small g, c', e', g', b flat', and c''. Above the seventh overtone (i.e., eighth partial), it is difficult to hear the pitch. This may be tried above a variety of fundamental pitches.
- b) Two clear, evenly matched male or female voices are asked to simultaneously produce an interval of a fifth (i.e., c and g, or c' and g') which, if sung in tune, will produce an audible overtone.
- c) Student instrumentalists are asked to demonstrate the overtone series on selected instruments. For example, string players will continuously cut a given string in half by partially depressing a finger against the fingerboard to produce overtones. A trumpet or trombone player will overblow pitches without the use of valves or a slide to produce the natural overtone series of the instrument.

Enharmonic Exercise:

Selected students are asked to go to the staff-lined whiteboard to construct a series of intervals and/or triads on different pitches, utilizing various accidentals. A second set of students is asked to construct the same pitches on the staff below using enharmonic spelling (sounding the same but spelled differently). A third set of students is asked to test the enharmonic spellings at the piano.

Major and Minor Scale Drill

Students are positioned at electronic keyboards in pairs. They are asked by the teacher/conductor to start playing, at a tempo of 60 bpm, in unison or in octaves, beginning with the ascending and descending scale of C major, then A minor, and transitioning through all of the major and minor keys (three forms) in the circle of fifths and fourths, keeping the relative major/minor keys together. Correct fingering is not required. Consequently, one finger alone may be used if necessary. The sequence of scales would begin with C major, played as follows: C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C-B-A-G-F-E-D-C-B-A-B-C, etc. The next scale would be G major, followed by the three forms of E minor, continuing through the entire sequence of scales.

Teaching of Form

A variety of forms are introduced and studied throughout the year. One way to solidify a formal concept is through student composition. [C10, C14] An example follows.

C10—The course also teaches: small forms (e.g., rounded binary, simple ternary, theme and variation, strophic).

C14—Musical skills are developed through the following types of musical exercises: creative exercises.

Theme and Variation:

1. Students are asked to select a simple folk song, hymn, nursery rhyme, or patriotic song.
2. The melody of the main theme is written on staff paper.
3. Students are asked to create variations on the given theme (melody only) by using, among others, the following techniques:
 - a. change of meter (from simple to compound, etc.)
 - b. augmentation (stretching out the note values)
 - c. diminution (compressing the note values)
 - d. change of key (relative or parallel minor)
 - e. inversion (mirrored contour)
 - f. retrograde (backward theme)
 - g. ornamentation (trills, turns, nonharmonic tones)

An example from the literature, which is useful for demonstration, is *Variations on America* by Charles Ives (various recordings are available, including concert band, pipe organ, etc.).

Ear Training

My students are required to sing everything that is learned in terms of scales, modes, intervals, triads, quadrads, etc. This serves to solidify the aural aspects of what they see on paper. [C12]

C12—Musical skills are developed through the following types of musical exercises: sight-singing.

Student Evaluation

The criteria I use to determine students' grades are as follows:

Attendance:.....	20 %
Classroom Participation:	20 %
Homework Assignments:.....	30 %
Quizzes:	15 %
Final Exams:	15 %

Written assignments are due at the beginning of each class session unless otherwise arranged (i.e., in the case of excused absences, illness, etc.). Late work is accepted but receives one letter grade lower for each day it is delinquent. Arrangements may be made at my discretion to resubmit assignments for the purpose of improving a grade. Extra credit is not awarded.

Short quizzes are given following each unit, or grouping of units, throughout the term; and a comprehensive exam is administered at the end of each quarter.

Assessment Strategies

One strategy I use for assessment is to compile a student-generated test—each class member constructs questions or problems based on the material from the unit being studied.

A somewhat different approach recognizes that the study of music theory encourages cross-hemispherical brain activity and thought processes similar to those used in math and logic disciplines. Therefore, I might include word problems that require solving pieces of a puzzle, one at a time, in order to “proof out the formula” and arrive at the correct answer. Simpler word problems are posed early in the term, with more complex problems introduced as the students’ level of knowledge and skill improves. At first problems may be done on paper; with mastery, students can come up with the answers without written assistance.

These are examples of assessment questions I give my students:

1. F# is the leading tone in a harmonic minor scale. Spell the dominant triad of the parallel minor to the relative major key.
2. E is the submediant of a major scale. Spell the mediant triad of its parallel, natural minor.
3. If Ab is the subdominant of a major scale, what is the third of the supertonic triad in the relative minor?
4. If G is the fifth of a tonic triad in a major key, what is the first inversion of the tonic triad in the relative minor?
5. Gx is the leading tone in a harmonic minor scale. Spell the supertonic triad in the relative major key written for three horns in F.

Because of the time demands of our intense focus on aural skill development in the common practice style, this course limits its introduction to twentieth-century compositional techniques to whole-tone, octatonic and pentatonic scales, part of the study of scales in weeks 9–11.