

Advanced Placement Music Theory Course Syllabus 2025-2026

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Class Times: 9:15, 10:12, 1:25, 2:22

I: Required Textbook

Each student is given a large loose-leaf 3-ring notebook of materials written and compiled specifically for this course. It includes charts, musical examples, and worksheets. The binder is used in class every day, and is provided for a small fee. The book increases in size throughout the year as tests, quizzes, and other assignments are added (all are 3-hole punched for easy insertion).

It is essential that the student stay organized and keep the book in order. It is often convenient to take out a single page to work on it, especially at the piano, but the student must be careful to put it back for use in class the next day.

The content of the binder tends toward the character of an outline rather than a text. Rather than being provided with all the details from the start of a topic, the student will gradually add pages to the binder as concepts are explained in class and drills are completed.

II: Other Resources

Texts and anthologies available in the music library include:

- Burkholder, J. Peter, and Palisca, Claude V., editors. *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, vols. 1, 2, and 3, 6th ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2009.
- Ottman, Robert W., and Paul E. Dworak. *Basic Ear Training Skills*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991.
- Palisca, Claude V., ed. *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, vols. 1 and 2, 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1988.
- *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*. New York: Macmillan, 1980
- *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 3rd ed. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1986

Internet resources:

Ear Training:

- <http://www.earbeater.com/online-ear-training>
- <http://www.trainear.com>
- <http://www.musictheory.net/exercises>
- www.teoria.com

- <http://www.earbeater.com/online-ear-training>
- <http://tonedear.com>
- <http://www.cantonmusic.org/class-websites/brett-gottheimer/ap-music-theory-ear-training>

Dictation exercises: Rhythm, Melody

<http://davesmey.com/mus181/webdictation/webdictation.htm>

Ear Training Text with website audio files:

<http://mhhe.com/socscience/music/benward7/train.htm>

Rhythmic Exercises:

- <http://www.samuelstokesmusic.com/rhythm.html>
- <http://composecreate.com/students/wendys-piano-studio/teaching-resources/rhythm-work-sheets>
- <http://www.sisbands.org/SISfiles/RhythmBook.pdf>

Downloadable PDF:

http://www.waggonermusic.com/uploads/2/9/4/1/2941513/cb_rhythm_sheets.pdf

Rhythm Dictation:

- <http://www.therhythmtrainer.com>
- <http://www.teoria.com/en/exercises/rd4.php>
- <http://www.teoria.com/exercises>
- http://www.musictechteacher.com/music_quizzes/aq_rhythms_find_the_correct_measure/quiz.html

Sight Singing Workbook:

<http://www.cantonmusic.org/wp-content/uploads/Sightreading-Workbook1.pdf>

Music Dictionary:

<http://dictionary.onmusic.org/appendix>

III: Course Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a knowledge of fundamental elements and terminology of music including notational skills, scales, keys, intervals, chords, rhythm, meter, phrase structures, and small forms.
- Compare and contrast repertoire from various time periods and world cultures.
- Differentiate the sounds of common musical instruments based on timbre.
- Aurally identify all types of triads, 7th chords, intervals up to an octave, and scales including major, natural, harmonic, and melodic minor, pentatonic, and whole tone.

- Notate and visually identify all types of triads, 7th chords, major modes, harmonic and melodic minor scales, and intervals.
- Visually and aurally interpret motivic and melodic variations such as retrograde, inversion, augmentation, and transposition to closely related keys.
- Sight sing melodies up to four measures in length, using solfege, in major and minor keys, with simple and compound meters.
- Visually analyze diatonic harmonies, secondary dominants, and non-harmonic tones on multiple staves in all clefs.
- Notate melodies and bass lines from four part harmonies via aural dictation and identify the harmonic functions.
- Compose four-part chorale harmonies from Roman numeral harmonic functions and figured bass lines using eighteenth century voice leading techniques.

*Assessment of course objectives is in Section **VII**.

IV: Course Planner

This course is cumulative and the majority of these topics are referenced repeatedly after they are introduced. Thus, this schedule lists the approximate points at which each topic is introduced, but not necessarily the points at which they are completed. Many topics or skills are never “completed.”

Throughout the course, aural skills are introduced which match the visual exercises in the textbook. These activities steadily increase in complexity until students are working at a level similar to the sight-singing and dictations on the AP Test. Intensive drilling and testing of musical terminology also occurs throughout the year as new terms are introduced in support of new topics. In addition to their introduction during class late in the year, sample AP practice tests from previous years are also presented in two extra (and optional) Saturday morning sessions shortly before the AP Test date.

*Subject to change based on needs of individual classes.

WEEKS 1-2	Course Introduction and Unit A: Fundamentals of Music Theory. Introduction to solfege and aural skills. Review basics of notational system, terminology, and other items from Theory I.
WEEKS 3-4	Unit B: Scales and Keys, Major/Minor Scales with Solfege. Introduction of aural scale identification including the major and three common minor scales.

WEEKS 5-6	Unit C: Rhythm, Meter, and Tempo. Rhythm (clapping) dictations. Aural identification of intervals up to a P5.
WEEKS 7-8	Unit D: Intervals, interval inversion and its applications; the interval content of major and minor scales. Interval singing drills. Aural identification of intervals up to a P8.
WEEK 9	Unit E: Melody. Comprehensive review, First Quarter tests.
WEEKS 10-11	Unit F: Timbre and Texture. Dictation of complete melodies (pitch and rhythm).
WEEKS 12-14	Unit G: Intro to Tonal Harmony. Triads, functional harmony, and inversions. Aural identification of all four triad types.
WEEKS 15-17	Unit H: Four Part Harmony. Introduction of 7th chords. Harmonic analysis of triads in major and minor keys. Basic SATB texture concepts & vocabulary. Listening examples from 18th century literature. Aural identification of common 7th chords.
WEEK 18	Review; Midterm Exam (before Winter Break).
WEEK 19	First semester review.
WEEKS 20-22	Unit I: Harmonic Progressions and Non-Chord Tones. Four-part writing of increasing complexity. Simple aural harmonic exercises are introduced (I-V-I, etc). Students learn to pick out and sing the melody lines and the bass lines.
WEEKS 23-24	Unit J: Phrase Analysis. Cadence types, phrase and period structures. Musical examples are shown and analyzed. Four-part writing with increased complexity, using both Roman numerals and figured bass.
WEEKS 25-27	Unit K: Secondary Dominants.
WEEKS 28-29	Unit L: Modes and Non-Diatonic Scales. Listening examples from mode anthology. Aural identification of modes.
WEEKS 30-35	Extensive review & AP test preparation: 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2018 AP practice exams.
WEEK 36	AP Music Theory Exam: Wednesday, May 15, 2024, 12:00 PM

WEEKS 37-39	Miscellaneous post-exam listening projects with focus on world music. Student showcases and guest artist performances.
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V: Teaching Strategies

Aural skills are perhaps the most challenging elements of the curriculum in a music theory class. Consistent repetition of aural skills via kinesthetic methods will provide a proven pathway to acquiring a true basic understanding of the course material. We begin most class periods with sight singing drills, followed by ear training exercises. These skills are applied with dictation exercises, where melodies are played on an instrument and students notate what they hear. The class then sings the melodies, demonstrating overall understanding of what they have just interpreted.

The second half of the class typically turns towards a focus on visual materials presented in the textbook and the supplemental materials. Visual interpretation of music stimulates the analytical processes of the mind, which draws connections to what the mind has learned from the ear. As the course progresses, the ear training and dictation exercises become increasingly complex. Students begin to construct four part harmonies in the eighteenth century style and critique one another's work as their compositions are played on the piano and sung by the class. During the two months prior to the AP exam, sample exams from previous years are reviewed by the class.

VI: Student Evaluation

Student performance is graded using the mandated South Carolina state grading scale. The grading scale is as follows:

Report card grade calculation:

- Each quarter grade = average of 12 minor assessments (30%) + timely completion of homework assignments (10%) + average of 3 major assessments (60%).
- 1st semester grade = 1st quarter grade (45%) + 2nd quarter grade (45%) + midterm exam (10%).
- 2nd semester grade = 3rd quarter grade (45%) + 4th quarter grade (45%) + final exam (10%).
- Final course grade = 1st semester (50%) + 2nd semester (50%).

South Carolina State Grading Scale

The following scale is used throughout the state to convert numerical grades to letter grades:

90 - 100	=	A (Excellent)
80 - 89	=	B (Above Average)
70 - 79	=	C (Average)
60 - 69	=	D (Below Average)
0 - 59	=	F (Failed to demonstrate minimum level of mastery)

Late Work

Late Work constitutes class work, homework, or projects that are either:

- Assigned when a student is present and they fail to turn the work in by the deadline.
- Assigned with a student is absent and the student misses the deadline.

The responsibility for meeting deadlines lies with the student. The below chart illustrates assignment types that will or will not be accepted late, and the corresponding grade penalty for the submission of late work.

Major Grades	Minor Grades	Homework
· Accepted up to 3 days late · 15 point deduction per day · Grade will become and remain a zero (0) after 3 days	· Accepted up to 1 day late · 15 point deduction per day · Grade will become and remain a zero (0) after 1 day	· Not accepted late · Grade is assigned a zero (0)

Make-up Work

Make-up work constitutes any work that is assigned when a student has an excused absence and is unable to complete their assignments at home due to illness, injury, or lack of access to equipment. Make-up work can also be assigned when a student is out of school on suspension.

It is the student's responsibility to request make-up work through the Instructor. Instructors should respond to requests for make-up work within 24 hours to ensure that assignments are completed in a timely manner. **The Instructor will set an appropriate deadline for the submission of work based on the nature of the student's absence.** Extended illness should be handled on an individual basis with the student's illness and workload in mind.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

CHEATING or PLAGIARISM - Copying the work of others and submitting it as one's own, securing or providing answers in a dishonest way, and plagiarism from the internet are strictly forbidden. By the time a student has entered high school, they will have received enough training in the elementary and middle schools to know how to behave with academic integrity. Due process will always be offered to the student, and full cooperation from the student is expected.

Consequences:

First offense:

- A grade of "zero" will be given for the assignment or assessment.
- The teacher will notify both the FAC administration and the parent. The parent may request a conference to discuss the infraction.
- A referral will be entered into IMS.
- The student's home-base school will be notified of the infraction.

Second offense: Same as the first offense, and the student will be removed from the FAC at the end of the semester.

Probationary Status at FAC

Students who are new to the learning environment at the Fine Arts Center may go through a brief adjustment period as they get used to the high level of rigor and expectations. While returning students should already be adjusted to the environment, some students may fall off-track during their time as a student at the FAC. For these reasons, we have in place procedures to assign students “Probationary” status in order to help them get back on track. After one academic quarter of poor performance by a student, an Instructor may place the student on probation. Expectations for improvement will be communicated to the student and parent, and the student will have one academic quarter to improve their performance. If the performance does not improve, the student may lose their roster spot at the Fine Arts Center. This can occur at the end of Semester 1 or Semester 2.

Plan for Routine Communication With Parents

- Parents are encouraged to check in on Google Classroom and make sure their email addresses are correct and up to date. This makes it far easier for the teacher to send out any important information which pertains to everyone. It also makes it easier to reach you via email individually.
- Parents are contacted promptly in the event of academic or disciplinary problems.

VII: Assessment of Class Objectives

1. Demonstrate a knowledge of fundamental elements and terminology of music including notational skills, scales, keys, intervals, chords, rhythm, meter, phrase structures, and small forms.

Assessment:

Ongoing series of quizzes in multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank quiz format, increasing in complexity throughout the year.

2. Compare and contrast repertoire from various time periods and world cultures.

Assessment:

Multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank quiz where students identify music by time period, region, or genre.

3. Differentiate the sounds of common musical instruments based on timbre.

Assessment:

Multiple choice quiz where students aurally identify an instrument from a recording.

4. Aurally identify all types of triads, 7th chords, intervals up to an octave, and scales including major, natural, harmonic, and melodic minor, pentatonic, and whole tone.

Assessment:

Written quizzes where above mentioned examples are played on a piano and students identify them by sound.

5. Notate and visually identify all types of triads, 7th chords, major modes, harmonic and melodic minor scales, and intervals.

Assessment:

Written quizzes where above mentioned examples are identified by sight or notated.

6. Visually and aurally interpret motivic and melodic variations such as retrograde, inversion, augmentation, and transposition to closely related keys.

Assessment:

Fill-in-the-blank quiz where students visually identify melodic variations from a musical score.

Fill-in-the-blank quiz where students aurally identify melodic variations from a recording.

7. Sight sing melodies up to four measures in length, using solfege, in major and minor keys, with simple and compound meters.

Assessment:

Technique	Mastery-4	Proficient-3	Developing-2	Beginning-1	No Evidence-1
Score Analysis	Student is able to determine major vs. minor key and beginning solfege syllable at a high level of proficiency.	Student is able to determine major vs. minor key and beginning solfege syllable at an above average level of proficiency.	Student is able to determine major vs. minor key and beginning solfege syllable at a satisfactory level of proficiency.	Student is able to determine major vs. minor key and beginning solfege syllable at a limited level of proficiency.	Student is unable to determine major vs. minor key and beginning solfege syllable.
Pitch Accuracy	Student is able to perform with accurate intonation as written in their key signature, at a	Student is able to perform with accurate intonation as written in their key signature, at	Student is able to perform with accurate intonation as written in their key signature, at a	Student is able to perform with accurate intonation as written in their key signature, at a	Student is unable to perform with accurate intonation as written in their key signature.

	high level of proficiency.	an above average level of proficiency.	satisfactory level of proficiency.	limited level of proficiency.	
Rhythmic Accuracy	Student is able to perform with accurate rhythm at a high level of proficiency.	Student is able to perform with accurate rhythm at an above average level of proficiency.	Student is able to perform with accurate rhythm at a satisfactory level of proficiency.	Student is able to perform with accurate rhythm at a limited level of proficiency.	Student is unable to perform with accurate rhythm.
Solfege Syllable Accuracy	Student uses proper solfege syllables at a high level of proficiency.	Student uses proper solfege syllables at an above average level of proficiency.	Student uses proper solfege syllables at a satisfactory level of proficiency.	Student uses proper solfege syllables at a limited level of proficiency.	Student is unable to use proper solfege syllables.

8. Visually analyze diatonic harmonies, secondary dominants, and non-harmonic tones on multiple staves in all clefs.

Assessment:

Written quizzes where students are given a score and students analyze harmonies, using Roman numeral symbols and figures (harmonic analysis).	
10-30 Chords, 2 points per chord, 1 point for each non-harmonic tone.	Points Awarded
Correct Roman numeral symbol	1
Correct Arabic numeral figure	1
Correct identification of N.H tone	1

9. Notate melodies and bass lines from four part harmonies via aural dictation and identify the harmonic functions.

Assessment:

Aural quizzes where harmonies are played on the piano or from a recording. Students notate the soprano and bass lines, and identify the underlying harmony with Roman numeral symbols and figures (harmonic dictation).	
3-10 Chords, 6 points per chord.	Points Awarded
Correct soprano note	2
Correct bass note	2
Correct Roman numeral symbol	1
Correct Arabic numeral figure	1

10. Compose four part chorale harmonies from Roman numeral harmonic functions and figured bass lines using eighteenth century voice leading techniques.

Assessment:

Students are given a melody line and Roman numeral symbols. Students write in the bass, tenor, and alto lines (four part writing).		
	10 -30 Chords, 5 points each	Points awarded
	Chord spelled correctly	2 points
	Correct bass note	2 points
	Proper voice leading	1 point

XIII: Addendum

The South Carolina Music Standards was aligned with the National Music Standards in 2017.

2014 Music Standards (Composition/Theory)

Creating

- Imagine- Generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts.
- Plan and Make-Select and develop musical ideas for defined purposes and contexts.
- Evaluate and Refine- Evaluate and refine selected musical ideas to create musical work that meets appropriate criteria.
- Present-Share creative musical work that conveys intent, demonstrates craftsmanship, and exhibits originality.

Performing

- Select- Select varied musical works to present based on interest, knowledge, technical skill, and context.
- Analyze- Analyze the structure and context of varied musical works and their implications for performance.
- Interpret- Develop personal interpretations that consider creators' intent.
- Rehearse, Evaluate, and Refine- Evaluate and refine personal and ensemble performances, individually or in collaboration with others.
- Present- Perform expressively, with appropriate interpretation and technical accuracy, and in a manner appropriate to the audience and context.

Responding

- Select- Choose music appropriate for a specific purpose or context.

- Analyze- Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response.
- Interpret-Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators'/performers' expressive intent.
- Evaluate-Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Connecting

- Connect #10-Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.
- Connect #11- Relate musical ideas and work to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding.