

## AP MUSIC THEORY SYLLABUS

### Course Overview

Music theory is the study of the mechanics of music. This entails aural recognition and discernment skills, procedures, and guidelines used in writing music to communicate to a performer and listener. In this instance we are primarily concerned with Western music. This rightly includes, but is not limited to, the traditional (but sometimes misleading) period designations of early music beginning in the ninth century in Europe: Renaissance, Baroque (from whence comes common practice tonality), Classical, and Modern music.

Non-Western music may be touched upon, but is not the primary concern of this course. The AP music theory course and exam is primarily concerned with what has become known as “common practice tonality” or “functional harmony.” This is the systemization of music writing, analysis, performance practice, realization of figures, formal structure, and aural perception as practiced by J.S. Bach or from the years of his life spanning from 1685 to 1750.

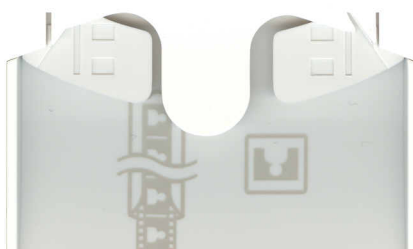
Through this course, students will not only gain skills associated with good musicianship but also begin to see historical and practical relationships between music of the past and present.

### Prerequisites

AP music theory students are expected to have knowledge of:

- Major scales in all keys
- Minor scales (in its different forms)
- Keys and circle of fifths and fourths
- Accidentals
- Note and rest values
- Time Signatures
- Treble and bass clefs
- The **C** clefs (primarily alto and tenor)
- Intervals in all forms

Students will be evaluated by exam on the prerequisites. Those lacking in some of the prerequisite knowledge are not necessarily disqualified from taking the course. Please see the teacher about remediation or any questions you may have about your readiness to take the rigorous course that is AP music theory.

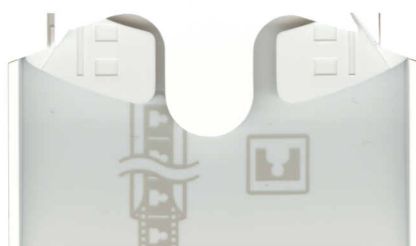


## Course Objectives

- a. Notate pitch and rhythm using standard notation procedures.
- b. Define and identify musical terms and theoretical concepts.
- c. Fluently read music in treble, bass, and movable **C** clefs.
- d. Write, sing, play, and identify intervals in all forms.
- e. Write, sing, play, and identify major scales and various forms of minor scales.
- f. Write, sing, play, and identify modes and scales other than major or minor (ie, whole tone and diminished).
- g. Sing simple melodies at sight.
- h. Recognize and demonstrate understanding of simple and compound meters.
- i. Be able to take down simple melodies on two or three hearings.
- j. Be able to identify different meters by ear.
- k. Construct compositions in four parts using proper voice leading and appropriate procedures of functional harmony.
- l. Analyze harmonic structure using Roman numerals.
- m. Realize figured bass.
- n. Identify basic musical forms.
- o. Recognize and identify various procedures used to modulate (common chord, secondary dominant, pivot chord for example.)
- p. Identify and utilize various cadences in accordance with precepts of functional harmony.
- q. Recognize, identify, and apply various Twentieth century compositional techniques (modes of limited transpositions, 12-tone techniques, clusters, non-functional harmony, scales and modes outside major/minor framework, for example.)

## Primary Texts

Adler, Samuel. *Sight Singing: Pitch, Interval, Rhythm*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1997



Benjamin, Thomas, Horvit, Michael, and Nelson, Robert. *Music for Analysis: Music from the Common Practice Period and the Twentieth Century*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1996.

Kostka, Stefan and Payne, Dorothy. *Tonal Harmony With an Introduction to Twentieth Century Music*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York, N.Y.: McGraw Hill, 2004.

Kostka, Stefan and Payne, Dorothy. *Workbook for Tonal Harmony With an Introduction to Twentieth Century Music*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York, N.Y.: McGraw Hill, 2004.

### Other Resources

Bach, J.S. *371 Harmonized Chorales and 69 Chorale Melodies with Figured Bass*. Albert Riemenschneider, ed. New York, N.Y.: G. Schiremer, 1941.

Clough, John, Conley, Joyce, and Boge, Claire. *Scales, Intervals, Keys, Triads, Rhythm, and Meter: A Programmed Course in Elementary Music Theory, With an Introduction and Part Writing*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc, 1999.

Gauldin, Robert. *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*. New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997.

Gauldin, Robert. *Work Book for Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*. New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997.

Hindemith, Paul. *Elementary Training for Musicians*. Valley Forge, PA: Schott & Co. Ltd., 1974.

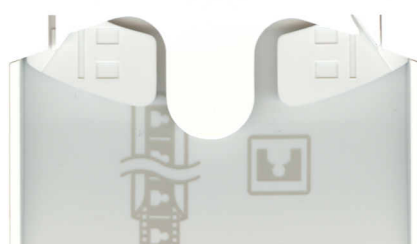
Hindemith, Paul. *Traditional Harmony: Book I*. Valley Forge, PA: Schott & Co. Ltd., 1968

Lee, Dr. William F. *Music Theory Dictionary: The Language of the Mechanics of Music*. London, England: Hansen Publications Ltd., 1966.

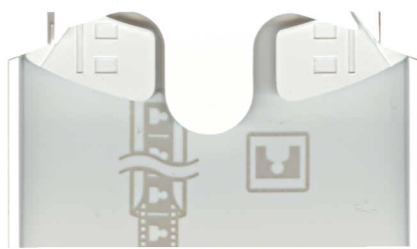
Ottman, Robert. *Elementary Harmony: Theory and Practice*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1998.

**N.B.** The other resources listed above may be used for remediation or as alternative sources for similar material.

The Ottman book is crucial. Most of what we learn about music theory will be from this book. Study each chapter thoroughly. There is no review book for music theory, so



everything you need to know will be found in this book as well as any supplemental material I may hand out. We will strive to finish working through the whole book by April 1<sup>st</sup>. This way we will have the entire month of April to review for the AP test.



## Week 1 & 2

- Chapter I
- Quick review of the prerequisites
- Alder, Melodic Studies, rhythm Studies (Chap. 1 & 2)
- Pencil exercise
- Basics Quiz 1
  
- Chapter II
- Alder: Cont. Chap. 1 & 2
- Drill 1 through 7
- Basic Quiz 2

*These first two weeks are crucial. It is during the first two weeks that any remediation that may be needed will be addressed. The teacher may distribute student specific exercises to target individual deficiencies. A two week evaluation will help the student and teacher decide upon the best course of study.*

## Week 3 & 4

- Chords and triads
- Chords within a key
- Hindemith exercises 1, 2, & 3  
*(N.B. All of the exercises contain many components. It will be determined by the teacher and student which specific parts will be most useful in any particular instance.)*
- Ear Training: Major and Minor seconds. Alder, p. 20-31.  
*(N.B. Ear training usually requires work with another musician. The student will be responsible for effective practice and drill on the presented material. There is very limited teacher time available and arrangements must be made to spend time together in ear training.)*
- Non-rhythmic exercises
- Ottman: Chap. I, II, & III



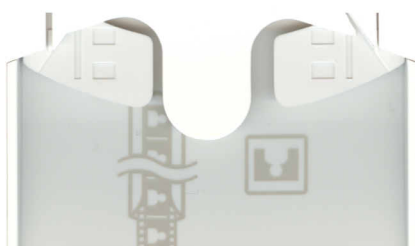
- Ottman: “Pitch Notation from Earliest Times” (p. 39); “The History of Rhythmic Notation” (p. 57)

### Week 5

- Ottman: Chap. IV *Tonic and Dominant I: Cadences*
- The cadence in relation to form
- Harmony at the cadence (major keys)
- Spelling tonic and dominant chords (major keys)
- “The ‘Difficult’ Triad Spellings”
- Cadences incorporating dominate harmony  
Perfect Authentic (PA), Imperfect Authentic (IA), Half Cadence (HC)
- The cadence in minor keys
- Spelling tonic and dominant chords (minor keys)
- Cadences incorporating dissonances
- Cadences in a melodic line
- Spelling Intervals from major triads
- Triads outlined in melodies
- Keyboard Harmony
- “The Universality of the Cadence” (p. 85)

### Week 6

- Chap. V *Tonic and Dominant II: Part-Writing*
- Conventional procedures
- Writing a single triad  
*Voice Range, Doubling, Triad Position, Distance between voices*
- Connection of repeated triads



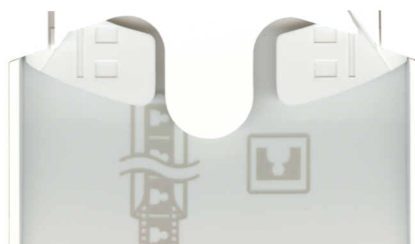
- Writing the authentic cadence  
*First Procedure, Second Procedure*
- Writing in Phrase Lengths
- Harmonizing a Melody
- Keyboard Harmony  
*Authentic Cadences, Harmonizing melodic cadences*
- Melody harmonization using lead sheet symbols  
*Playing an accompaniment only. Playing melody and accompaniment together*

### Week 7

- Chapter V *The Subdominant Triad*
- Spelling the subdominant triad
- Plagal Cadences  
*Perfect Plagal, Imperfect Plagal, Half Cadence*
- The progression IV-V or iv-v
- The subdominant triad in melodic writing
- Writing the progression IV-I or iv-i
- Writing the progression IV-V (iv-v)
- Parallel fifths and octaves; the melodic augmented second
- Keyboard harmony
- The progression I-IV-V-I
- “The Three Demons of Part Writing” (p. 135)

### Week 8

- Chapter VII *The Melodic Line I*
- Chapter VIII *C Clefs; Transposing Instruments*



- Form  
*Phrases and Periods, Repetition and Sequence*
- Pitch  
*Intervals and Scale Passages, The leading tone, Minor keys: the sixth and seventh scale steps.*
- Harmonic implication
- Rhythm and meter
- Melodic composition
- “Some Varieties of Melodic Expression” (p. 162)
- C clefs
- A clef for the tenor voice
- Transposing instruments  
*Writing for transposing instruments*

## Week 9

- Chapter IX *The Triad in Inversion*
- The triad in first inversion
- The triad in second inversion  
*The cadential six-four chord.*  
*The pedal six-four (embellishing six-four, auxiliary six-four)*  
*The passing six-four*
- Writing a triad in first inversion  
*Major triads, Minor triads*
- Writing to or from a triad in first inversion
- Writing successive triads in first inversion
- Writing a triad in second inversion  
*Doubling, Approach and Resolution*
- Other part-writing considerations  
*The melodic augmented fourth*



*Overlapping voices**Hidden octaves and hidden fifths (direct octaves and fifths)*

- “The Theory of Inversion” (p. 202)
- “Figured Bass” (p. 208)

**Week 10**

- Chapter X *Harmonic Progression; the Supertonic Triad and the Leading-Tone Triad*
- Root Movement
- Harmonic Progression in major keys
- Harmonic Progression in minor keys
- Other common types of progressions  
*First inversions in succession*  
*Harmonic sequence*  
*Chromatic bass line*
- The diminished triad
- The supertonic triads
- The leading-tone triad
- Writing the diminished triad
- Writing to and from the diminished triad
- Writing ii in major keys
- “The Devil in Music” (p. 238)

**Week 11**

- Dominant seventh chords
- Resolution of augmented fourths
- Hindemith exercises 22-27 (Trad. Harmony)
- Rhythmic dictation. Alder, p. 178



- First melodic dictation
- Self-realization of commonly known melodies
- Ear training: Major/minor sixths. Alder, p. 83-104
- Cadences

### **Week 12-14**

- Inversions of dominant sevenths
- Hindemith exercises 29-34 (Trad. Harmony)
- Ear training: Sevenths. Alder, p. 105-129
- Rhythmic dictation. Alder, p. 178
- Melodic dictation

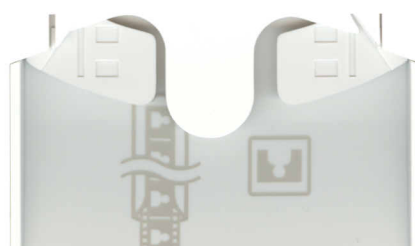
### **Week 15**

- Derivations of  $V_7$
- Hindemith exercises 35-38 (Trad. Harmony)
- Ear training: Augmented fourth. Alder, p. 130-133
- Hindemith exercise 12 (Elem. Training)

←----- *WINTER BREAK* -----→

### **Week 18 & 19**

- Non-chord tones I: passing tones, neighboring tones
- Ottman assignment 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.5



**Week 20 (review)**

- 6/4 chord
- II 6/5 chord
- Hindemith exercise 40-43
- Ear training: Alder, p. 23-26
- Dictation: self-realization of known melodies
  
- Triads on II, III, VI, VII
- Diminished and augmented triads
- Hindemith exercises 44-47 (Trad. Harmony)
- Ear training: sight singing. Alder appendix
  
- Seventh Chords on I, II, III, IV, VI and VII
- Inversions of scale-tone sevenths
- Hindemith exercises 48-52 (Trad. Harmony)
- Ear training: sight singing. Alder appendix
  
- Simple alteration (borrowing, Neapolitan sixth)
- Hindemith exercises 53 & 54 (Trad. Harmony)
- Ear training: interval recognition
- Rhythmic duets. Alder, p. 231
  
- Secondary dominants
- Hindemith exercises 56 & 57 (Trad. Harmony)
- Ear training: interval recognition, melodic dictation
  
- Voice leading, root movement, cadences, inversions, figured bass, function of dominants, non-chord tones, secondary dominants

