

AP Music Theory Course Planner

This course planner is approximate, subject to schedule changes for a myriad of reasons. The course meets every day, on a six day cycle, for 52 minutes.

Written skills notes: Consistent student demonstration of written skills mastery is expected. This takes place with student presentations on the white board, peer review of class work, and teacher review of homework.

Ear training notes: the musical examples for ear training, while centered in the Common Practice Period, encompass a wide range of musical genres, with an emphasis on music within the realm of the student's everyday experiences. Examples of this would be both literature from their present performing ensembles, as well as music downloaded onto their iPod. I believe this deepens the student's experience by personalizing theoretical concepts codified four centuries ago.

Activities notes: A great attempt is made to present material in a way that meets the variety of student learning styles and their areas of intelligence.

Assessment notes: In the beginning of the course, assessment is heavy on written skills via the use of tests. As the year progresses, more emphasis is placed on homework assignments, projects, and timed ear training. Ear training quizzes are given weekly at course onset. Sight singing assessment is given via class demonstration periodically.

Weeks 1 - 2 Notation

Written skills: Clefs, octave registration, notation, meter.

Ear training: Pitch register, melodic direction, simple and compound meter.

Activities: Most of the notation information is previous knowledge, with the exception of student notation to manuscript. This information is reviewed meticulously with students both identifying and scribing correct notational practice. Ear training centers on the identification of simple, compound, and asymmetric meters in a variety of musical examples. Melodic dictation is introduced, involving melodies in simple time utilizing quarter, half, and dotted half notes.

Assessment: homework, ear training meter quiz, notation error quiz

Weeks 3-5 Scales, Tonality, Key, Modes

Written skills: major/minor key signatures, key relationships, diatonic scales: major, natural/harmonic/melodic minor scales, non – diatonic scales: blues, pentatonic, chromatic, whole – tone, modes.

Ear training: aural identification of all scales listed above. Extensive work is done with modal listening and singing.

Activities: Human circle of fifths, where students identify key signature based on their order in the circle. Students are then rearranged in order to reinforce process. Melodic dictation continues.

Sight singing, with solfeggio syllables, is introduced with the concept of a major scale. For modes, students are expected to find a musical example from their everyday experiences that utilize one of the following modes: Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian.

Assessment: Mode project, key sig and scale test, melodic dictation quiz, homework. First sight singing assessment.

Weeks 6-7 Intervals and Transposition

Written skills: major/minor/perfect/diminished/augmented intervals, score reading, instrument ranges/transpositions/and foreign names.

Ear Training: the long journey of aural interval recognition begins. Sight singing is used extensively to reinforce intervallic distance.

Activities: Melodic dictation now expands to the utilization of 8th notes and leaps within the tonic triad. As stated above, sight singing is used for intervallic reinforcement. Students will transpose melodies notated for various band and orchestral instruments and place them in concert pitch, and vice versa. Students will extract the concert pitches performed by orchestral instruments from a non transposed/foreign language score.

Assessment: Ear-training quiz with intervals presented ascending, and descending. Score transposition project as described above.

Weeks 8-10 Chords

Written skills: triad construction, triad inversion and figured bass symbols, triad qualities, diatonic chord construction in major and 3 minor forms, chord analysis.

Ear training: aural identification of major/minor/diminished/augmented chords, identification of triad in inversion

Activities: Human chord qualities activity: students assume certain physical positions based on their quality in a particular scale. Melodic dictation on instruments other than the piano is introduced. I will do this first on trumpet, and then it will expand to student demonstration on their particular medium of performance. Chord analysis of music examples commences with macro analysis of a section of the “Hallelujah Chorus”. There is a brief discussion of 20th century harmonic devices such as 9th/11th/13th chords and poly-chords.

Assessment: Major test on chord quality identification, inversions, rudimentary figured bass, and qualities of chords built on the major and the three minor scales. Ear training quiz on chord qualities. Melodic dictation quizzes using an instrument besides piano as the melodic source. Second sight singing assessment.

This is the end of the first marking period.

Weeks 11-12 Cadences and Non - harmonic Tones

Written skills: identifying and constructing perfect/plagal/half/deceptive cadences, identifying and constructing non-harmonic tones. Special emphasis is placed on identifying and constructing the 4 types of suspensions.

Ear Training: Aurally identifying the above cadences, both isolated and in musical examples. Aural identification of non – harmonic tones, with an emphasis on 4-3 suspensions.

Activities: Students are asked to bring in and present examples of specific non - harmonic tones contained in music from their everyday experience. The human portrayal of non harmonic tones utilizing one person as the approach, next person as non-harmonic tone, and last person as resolution. Melodic dictation and sight singing continue. Roman numeral analysis of Bach Chorales Commences.

Assessment: Significant project analyzing 30 musical examples in regards to non harmonic tone identification, Roman numeral analysis, and cadence type. Ear training quizzes identifying cadences. Ear training quiz on non harmonic tones.

Weeks 13-14 Melodic Organization

Written skills: motivic construction, motivic repetition and sequential development, phrase construction and period organization,

Ear training: aural identification of melodic repetition and sequences, aural recognition of parallel and contrasting phrases. Melodic dictation now will be expanded to include simple syncopated rhythms, leaps of a fifth and octave, and melodies starting on scale degrees other than do.

Activities: sight singing of melodies that contain content parallel to those being dictated melodically. Music literature is analyzed in regard to melodic development and phrase and period construction. Students will complete a 16 measure composition project, where they compose a motive, and develop that motive in order to construct a four measure phrase. They then compose a second phrase to form a period. They then repeat the process to form a period.

Assessment: composition project as described above. Ear training quiz on compound intervals. Homework analyzing melodic construction principles, especially in regard to melodic contour.

Weeks 15-16 Texture and Textural Reduction

Written skills: visual identification of texture types – monophonic, homophonic, polyphonic, homorhythmic, heterophonic. Textural analysis in regard to the identification of primary, secondary, supporting melodies, and harmonic and rhythmic support.

Ear training: identifying the texture of a variety of musical examples. Listening to musical examples and evaluating the melody in terms of being primary or secondary.

Activities: Listening and analyzing various carol settings that utilize a variety of textures to give variety to the verses. Students sing simple melodies, like “Row, Row, Row, your Boat, demonstrating the various textures that may be employed. Sight singing begins to include duets.

Assessment: Ear training quiz on identifying the changing texture in the carol setting of “Once in Royal David’s City”. Homework is graded on the accurate textural analysis of excerpts from several piano pieces and art songs.

Week 17 Voice Leading in Two Voices

Written skills: melodic construction, principles of first species counterpoint, constructing melodies over a *cantus firmus*.

Ear training: identifying the negative aural effects of improper voice leading – parallel motion, improperly placed climax tone, and unwise melodic leaps.

Activities: Composition project where student composes a counterpoint to a *cantus firmus*. The counterpoint must follow the principles of species counterpoint.

Assessment: Ear training quiz on consonant and dissonant intervals, composition project as described above.

Weeks 18-20 Voice Leading in Four Voices

Written skills: analyzing and constructing four part musical examples following the principles of four voice leading - chord role and quality identification, doubling, distance, range and motion principles. Students will realize a figured bass utilizing all content known to the present.

Ear training: Melodic dictation will now be expanded to include the bass clef, harmonic minor, compound time, and leaps in the dominant and subdominant triad. Students will identify cadence types during extended musical examples. For the first time, students will notate a bass line while the upper three voices are played.

Activities: analysis by the pound is found here. Hymns, Bach chorales, examples from Haydn, and Mozart are analyzed in abundance in respect to their voice leading, their harmonies, their non harmonic tones, and their cadences. Students do extended examples of figured bass realization, concentrating on the creation of a sound soprano which then has the inner voices filled in according to the principles of four voice leading. The “God’s of Part Writing” activity is undertaken, where a student exhibits their work on the white board, where it is examined by the class with each class member being a “God” of a particular area, such as the “God of Parallels” for example. It is silly, but fun.

Assessment: Many, many homework assignments on analysis and figured bass realization. Ear training quizzes and a sight singing quiz on the new content.

This is the end of the second marking period and first semester.

Weeks 21 – 22 Harmonic Progression and Harmonic Rhythm

Written skills: identifying and constructing chord progressions based on the circle progression and its variants, determining the harmonic rhythm of musical excerpts, and harmonizing simple folk melodies with tonic, subdominant and dominant chords.

Ear training: The commencement of harmonic dictation which contains the soprano and bass lines, as well as Roman numeral identification and figured bass. All harmonic content will be contained up to this point. That’s enough.

Activities: Big unit here. The students will begin to harmonize folk melodies, with chords restricted to I, IV, V. The student will also compose a melody and harmonize the melody with a circle

progression. The initiation of harmonic analysis brings about a temporary shock, as the student is accountable now for two simultaneous melodic lines, the chords they are a member of, and their figured bass. There is a brief introduction to 20th century chord progressions in this unit studying works currently being performed in the Symphonic Band

Assessment: the circle progression composition detailed above, the folk melody harmonization, and the full harmonic dictation. Sight singing and melodic dictation go on hiatus for these two weeks.

Weeks 23-24 The Dominant Seventh Chord

Written skills: identifying and constructing the Dominant seventh and its three inversions; circle, non circle, and non resolution of the V7

Ear training: aural identification of the V7 chord in root position and in inversion

Activities: Harmonic dictation, figured bass realization, and melodic harmonization to now include the V7. Melodic dictation and sight singing resume with an emphasis on compound meter, and harmonic minor.

Assessment: melodic dictation and sight singing quiz, extended analysis of excerpts from a Kulau Piano Sonata, a Beethoven Piano Sonata, and a Haydn Symphony.

Week 25 The Leading – Tone Seventh Chord

Written skills: identifying and constructing the half diminished and fully diminished leading tone seventh chord; resolving the root, seventh, and tritons of the chord.

Ear training: aural identification of the chord, differentiating between half and fully diminished qualities.

Activities: Harmonic dictation, figured bass realization, and melodic folk harmonization to now include the vii7. Melodic dictation and sight singing now expand to melodic minor.

Assessment: Students will harmonize a folk melody utilizing all chords learned up to this time. There will be a graded harmonic dictation including all harmonic content up to this time as well. All dictations, realizations, Roman numeral part-writing, and compositions will be timed from this point forward.

Week 26 Non Dominant Seventh Chords

Written skills: identifying and constructing non dominant seventh chords – I, ii, iii, IV, and vi, in major and minor keys; resolving the seventh factor of the chord.

Ear training: aural identification of the different chords

Activities: Harmonic dictation, figured bass realization, and melodic folk harmonization to now include the vii7. Melodic dictation and sight singing continue in melodic minor. Works by Bach, Mozart, Debussy, and Brahms, are analyzed in regards to all seventh chords – dominant and non dominant.

Assessment: figured bass realization that includes all harmonic content to this point.

Weeks 27- 28 Modulation

Written skills: identifying and constructing common chord, phrase, and chromatic modulations to closely related keys

Ear training: aural identification of the different modulations

Activities: Figured bass realization and part-writing of common chord, chromatic, and direct modulations. Review of key signatures in closely related umbrella. Since these weeks coincide with the school musical, we do AP type multiple choice aural stimulus questions using music from the current production. Also, musicals from the recent past are also used for ear-training. All current aural content, including modulation, is included in the ear-training. Melodic dictation and sight singing go on hiatus during this time to focus on review of all aural content. Modulations to distant keys, 20th century chord progressions, and melodic chromaticism are briefly touched upon during musical analysis of current Broadway fare.

Assessment: figured bass realization that includes modulation identification and part-writing. AP types multiple choice aural stimulus questions pertaining to the music of the current school production.

This is now the end of the third marking period.

Weeks 29 – 30 Secondary Dominants and Leading Tone Chords

Written skills: identifying and constructing secondary dominants and leading tone chords

Ear training: aural identification of secondary dominants and leading tones, focusing the students on the temporary tonicization these chords provide

Activities: Sight singing and melodic dictation to include altered tones indicating underlying chords that have a secondary function. Harmonic dictation will now include secondary function chords. There will be analysis of hymns that include secondary function chords. There will also be analysis of works by Schumann, Brahms, Joplin, and Mozart that include secondary function chords. Students will realize figured bass and part write numerous examples of chord progressions that include secondary function chords and their proper resolution. Students will complete several free response questions from previous AP examinations. Students will complete a Pop Music Analysis project where they are to select one of their favorite pop songs and analyze the song in regards to all current content. They are expected to notate the bass line of the chorus and provide harmonic and cadential analysis, analyze the melody in regards to motivic development and non harmonic tones, and provide a strophic form analysis. The student makes a presentation of their song analysis to the class where they also identify the musical characteristics that appeal to them.

Assessment: graded melodic and harmonic dictation; homework assignments of figured bass realizations; part –writing from both figured bass and roman numerals and composition examples from previous AP tests will be completed in a timed manner; class presentation on Pop song

Weeks 31 Binary and Ternary Forms

Written Skills: identifying and constructing pieces in binary, rounded binary, and ternary form

Aural Skills: aural identification of pieces in binary, rounded binary and ternary forms

Activities: After studying pieces by Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Schumann, and Chopin, the students will formally analyze a Bach March, a Bach and Haydn Menuet, and several short pieces by Schumann.

Assessment: The formal analysis will be reviewed and graded for accuracy. There will be a sight-singing assessment taken from previous AP exams that will be graded using the AP scoring system.

Weeks 32-33 Practice AP tests

During these two weeks, practice AP exams from 1998 and 2003 will be administered. Students will take the 2003 exam in parts and reviewed after each section, while the 2008 exam will be administered as a final grade under AP testing conditions.

Weeks 34-36 Culminating Project and Movies

After the AP exam has been administered, the students will complete their culminating project. The project will be a 24 to 32 measure homophonic composition that will contain the harmonic vocabulary studied to date, and use the compositional procedures studied to date. The composition will be for any instrument, voice, or combination thereof that class members can play. Upon completion of the composition, each work will be performed in class and critiqued by class members. The remaining time will be spent analyzing music from the student's favorite movies and/or television shows, centering in on what musical devices the composer has used in order to generate the emotion portrayed by the scene. This activity actually takes place throughout the course, but extended time is spent now as the students prepare to end the school year.

Primary Texts:

Benward, Bruce, and Marilyn Saker. *Music in Theory and Practice*, 8th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill 2003

Benward, Bruce, and Marilyn Saker. *Music in Theory and Practice*, 8th ed – Workbook
New York: McGraw-Hill 2003

Ottman, Robert and Nancy Rogers. *Music for Sight-singing*, 7th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007

