

# **AP MUSIC THEORY 2015-2016**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION — TEACHER: NICK PATTON**

Period 05

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## **COURSE OVERVIEW:**

The AP Music Theory course is designed to be a comprehensive introduction to fundamental, beginning, and intermediate Music Theory. The course is scaffolded in such a way that both students with extensive or minimal backgrounds in Music Theory can enter the class and engage from the very beginning. Students will learn through a variety of differentiated learning strategies, including but not limited to: textbook and writing analysis; analytical listening; live & recorded performance; sight-singing exercises; rhythmic & melodic dictation exercises; hands-on keyboard or instrument activities; compositional activities; and musical games.

## **ENCOURAGED COURSE SUPPLIES:**

The following items should be brought to class every day:

1. 1.5" Binder with notepaper for notes
2. A notebook of staff paper –or- printed staff paper – Staff Paper will be made available for printing on the Course Locker. Please ask Mr. Patton if you need access to a printer!
3. 2-3 pencils

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

At the end of the year long course, students will be able to:

- identify, sing, play, and/or write the rudimental aspects of music theory: rhythmic values, solfege & tonal notes, key signatures & scales, accidentals, and time signatures & meters.
- differentiate between the different types of intervals, triads, and chords in written form, aural performance, or physical performance. These include but are not limited to: major, minor, diminished, and augmented triads; chords and their inversions; & 7<sup>th</sup> chords and their inversions, and secondary dominants
- realize chord progressions from figured bass and chord symbols, or analyze and identify progressions and figured bass from written music, utilizing proper voice leading in accordance with Common Practice rules
- utilize their understanding of figured bass realization and chord progressions to write a bass line from a provided melody

- identify via listening, performance, or notation the structure of music, including but not limited to: phrase, motive, & periods, and their qualities; the different types of cadences, and the progressions leading into and making up said cadences; non-harmonic tones, passing & neighbor tones, and/or suspensions; harmonic sequences; modulation to neighboring keys; and binary & ternary forms.
- complete and perform (or organize a performance of) an original composition following common practice rules

## **GENERAL CLASSROOM OVERVIEW:**

Each class period, students will have an exercise that develops their Aural Skills, either a melodic dictation, a chord progression, a rhythmic dictation, or a sight singing exercise. In addition, students have brief written exercises each day as homework that they must complete, i.e. rudiment review, chord analysis, figured bass realization, etc. Students will be assessed for understanding regularly in bi-weekly quizzes and scheduled tests at the end of each unit of learning.

**Students regularly participate in a sight-singing or rhythmic sight-reading activity as part of their beginning class-period routine.** Students also frequently listen to aural examples of concepts that are being explained in lecture and homework, including and not limited to: intervals, scales, chords and their inversions, progression examples, cadential examples, etc. Real-world examples of concepts and compositional skills from the Western Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionist, and 20<sup>th</sup> Century musical traditions are also employed whenever possible to give students historical and practical context for their theoretical work.

Students might be asked to demonstrate concepts vocally, on the keyboard, or on their instrument of choice to differentiate examples further. In lieu of a traditional final for the end of the semesters, students will participate in a project focused on world music, increasing the scope of their learning beyond the confines of the Western Tradition taught in formal Music Theory courses in this country.

## **STUDENT EVALUATION**

Students will be evaluated according to the following scoring criteria:

Attendance: 10 percent  
 Classroom Participation: 40 percent  
 Homework: 20 percent  
 Quizzes: 15 percent  
 Final Exam/Project: 15 percent

Emphasis is placed on successful classroom participation to allow for students to utilize the theoretical aspects of music theory in as many hands-on or performance based opportunities as possible. Students will be evaluated primarily on participation in performance, sight-singing, dictation, analysis, and other classroom activities, both

teacher and peer evaluative in nature. This is to allow for constant formative assessment to take place, in an attempt to maximize understanding in an environment that would allow for teacher assistance, review, or redirection.

Quizzes and tests will consist of evaluations on student's written analysis skills, as well as their aural and sight-singing and other performance skills. In written skills, students will be expected to realize figured bass, complete chord progressions from roman numerals, produce roman numeral analysis from a bass line or voice parts, utilize correct voice leading practices, and successfully utilize the rudiments of music. In aural and performance skills, students will be expected to successfully notate aural dictations, identify errors through error detection exercises, realize bass lines from a given melody, and successfully sight sing a given melody. Quizzes will be scored and returned to students on the Monday following their administration.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework in Music Theory is scored based on attempt, not on accuracy. Students are encouraged to try, ponder, completely fail at, write all sorts of questions on, and generally make a mess of their homework in any way that helps to increase their understanding. Full credit will be given on homework assignments as long as each question is attempted, and any uncertain areas are tried and marked with questions. Homework in theory is designed in this manner because the purpose of homework should be to allow students to reinforce and practice the skills they are working on in class.

Homework will be assigned with the general expectation that it will be completed by the next class period, so it is ready to be reviewed and discussed as a class. However, homework becomes ineffective as a learning tool if the student has not developed the skills or understanding necessary to complete the assignment that evening. A student should not be penalized for traveling along their journey of understanding at their individual pace. Therefore, if a homework assignment is not ready to be turned in, it should be completed and turned in once understanding allows for it to be completed. Students will not be penalized for turning in late homework.

**HOWEVER:** At some point, if a student isn't turning in their homework on a regular basis that matches their readiness level, the amount of work due will become impossible to complete without extra time at lunch or tutorial to finish missed assignments. Any student who has fallen behind on three or more assignments will be required to schedule time during school with Mr. Patton or the Homework Center to finish these assignments.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is essential for maintaining a well working, supportive class! I encourage both students and parents alike to let me know of any concerns, comments, or questions they may have at any time. I can only solve problems or address issues if I know they exist, so please do not hesitate to ask whenever something arises. E-mail is the best way to reach me, and I will respond to phone

calls and texts as I am able to. In addition, handouts will occasionally be distributed in class. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that these handouts arrive home!

### **ATTENDANCE & TARDIES**

Because much of the AP Music Theory class is based on participation in in-class activities, it is essential that all students are present as often as possible. It is also important the students arrive on time to the classroom, so that they are ready for opening activities. If a student misses a class, it is their responsibility to find out what was missed and to make arrangements with Mr. Patton to make up any missed work or in class activities.

The school's attendance policy will be followed as such: three tardies becomes a lunchtime detention. Excessive tardies and absences will result in a lowering of a student's grade, and a discussion with administration and parents about continued participation in AP studies.

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I look forward to a fabulous year together and can't wait to help open the world of Music Theory with you! Every student and parent is an integral part of the program, and it is my pleasure to work with and to get to know each and every one of you! Every voice counts, after all!

Here's to a fabulous upcoming year!

~Nick Patton  
AP Music Theory  
California High School