

AP Music Theory Course Syllabus

Fall 2021-Spring 2022

Instructor: Ms. Phillips

COURSE OVERVIEW

AP music theory is a rigorous class for students who wish to expand their understanding of music fundamentals, composition, and theory. The goal of this class is to prepare students to take and pass the AP Music Theory test that is offered to students in the month of May, every school year. The emphasis of this course will be placed on music of the common practice period of 1600-1900 as well as other stylistic periods.

AP Music Theory is the introduction to music theory fundamentals and topics. In this course, students will learn all the fundamental knowledge to progress into further theory classes in college. By the end of this course students will be able to read music at an advanced level, understand rhythm and meter, notate, and count all note and rest values, memorize intervals, write, and perform all major and minor scales in all the clefs, show understanding of how to build major and minor triads, know how to construct and analyze all types of chords.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and notate pitch in four clefs: treble, bass, alto, and tenor.
2. Notate, hear, and identify simple and compound meters.
3. Notate and identify all major and minor key signatures.
4. Notate, hear, and identify the following scales: chromatic, major, and the three minor forms.
5. Name and recognize scale-degree terms, for example: tonic, supertonic, mediant, subdominant, dominant, submediant, subtonic, leading tone.
6. Notate, hear, and transpose the following modes: Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian.
7. Notate, hear, and identify whole-tone and pentatonic scales.
8. Notate, hear, and identify all major, minor, diminished, and augmented intervals inclusive of an octave.
9. Transpose a melodic line to or from concert pitch for any common band or orchestral instrument.
10. Notate, hear, and identify triads, including inversions.
11. Notate, hear, and identify authentic, plagal, half, and deceptive cadences in major and minor keys.
12. Detect pitch and rhythm errors in written music from given aural excerpts.

13. Notate a melody from dictation, 6 to 12 bars, in a major key, mostly diatonic pitches, simple or compound time, three to four repetitions.
14. Notate melody from dictation, 6 to 12 bars, in a minor key, chromatic alteration from harmonic/melodic scales, simple or compound time, three to four repetitions.
15. Sight-sing a melody, 4 to 8 bars long, major, or minor key, duple or triple meter, simple or compound time, using solfège, numbers, or any comfortable vocal syllable(s).
16. Notate and analyze simple 2-bar counterpoint in sixteenth- and/or eighteenth-century styles.
17. Realize a figured bass according to the rules of eighteenth-century chorale style, major or minor key, using any or all the following devices: diatonic triads, seventh chords, inversions, nonharmonic tones, and secondary-dominant and dominant seventh chords.
18. Analyze a four-part chorale style piece using Roman and Arabic numerals to represent chords and their inversions.
19. Notate, hear, and identify the following nonharmonic tones: passing tone (accented and unaccented), neighboring tone, anticipation, suspension, retardation, appoggiatura, escape tone, changing tone (cambiata), pedal tone.
20. Notate the soprano and bass pitches and the Roman and Arabic numeral analysis of a harmonic dictation, eighteenth-century chorale style, seventh chords, secondary dominants, 4 to 8 bars in length, major or minor key, three to four repetitions.
21. Compose a melody or expand a motive with or without text, 6 to 12 bars long, given specific directions about key, mode, phrasing, rhythm, and harmonic language. Harmonize a 4- to 12-bar melody by writing a bass line with chords and/or chord symbols, given specific directions about key, mode, phrasing, and rhythmic and harmonic language.
22. Define and identify common tempo and expression markings.
23. Identify aurally and/or visually the following: modulation, transposition, melodic and harmonic rhythm, sequence, imitation, ostinato, augmentation, diminution, inversion, retrograde, and fragmentation.
24. Recognize standard musical algorithms, such as standard melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic idioms, that occur in music.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

1. Students will participate in all classroom discussions and activities.
2. Students will complete all assigned exercises and readings.
3. Students will keep and maintain a Music Theory notebook, which will include class notes, handouts, assignments, and listening logs.
4. Students will study the released AP Exams and take practice tests to prepare for the exam.

5. Students will listen to approximately one hour of music each week outside of class and maintain a music listening log, which will consist of written analysis/evaluations of each listening selection. These written logs should include observations and evaluations regarding the following items:

- a. melodic characteristics (conjunct/disjunct)
- b. harmonic characteristics (harmonic idioms present)
- c. rhythm (straight/syncopated)
- d. texture (homophonic, monophonic, polyphonic, heterophonic)
- e. timbre (instrumentation, tone color)
- f. dynamics (dynamic contrasts)
- g. tempo (tempo changes)
- h. meter (duple/triple, simple/compound, regular/irregular)
- i. mode (major, minor, modal, atonal)
- j. form (binary, ternary, sonata, rondo, and so on)
- k. articulation (legato, staccato, and so on)

6. Students will view one concert each nine weeks and submit a minimum 2-page typed, double-spaced paper about the concert, using an appropriate musical vocabulary. This paper should contain general information about the concert, the student's evaluation of it, and specific analysis of three individual selections from the concert. In-person concerts are preferred, but students may choose to view a concert online. This analysis should include the following:

- a. melodic characteristics (conjunct/disjunct)
- b. harmonic characteristics (harmonic idioms present)
- c. rhythm (straight/syncopated)
- d. texture (homophonic, monophonic, polyphonic, heterophonic)
- e. timbre (instrumentation, tone color)
- f. dynamics (dynamic contrasts)
- g. tempo (tempo changes)
- h. meter (duple/triple, simple/compound, regular/irregular)
- i. mode (major, minor, modal, atonal)
- j. form (binary, ternary, sonata, rondo, and so on)
- k. articulation (legato, staccato, and so on)

7. Students will submit one major composition each nine weeks, based on assigned form and content. Other minor compositions will be required to demonstrate understanding and synthesis of concepts presented.

TEXTBOOK

The following textbook and accompanying materials are provided for each student:

Clendinning, Jane Piper, and Elizabeth West Marvin. *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*. 4th ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2021.

Clendinning, Jane Piper, and Elizabeth West Marvin. *The Musician's Guide: Workbook and Ear Training*. 4th ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2021.

Clendinning, Jane Piper, and Elizabeth West Marvin. *The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills Sight-Singing*. 4th ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2021.

EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY

All students will have access to personal or school provided devices for accessing audio playback and recording. Furthermore, students will have access to acoustic and/or digital pianos in the music classroom.

COURSE SCHEDULE

There are no prerequisites to take the AP Music Theory class at Central High School.

Weeks 1-4:

Unit 1 Music Fundamentals I: Pitch, Major Scales and Key Signatures, Rhythm, Meter, and Expressive Elements

Topics Covered: pitch and pitch notation, rhythmic values, half steps and whole steps, major scales and scale degrees, major keys and key signatures, simple and compound beat division, meter and time signature, rhythmic patterns, tempo, dynamics, and articulation.

Weeks 5–8:

Unit 2 Music Fundamentals II: Minor Scales and Key Signatures, Melody, Timbre, and Texture

Topics Covered: minor scales (natural, harmonic, and melodic), key relationships (relative, parallel, closely related, and distantly related), other scales (chromatic, whole-tone, pentatonic),

interval size and quality, interval inversion and compound intervals, transposing instruments, timbre, melodic features, melodic transposition, texture (types and devices), rhythmic devices

Weeks 9–12:

Unit 3 Music Fundamentals III: Triads and Seventh Chords

Topics Covered: triad and chord qualities (M, m, d, A), diatonic chords and Roman numerals, chord inversions and figures (introduction to figured bass), seventh chords (qualities, inversions, and figures), lead sheet symbols and various chord textures

Weeks 13–16:

Unit 4: Harmony and Voice Leading I: Chord Function, Cadence, and Phrase

Topics Covered: Fux's first-species counterpoint and soprano-bass counterpoint (appropriate leaps, preparation and resolution of tendency tones, contour, four types of melodic motion [parallel, contrary, similar, and oblique]), SATB voice leading (part-writing in a four-voice texture using triads and seventh chords in root position and all inversions), harmonic progression, functional harmony, cadences.

Weeks 17–20:

Unit 5 Harmony and Voice Leading II: Chord Progressions and Predominant Function

Topics Covered: Adding predominant function IV (iv) and ii (ii^o) to a melodic phrase, the vi (VI) chord, predominant seventh chords, the iii (III) chord, cadences, and predominant function, cadential 6/4 chords, additional 6/4 chords

Weeks 21–24:

Unit 6 Harmony and Voice Leading III: Embellishments, Motives, and Melodic Devices

Topics Covered: Embellishing tones (identifying and writing passing tones, neighbor tones, anticipations, escape tones, appoggiaturas, pedal points, suspensions, and retardations), motive and motivic transformation, melodic sequence, harmonic sequence

Weeks 25–27:

Unit 7 Harmony and Voice Leading IV: Secondary Function

Topics Covered: Tonicization through secondary dominant and secondary leading tone chords, part-writing of secondary dominant and secondary leading tone chords.

Weeks 28–30:

Unit 8 Modes and Form

Topics Covered: Modes, phrase relationships, common formal sections. Learn to notate all church modes (Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, Locrian). Learn to identify the modes two ways: 1) based on interval pattern in tetrachord form, and 2) based on alterations to the nearest major or minor scale. Also learn to transpose the modes onto different tonics (finals).

Weeks 31–AP Exam Date

Unit 9 Review for AP Music Theory Exam

Topics Covered: From now until the AP Music Theory Exam, we will work through the 2008 and 2016 AP Music Theory Released Exams, and 2020 Practice Exam.

GRADING

Grading	Grading Scale
Homework 20%	90%– 100%: A
Projects/Classwork/Aural Skills (Dictations, Sight-Singings, Compositions) 30%	80% – 89%: B
Major Assessments 30%	70% – 79%: C
Final Exam 20%	60%– 69%: D
	59 and below: F

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:

1. Assignments

Assignments include homework activities, listening journals, required reading, and sight singing practice. Students will be graded on accuracy and completion. Missing work calculates as a grade of “0.” Late work will only be accepted up to five school days past the due date. If a student misses an extended amount of school, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor regarding missed assignments.

2. Projects/Classwork/Aural Skills (Dictations, Sight-Singings, and Compositions)

Projects, classwork, and aural skills activities will be graded on accuracy and completion. AP Music Theory scoring guidelines will be used to grade dictations, sight-singings, and free response questions. Each nine weeks, students are required to turn in a minimum 2-page, double-spaced paper reviewing a concert (either in-person or online). Additionally, students will complete one major composition each nine weeks. Missing work calculates as a grade of "0." Late work will only be accepted up to five school days past the due date. If a student misses an extended amount of school, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor regarding missed assignments.

3. Major Assessments

Exams will be given at the end of each unit. For each exam, you will be asked a variety of questions pertaining to the units taught in class, including, but not limited to definition of terms, writing various scales in different clefs, identifying intervals, writing triads, writing triads in inversion, writing, or identifying figured bass, identifying seventh chords, writing seventh chords, identifying meter, meter signatures, beaming and more. Prior to each exam, a study guide will be provided detailing all topics and material that will be tested. It is each student's individual responsibility to study appropriately for each exam!

5. Final Exams

At the end of each semester students will take a final exam. There will be different components to the 'fall' final exam including singing, analyzing and answer questions (multiple choice or writing).

The spring final will include a composition and performance project.