

AP[®] Music Theory at Clear Springs High School

Mr. Rob Phillips, instructor

Meets 2nd Period in the Choir Room (1330)

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Conference 1st period; please call or email to make an appointment.

Tutorials Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30 to 3:15, and as needed with an appointment.

Course Overview

The AP[®] Music Theory course is a study of advanced music literacy, with a focus on aural and written musical skills. This course covers material typically taught at a college freshman level. For students who plan to continue musical studies at the college level, this course offers an essential opportunity for in-depth study and preparation. Current technological developments are used in the class to provide “state of the art” learning opportunities. NOTE: this class starts with the expectation that all students are already able read music in at least one clef (pitch and rhythm), and have performance experience (either in a formal ensemble or through formal private training). Students who do not meet this requirement are encouraged to participate in one of Clear Springs’ ensembles before taking this class!

Course Objectives

It is the goal of this course to gain knowledge of musical elements (melody, harmony, form, rhythm, meter, texture, timbre, etc.) and use this knowledge through various listening, singing, writing, analytical, and creative activities to develop various speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills associated with the language of music.

- ↻ **General knowledge/Language of music:** Students are expected to achieve fluency with the terminology and symbols used to describe musical elements, including their interaction.
- ↻ **Oral skills:** Students are expected to sing independently, demonstrating accurate intonation and rhythm, using literature ranging in difficulty from moderate to difficult. This includes sight-singing major, minor, and chromatic melodies in simple and compound meters.
- ↻ **Aural skills:** Students are expected to identify through listening: intervals, scales and keys, harmonic structure, metric organization, rhythmic patterns, texture, and form. These skills will be developed through dictation (both melodic and harmonic) as well as aural analysis of standard Western tonal repertoire.
- ↻ **Writing skills:** Students are expected to master notational skills such as clef placement, proper use of key and time signatures, proper metric use of beaming, vertical alignment of chords, etc. These skills will progress to include more sophisticated and creative tasks: melodic harmonization, figured bass realization, and the realization of a Roman numeral progression.
- ↻ **Visual skills:** Students are expected to identify and describe musical elements and their interaction from visual representation, including study of motivic treatment, examination of rhythmic and melodic interaction between individual voices of a composition, and harmonic analysis of functional tonal passages.

Materials

- ★ 3-ring binder of at least 1 inch
- ★ Notebook paper
- ★ Notepad of staff paper (manuscript paper) OR at least 30 pages printed from blanksheetmusic.net
- ★ PENCILS and ERASERS
- ★ Tablets
- ★ Earbuds or headphones
- ★ \$10 fee to cover Noteflight membership. Make checks to CSHS Choir.

Class Resources

Most information will be given in class. Students must come prepared each day to take notes. If a student is absent, it is his or her responsibility to copy someone else's notes and attend tutorials as needed.

Excellent resources are available via the Internet, and access to the World Wide Web is strongly encouraged. Following is a starter's list of resources, but it is by no means comprehensive:

- ↳ www.charmsoffice.com We will use Charms throughout the year, and it is your gateway to Noteflight, an online-based notation program we will use in this class.
- ↳ www.blanksheetmusic.net Print staff paper!
- ↳ www.apcentral.collegeboard.com AP Central offers useful information about the AP test, including sample questions. A comprehensive vocabulary list is also available on this site.
- ↳ www.musictheory.net Ricci Adams' wonderful site includes Flash tutorials and practice exercises.
- ↳ www.teoria.com Teoria offers tutorials and practice exercises.
- ↳ tonalityguide.com Excellent tutorials for harmonic analysis.
- ↳ cnx.org/content/m10865/latest Circle of fifths.

Fall 2014

Week of...	Theory objectives	Ear training objectives	Assessment
August 25	Pitch class, octaves, keyboard, clefs, half/whole steps	Intro to solfege and dictation	Pre-test
September 1	Intro to aural analysis, scale patterns: major, minor	Sing and ID major/minor scales	Exam: Pitch, keyboard
September 8	Minor scale variations, modes, key signatures	major/minor triads. Stepwise melodies	
September 15	Degree names, intro to interval ID (quantity)	SR/dictate stepwise melodies	Exam: Pitch, scales, keys
September 22	Interval ID (quality) and construction	Interval identification	
September 29	Intervals (continued)	Interval identification	Exam: Intervals
October 6	Review, catch up		9 weeks test 10/9
October 13 (Homecoming)	Triads: qualities	Sing/ID triads	
October 20 (2nd 9 Weeks)	Seventh Chords	Sing/ID triads and 7th chords	
October 27	Inversions	Sing/ID inversions	
November 3	Tonic/Dominant relationship	Intro to harmonic dictation	Ear Training Exam 1
November 10	Chords in a diatonic context	Harmonic dictation	Exam: Chords
November 17	Rhythm and Meter	Minor Sightreading	
December 1	Rhythm and meter	Simple rhythms	
December 8	Rhythm and meter	Meter identification	Exam: Rhythm & Meter
December 15	Review for Exam		Semester Exam

Spring Calendar (revised January 5, 2015)

Week of...	Theory objectives	Ear training objectives	Assessment
January 5	Chords in a diatonic context; Roman numerals, figured bass	Harmonic dictation (I and V)	
January 12	Part Writing with tonic and dominant chords (I & V).	Melodic dictation.	PROJECT: Harmonic Analysis
January 19	Authentic cadences. Non-chord tones. Harmonizing a melody	Harmonic dictation (I and V)	
February 2	PW: subdominant and supertonic chords (IV & II). Plagal cadences.	Melodic dictation	EXAM: Part-writing and cadences
February 9 (TMEA)	PW: submediant chords (VI). NCT: Passing/neighbor tones.		SRF Level 4 due Thursday
February 16	PW: leading tone chords (VII). Intro to secondary dominants.		
February 23	PW: secondary dominants. NCT: Suspensions and anticipations.	Recognizing secondary dominants in harmonic dictation.	
March 2	Exam review		9 weeks exam
March 9	PW: mediant chords (III), modal borrowing. NCT wrap-up.	Sightsinging	
March 23	Phrase-level form analysis	Sightsinging	
March 30	Form analysis	Harmonic analysis	
April 6	Binary/Ternary form	Melodic Dictation	Compose a period
April 13	Larger form analysis	Harmonic Dictation	EXAM: Form and modulations
April 20	20th century techniques	Exam practice	
April 27	20th century techniques	Exam practice	PROJECT: Full analysis
May 4	AP Exam practice, review	Exam practice	
May 11	21st century popular music		APMT Exam Monday
May 18	Final Project		PROJECT: Composition
May 25	Final Exam Review		
June 1	Final Exam		Final Exam

Students will develop and practice the following skills throughout the course of study:

1. AURAL (LISTENING) SKILLS

- a. Students will be able to sing various melodies in different tonalities and meters at sight. NOTE: YOU WILL BE SINGING OFTEN IN THIS CLASS! This is not choir, however; singing is a proven method of practicing and assessing a student's listening skills. Beautiful tone, performance practices, etc. are not part of the curriculum. In other words, you must sing to match pitch and rhythm, but it doesn't necessarily need to be pretty!
- b. Students will be able to aurally identify various melodies in different tonalities and meters and notate them correctly on the staff.
- c. Students will be able to aurally identify standard harmonic progressions and notate the outer voices correctly while applying appropriate Roman numeral analysis and inversion symbols.
- d. Students will be able to aurally identify discrepancies between notation and aural cues.
- e. Students will be able to aurally identify intervals and scales, meter and rhythm, form, chord progressions, cadences, instrumentation, and texture.

2. ANALYTICAL SKILLS

- a. Students will be able to read a musical score, identifying and applying knowledge of the following: clefs, keys/tonality, pitches, metric organization and rhythmic devices, intervals and scales, chord structure and progression, non-harmonic tones, compositional devices, cadences, form, and texture.
- b. Students will be able to apply Roman numeral analysis with inversion symbols to scores from the common practice period as well as scores from Western popular music.
- c. Students will be able to harmonize a melody using traditional chord progressions.
- d. Students will be able to spell chords from a given figured bass as well as from Roman numerals.

3. COMPOSITIONAL SKILLS

- a. Students will be able to realize a progression in four voices from both figured bass and Roman numerals.
- b. Students will be able to compose a bass line and write a harmonic progression with appropriate cadences for a given melody.

4. PERFORMANCE SKILLS

- a. Students will be able to sing various melodies in different tonalities and meters at sight.
- b. Students will be able to improvise appropriate melodies (sung and/or played on an instrument) above a given harmonic progression.
- c. Students will perform in groups as well as individually.

At the end of the course, students will have the skills needed to take the AP Music Theory exam in May and possibly place out of a first-year college music theory course.

Student Evaluation

Students will be regularly assessed on their oral, aural, writing, and analytical skills as well as their general knowledge (such as vocabulary). Grades will be weighed as follows:

- ↳ 50% Major Grades, including exams, ear-training and sight-singing tests, and composition projects
- ↳ 45% Daily Grades, including participation grades, minor quizzes, homework assignments, etc.
- ↳ 5% District-mandated Reading or Writing activity

Workload Expectations

- ⊃ As there is no textbook for this class, most new information will be given by lecture. If a student is absent for a class, it is the student's responsibility to copy the notes from a classmate and attend tutorials for assistance. Please attend class! Students who are habitually absent do not do well in this class.
- ⊃ There will be frequent homework assignments of varying degrees of time-consumption. Part-writing activities in the second semester can be particularly time consuming.
- ⊃ Sight-singing is a significant portion of the AP Music Theory Test. Students will be singing regularly in class as a group, and will be taking recorded sight-singing tests from time to time.
- ⊃ It is preferred that students have access to a piano or other keyboard instrument. Please secure permission from respective directors first before using instruments owned by Clear Springs High School; students using any piano without first securing permission will be disciplined.

Classroom Management Policies

HONOR OUR TIME: You must be in the room when the bell rings. If you are not, you are tardy, and all campus policies will be strictly adhered to. No stories, no hurt feelings, no exceptions—you will be admitted with an appropriate pass.

BE PREPARED: You must have the required materials with you every day. This class moves very quickly, and you will fall very quickly behind if you come to class without your pencil, staff paper, notes, etc. Blank staff paper can be purchased from Mr. Phillips at a rate of \$.25 per page. All work must be done in pencil; **work done in ink will be graded for half credit.** Have your tablet with you every day, charged for class.

BE RESPECTFUL: Cell phones should be put away and silenced during class. No student should ever be in the office without a director. Respect our beautiful facilities as well: students are not allowed in the PAC, any practice room, or ensemble room without permission from a teacher. We have LOTS of trash cans; please deposit water bottles, gum, and other waste in these trash cans, or risk being invited to a choir room beautification event. Finally, unless expressly invited to by the director, the grand piano is strictly off-limits.

BE MATURE: This class covers a great deal of information, and therefore must move at a very fast pace. You will be expected to take notes; don't just sit there expecting the information to be absorbed! Ask questions and come to tutorials if you don't understand something. Students will have fun in music theory (really), as long as that fun is a byproduct of the basic goals of the class. Students are expected to know when it is appropriate to make comments, tell jokes, move around, talk to your neighbors, etc. Inappropriate comments or activity will result in disciplinary action, and the class will then NOT be fun. Distracting the teacher or those around you during instructional time will result in disciplinary action.

BE EXCITED: This is a great class; I really enjoy teaching AP Music Theory and hope you are excited about accepting the challenge. It is a difficult and yet rewarding class that will change your perspective of music you hear every day, and you will come to appreciate the true artistry in making beautiful music. You will have homework but the workload will be reasonable. If there are concerns or major issues, please alert Mr. Phillips.

BATHROOM POLICY: Please take care of your business before school or between classes. You are expected by your teachers and administrators to remain in class from bell to bell. If you must leave during class, please wait until an appropriate break time to ask, and be sure to take the pass with you. If the restroom becomes an issue the number of trips will be limited. This is a college class, however, and it is my hope to run the class as it would be in a college setting.

FOOD AND DRINK POLICY: No food, drink (except bottled water), or gum is allowed in the music wing or in the Performing Arts Center. An automatic teacher's detention will be assigned to anyone in violation of this rule. Please attend to these needs before class.