

**Course Syllabus - Advanced Placement Music Theory  
Forest Park High School, Room 1406**

Mr. Shawn W. Davern, Instructor  
davernsw@pwcs.edu - (571) 589-3625  
www.bruinband.net

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**Course Description**

AP Music Theory is a course introducing the motivated and talented music students to musicianship, theory, musical materials, and theoretical procedures. The course is designed to provide students with the major components common to a first year course in a college music program.

AP Music Theory integrates aspects of melody, harmony, texture, rhythm, form, musical analysis, elementary composition, and, to some extent, history and style. Musicianship skills such as dictation and other listening skills, sight-singing, and keyboard harmony are considered an important part of the course. The student's fluency and ability to read and write standard musical notation is required for the successful completion of the course. It is also expected that the student has acquired at least basic performance skills in voice or on an instrument.

\*This syllabus is intended to give you an overview of the course, but for a complete breakdown of skills and for practice exams and other important links, please refer to the AP Music Theory Exam homepage

**Course Objectives**

The course objectives for AP music theory are largely drawn from the most recent course requirements for AP music theory, found on the music theory homepage at AP central. The ultimate goal of an AP music theory course is to develop a student's ability to recognize, organize, understand, and describe the basic materials and processes of music that are heard or presented in a score. This goal will be best achieved by integrated approaches to the student's development of:

- Aural skills through listening exercises.
- Sight singing skills through performance exercises.
- Written skills through pencil and paper written exercises.
- Compositional skills through creative musical exercises.
- Analytical skills through the guided, in-class analysis of musical compositions drawn from the body of great musical literature from a variety of styles.

**Course Materials**

- 1.5" 3-ring binder
- 5-tab Dividers:
  - Notes/Handouts
  - Homework
  - Dictation/SS
  - Quizzes
  - Tests
- Blank staff paper, store bought or printed free ([www.blanksheetmusic.net](http://www.blanksheetmusic.net))
- Pencils w/ erasers

## Course Content

The course seeks student mastery of the rudiments and terminology of music, including:

- Notation
- Intervals
- Scales and Keys
- Chords
- Metric Organization
- Rhythmic Pattern

We address these basic concepts through listening to not only music based in the European classical tonal system, but also contemporary, jazz, and popular music, and music of other cultures. We focus primarily on the system of major-minor tonality, but will incorporate a brief introduction to the church modes, pentatonic and other scales, and twentieth-century techniques and terminology. We give serious attention to the acquisition of correct notational skills. Speed, accuracy, and fluency with basic music materials will be emphasized.

Building on this foundation, the course progresses to include more creative tasks, such as:

- Composition of a bass line for given melody, implying appropriate harmony
- Realization of a figured bass
- Realization of a Roman numeral progression
- Analysis of musical repertoire, including study of motivic treatment, examination of rhythmic and melodic interaction between individual voices of a composition, and harmonic analysis of functional tonal passages.

We will listen to, play, discuss, analyze, and write fugues, 1st and 2nd species counterpoint, and (briefly) explore 20th century compositional techniques. A short introduction to twentieth-century scales, chordal structures, and compositional procedures will be incorporated through analysis and/or original composition. The course will also emphasize procedures based in common-practice tonality:

- Functional triadic harmony in traditional four-voice texture (with vocabulary including non-harmonic tones and secondary dominants)
- Cadences
- Melodic and harmonic compositional processes
- Standard rhythms and meters
- Phrase structure (e.g. contrasting period, phrase group)
- Small forms (e.g. rounded binary, simple ternary, theme and variation, strophic)
- Modulation to closely related key

## **Aural Skills**

One of the most important skills that any music student can develop is the training of the ear. Students will be expected to spend a considerable amount of time on melodic and harmonic dictation exercises. Examples will include: dictation of a given diatonic melodic line, recognition of diatonic intervals from perfect unison to octave, aural identification of major, minor, augmented, diminished, and suspended fourth chords, aural identification of major and minor sixth chords, and aural identification of minor seventh, major seventh, and dominant seventh chords. Recognition of harmonic patterns will be stressed, and the ability to correctly identify and notate harmonic sequences will be an integral part of the course. Two-part (soprano/bass) dictation will be tested on a regular basis. The recognition of cadences will be stressed, and students will be expected to accurately detect standard cadence patterns in major and minor tonalities.

## **Sight Singing**

Students will practice sight singing in groups, as well as in a solo setting. The discovery of the singing voice (while not a part of the curriculum) will be touched on, as a means to strengthen a student's ability to accurately sing pitches. Students will be expected to accurately sight sing a four measure melody that includes non-diatonic tones, in simple or compound duple time, and drawn from the major or minor tonality. Additionally, the student should be able to draw harmonic implications from the melody, and supply a figured bass analysis of each sung example.

## **Grading**

Grades will be determined as follows:

- Written Tests (30%)
- Written Quizzes (25%)
- Aural Skills Tests (25%)
- Homework (10%)
- Daily Musicianship (10%)

## **Student Expectations**

1. Mature and respectful behavior is expected at all times.
2. Students should be prepared and ready at the beginning of class.
3. As with any arts class emphasizing practicing skills, regular attendance is vital. If a student is excused, it is expected that the student will submit missing assignments and will make arrangements to re-take tests or quizzes.
4. If a student needs an extension on a homework assignment or a project, it is expected that the student contacts the teacher prior to the due date to make arrangements.
5. It is expected that all students complete homework assignments when assigned.
6. It is a student's responsibility to make an appointment with the teacher if extra help is needed. "Flex" time should be taken full advantage of for that purpose.

## **Course Planner** (This schedule is approximate.)

### **First Nine Weeks**

#### *Week 1:*

Theory –Review of basic pitch notation: the staff and its evolution, clefs, ledger lines, grand staff, octave designation, half steps and whole steps, intervals, chromatic alterations, enharmonic equivalents, accidentals

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – Major key, diatonic pitches, conjunct melodies using scale degrees 1-6, common cadential endings.

#### *Week 2:*

Theory –Review of meter and rhythm: the proportional system, beat and tempo, accent, meter and measure, meter signatures, simple meters, compound meters, asymmetric meter, conflict of rhythm and meter, borrowed divisions, syncopation, hemiola, cross rhythms, dots, ties, rests, dynamic and articulation markings

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – Major key, diatonic pitches, conjunct melodies using scale degrees 1-6, common cadential endings.

Harmonic Dictation – Bass voice

#### *Week 3:*

Theory –Review of major scales, circle of fifths, key signatures: the chromatic scale, whole-tone scale, major scale, pentatonic scale, transposition, tonality, placement of sharps/flats

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, conjunct melodies using scale degrees 1-6, add movement from scale degree 7-1

Harmonic Dictation – Outer Voices

#### *Week 4:*

Theory - Review of minor scales, circle of fifths, key signatures, relative major and minor keys, natural/harmonic/melodic minor scales, parallel minor keys

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, conjunct melodies using scale degrees 1-6, add movement from scale degree 7-1

Harmonic Dictation – Outer Voices

#### *Week 5:*

Theory – Review of intervals: numeric values of intervals, quality of intervals (major, minor, augmented, diminished), intervals of the major scale, alteration of interval quality, enharmonic intervals, inversions of intervals, simple versus compound intervals, diatonic versus chromatic intervals

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips using scale degrees 1, 3, and 5

Harmonic Dictation – Outer Voices

#### *Week 6:*

Theory – Review of triads/seventh chords: building and identifying triads (major, minor, diminished, augmented), building and identifying seventh chords (major seventh chords, minor seventh chords, diminished and half-diminished seventh chords, augmented seventh chords)

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips using scale degrees 1, 3, and 5

Harmonic Dictation – Outer Voices

#### *Week 7:*

Theory – Chord inversions: identifying and building triadic inversions identifying and building inversions of the seventh chord (root position, first inversion, second inversion, and third inversion)

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips on 1-3-5, cadential skips from 5-1

Harmonic Dictation – Outer Voices

## **First Nine Weeks (continued)**

### *Week 8:*

Theory - Chord symbols and figured bass: using traditional eighteenth-century nomenclature to identify and analyze chords, realization of Roman numeral progressions

Melodic Dictation/Sight Signing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips on 1-3-5, cadential skips from 5-1  
Harmonic Dictation – Outer Voices

### *Week 9:*

Theory - Diatonic function in major and minor keys: diatonic primary and secondary chords in a major key, diatonic and chromatically altered primary and secondary chords in a minor key (based on form of scale)

Melodic Dictation/Sight Signing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips on 1-3-5, cadential skips from 5-1

Harmonic Dictation – Outer Voices

### *Week 10:*

Theory – Introduction to Counterpoint: motion between voices, contrapuntal composition

Melodic Dictation/Sight Signing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips on 1-3-5, cadential skips from 5-1

Harmonic Dictation – Outer Voices

## **Second Nine Weeks**

### *Week 1:*

Theory – Functional tonal principles: tonality, chordal hierarchy, progression versus regression, harmonic motion, harmonic rhythm, variants in a minor key, idiomatic chord substitutions (vii/V, IV/ii)

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – Major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips, add skips to scale degree 6

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint and authentic cadence

### *Week 2:*

Theory – Cadences: authentic and perfect authentic cadence, plagal cadence, half cadence, deceptive cadence

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – Major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips, add skips to scale degree 6

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, authentic and plagal cadence

### *Week 3:*

Theory – Embellishing/non-harmonic tones: passing tone, neighboring tone, changing tone, anticipation, suspension, retardation, simultaneous embellishing tones, pedal point; use of nonharmonic tones in harmonic analysis

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – Major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips, add skips to scale degree 6

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, authentic, plagal, half, deceptive cadence

### *Week 4:*

Theory – Melodic principles in four-part writing/voicing chords: characteristics of the individual line's range, tessitura, spacing, movement, and doubling and resolution of tendency tones

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips from 1 - 3, 4, 5, 6

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor)

### *Week 5:*

Theory – Principles in chord connection: contrary motion, oblique motion, similar/parallel motion

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips from 1 - 3, 4, 5, 6

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices and primary triads (major/minor)

## **Second Nine Weeks (continued)**

### *Week 6:*

Theory – Connecting root position triads: triads in a fifths relationship, triads in a thirds relationship, triads in a seconds relationship, realization figured bass

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips from 1 - 3, 4, 5, 6

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor)

### *Week 7:*

Theory – Voicing triads in first inversion: frequency, spacing, doubling of first-inversion chords, connecting root position and first inversion triads, successive first inversion triad

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips to any scale degree

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor)

### *Week 8:*

Theory - Part writing using non-chord tones: voicing suspensions and retardations, stylistic use of non-chord tones

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips to any scale degree

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor)

### *Week 9:*

Theory – Review for midterm exam

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, diatonic pitches, melodies with skips to any scale degree

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor)

## **Third Nine Weeks**

### *Week 1:*

Theory – Triads in the second inversion: the cadential six-four chord, the passing six-four chords, the pedal six-four chord, the arpeggiated six-four chord

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – Major key, chromatic pitches based on natural minor

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor)

### *Week 2:*

Theory – Connecting triads in all positions

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – Major key, chromatic pitches based on natural minor

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor)

### *Week 3:*

Theory – Harmonizing a melody and part writing for SATB voices: writing with inversions, writing with nonchord tones, writing with inner voices

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – Major key, chromatic pitches based on natural minor

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor)

### *Week 4:*

Theory – Phrase structure, motives, and melodic form (Outside resource)

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, chromatic pitches based on harmonic minor

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices and primary triads (major/minor), seventh chords

### *Week 5:*

Theory – The dominant seventh chord: part writing with the V7 chord, part writing with inversions of the V7 chord, proper resolutions of tendency tones in the V7 chord

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, chromatic pitches based on harmonic minor

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor), seventh chords

### **Third Nine Weeks (continued)**

#### *Week 6:*

Theory – The leading tone seventh chord: part writing using the  $\text{vii}^{\text{O}7}$  chord, part writing with inversions of the  $\text{vii}^{\text{O}7}$  chord, proper resolutions of tendency tones in the  $\text{vii}^{\text{O}7}$  chord.

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, chromatic pitches based on harmonic minor

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor), seventh chords

#### *Week 7:*

Theory – Harmonizing with other seventh chords: common diatonic seventh chords in major and minor keys, voice leading with non-dominant seventh chords, predominant seventh chords, sequences using seventh chords, chain suspensions using seventh chords.

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, chromatic pitches based on harmonic minor

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, and primary triads (major/minor), seventh chords

#### *Week 8:*

Theory – Secondary Dominants (V/V, V/iii, V/ii, V/vi, and all dominant equivalents)

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, chromatic pitches based on melodic minor

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, all triads, seventh chords, and secondary dominants

#### *Week 9:*

Theory – Secondary leading-tone chords ( $\text{vii}^{\text{O}}/\text{V}$ ,  $\text{vii}^{\text{O}}/\text{ii}$ ,  $\text{vii}^{\text{O}}/\text{iii}$ ,  $\text{vii}^{\text{O}}/\text{vi}$ , and all seventh chord equivalents)

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, chromatic pitches based on melodic minor

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, all triads, seventh chords, and secondary dominants

### **Fourth Nine Weeks**

#### *Week 1:*

Theory – Identifying secondary dominants in analysis, part writing with secondary dominants, modulation to closely related keys. Practice AP exam questions/review.

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, chromatic pitches out of key (secondary dominants)

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, all triads, seventh chords, and secondary dominants

#### *Week 2:*

Theory – Small forms: simple binary, rounded binary, ternary form, and theme and variations, Practice AP exam questions/review. (Outside resource)

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, chromatic pitches out of key (secondary dominants)

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, all triads, seventh chords, and secondary dominants, FR-7 practice

#### *Week 3:*

Theory – Practice AP exam questions/review.

Melodic Dictation/Sight Singing – major key, chromatic pitches out of key (secondary dominants)

Harmonic Dictation – Outer voices using counterpoint, all triads, seventh chords, and secondary dominants, FR-7 practice

#### *Week 4:*

AP EXAM WEEK

#### *Week 5-7:*

Work on composition projects.

#### *Week 8:*

Composition project presentations/Final Exam

Student:

I have read the AP Music Theory syllabus and I understand the rigors and expectations of this course. I will

abide by the classroom rules set forth and will be mature and responsible with regard to the work involved. I will complete all assignments in a neat and timely fashion. I understand that the work and concentration I put into this class will directly affect the level of success with which I complete the AP Music Theory Exam.

"I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on any test, quiz, research paper, lab or any other student-generated work as long as I am enrolled at this or any other academic institution."

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent:

I have read the AP Music Theory syllabus and I understand the rigors and expectations of this course. I am

aware of the difficulty level of the curriculum and the large amount of out-of-class time it will require to sufficiently develop the necessary skills for my son/daughter to achieve a passing grade in this course.

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*This form is due to Mr. Davern by Friday, August 30th\***