

# Music Theory/AP Music Theory

## Timberline High School

### Syllabus

#### Texts:

**First Semester:** Gretz, Ronald J. *Music Language and Fundamentals*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. McGraw Hill, 1990.

**Second Semester:** Benward, Bruce, and Marilyn Saker. *Music in Theory and Practice*. Vol. 1. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. McGraw Hill, 2015.

Benward, Bruce, and J. Timothy Kolosick. *Ear Training: A Technique for Listening*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. McGraw Hill, 2008.

#### **Required Materials:**

1. Students need to bring their theory and sight singing texts daily. Each student MUST have a pencil EVERY day.
2. Students should bring a three ring binder to organize their notes and handouts by units and concepts. Keep all of your materials in this binder, keep it organized and it will be a great resource for you this semester, for reviewing for the AP Exam, and as a resource for you after high school.

### Course Overview

#### **First Semester:**

The first semester of this course is geared towards either non-music students, or music students with limited practice in music theory. You will learn everything from notes on the staff to building chords and writing simple compositions. By the end of first semester, you should be prepared for AP Music Theory which takes place second semester.

#### **Second Semester:**

The musically talented student is challenged to recognize, comprehend and analyze the basic materials and processes of music. This goal is approached through the development of fundamental aural, analytical, and compositional skills. The course provides a solid foundation in music notation, intervals, scales, chords, rhythms/meter, phrase structure, form, and the terms used to describe these elements of music as related to the major/minor tonal system. With this foundation, the course progression includes more complicated tasks such as the following: dictation of melodic and harmonic materials, sight singing, the analysis of repertoire, including the study of the rhythmic and melodic interaction between voices; harmonic analysis of functional tonal passages, and modulation to closely related keys. Creative activities include the realization of a figured bass and a Roman numeral progression, as well as composition of traditional four-part chorale passages. The course covers all topics necessary for the Advanced Placement test that all students are encouraged to take.

**Daily:**

**Weekly assignment work**  
**Sight singing skills/Listening skills**  
**Spot Lecture and homework assigned**  
**Aural skills and computer drill and practice**  
**Music literature analysis**

\*Previous weeks assignments graded at piano w/ you

*(I believe the best way for you to learn from your mistakes is for you to identify them. For this reason we will spend a portion of the week one on one at the piano. You will be asked to go over you previous week assignments with me and defend your reasoning for your answers).*

**Fridays:** Weekly assignments due/Quiz's/Tests (written and aural skills)

**Grading Scale:**

90% A  
80% B  
70% C  
60% D  
50% F

Much of this course' grade is derived from in and out of class assignments. It is incumbent upon you to turn these in on time as late work will not be accepted (see below).

It will be difficult for you to do well in this class without doing a large amount of personal study and practice. All tools to succeed on the AP Exam will be given to you. However, because of limited time, many items will require more study than we can devote in class...this becomes your responsibility.

**Make-up:** Assignments may be made up any time up until 2 weeks from the end of the semester. However, missing work will affect current and future work, so missing assignments is never ideal. Please work to complete all work on time and/or as soon as possible.

In order to experience success, students must develop skills in both the aural and written portions of the class. AP Music Theory will contribute to your additional grade point and many colleges and universities accept a passing score of 4 or 5 on the AP test in the spring in order to waive the classes of beginning theory and ear training. Unfortunately not all schools accept AP Test scores for credit. In most of these cases the college in question *will* allow you to take a placement exam to test out of beginning, and in some cases, sophomore theory/ear training classes.

**I. Fundamental Terminology and II. Fundamental Notational Skills:**

- Notate and identify pitch in four clefs: treble, bass, alto, and tenor.
- Notate, hear, and identify simple and compound meters.
- Notate and identify all major and minor key signatures.
- Notate, hear, and identify the following scales: chromatic, major, the three forms of the minor, pentatonic and whole tone.

- Name and recognize scale degree terms, e.g., tonic, supertonic, etc.
- Notate, hear, and transpose the following modes: Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian (authentic forms only).
- Notate, hear, and identify whole tone and pentatonic scales.
- Notate, hear, and identify all major, minor, diminished, and augmented intervals inclusive of an octave.
- Notate, hear, and identify triads including inversions.
- Define and identify common tempo and expression markings.

### **III. Compositional Skills:**

- Compose bass lines for a given melodies to create simple two-part counterpoint in seventeenth- and/or eighteenth-century styles; analyze the implied harmonies.
- Realize a figured bass according to the rules of eighteenth-century chorale style, major or minor key, using any or all of the following devices: diatonic triads and seventh chords, inversions, nonharmonic tones, and secondary-dominant and dominant seventh chords.
- Realize four-part chorale-style progression from Roman and Arabic numerals.
- Compose in 20<sup>th</sup> century style using 12 tone scales and tone clusters. Briefly learn and use 20<sup>th</sup> century compositional techniques such as sound mapping and chordal structures.

### **IV. Score Analysis:**

- Notate, hear, and identify authentic, plagal, half, Phrygian half, and deceptive cadences in major and minor keys.
- Identify in score the following nonharmonic tones: passing tone (accented and unaccented), neighboring tone, anticipation, suspension, retardation, appoggiatura, escape tone, changing tone (cambiata), and pedal tone.
- Small-scale and large-scale harmonic procedures, including: identification of cadence types
- Roman-numeral and figured-bass analysis, including nonharmonic tones, seventh chords, and secondary-dominant chords
- Identification of key centers and key relationships; recognition of modulation to closely related keys
- Melodic organization and developmental procedures: scale types; modes, melodic patterning motivic development and relationships (e.g., inversion, retrograde, sequence, imitation)
- Rhythmic/metric organization: meter type (e.g., duple, triple, quadruple) and beat type (e.g., simple, compound)
- Rhythmic devices and procedures (e.g., augmentation, diminution, hemiola)
- Texture: types (e.g., monophony, homophony, polyphony)
- Devices (e.g., textural inversion, imitation)
- NOTE: Scores for analysis may include two-stave piano scores, single-voice melodies, solo voice with piano accompaniment, and trio or quartet scores written at concert pitch, which may include an alto or tenor clef line.
- Recognition of 2 and three part forms, simple and complex. Identification of such forms through both composition and analysis.
- 20<sup>th</sup> century analysis of chordal usage as well as scales.

## V. Aural Skills:

- Detect pitch and rhythm errors in written music from given aural excerpts.
- Notate a melody from dictation, 6 to 8 bars, MAJOR key, mostly diatonic pitches, simple or compound time, treble or bass clef, 3 to 4 playings.
- Notate a melody from dictation, 6 to 8 bars, MINOR key, chromatic alteration from harmonic/melodic scales, simple or compound time, treble or bass clef, 3 to 4 playings.
- Sight sing a melody, 4 to 8 bars long, major or minor key, duple or triple meter, simple or compound time, treble or bass clef, using solfege, pitch names, numbers, or any comfortable vocal syllable(s).
- Hear the following nonharmonic tones: passing tone (accented and unaccented), neighboring tone, anticipation, suspension, retardation, appoggiatura, escape tone, changing tone (cambiata), and pedal tone.
- Notate the soprano and bass pitches and Roman and Arabic numeral analysis of a harmonic dictation 4-8 measures, in eighteenth-century chorale style. Features may include seventh chords, secondary dominants, major or minor key, 3 to 4 playings.
- Identify processes and materials in the context of music literature representing a broad spectrum of genres, media, and styles:
  - Melodic organization (e.g., scale-degree function of specified tones, scale types, mode, melodic patterning, sequences, motivic development)
  - Harmonic organization (e.g., chord function, inversion, quality)
  - Tonal organization (e.g., cadence types, key relationships)
  - Meter and rhythmic patterns
  - Instrumentation (i.e., identification of timbre)
  - Texture (e.g., number and position of voices, amount of independence, presence of imitation, density)
  - Formal procedures (e.g., phrase structure; distinctions among literal repetition, varied repetition, and contrast; small forms)

NOTE: Most examples are drawn from the standard repertoire of Western art music. Each AP exam will also include some representation of jazz, popular, vernacular, or world music outside of the Western tradition.