



Mr. Ryan Marsh, Instructor

401 Reed Lane • Lexington, Kentucky 40503 • 859-381-3492

www.lafayettechoir.org/ap-theory

Thinking about signing up for AP Music Theory?

January 2024

Students and Parents:

I am glad that you or your student is considering taking AP Music Theory next year. The class is the 4th and final musicianship class that SCAPA music majors take. The class is also open to all Lafayette seniors who are also enrolled in a Lafayette music ensemble. This course is intended for students who will continue their study of music at the college level or for students who desire to further their understanding of the fundamentals of music. “The ultimate goal of an AP Music Theory course is to develop a student’s ability to recognize, understand, and describe the basic materials and processes of music that are heard or presented in a score” (AP Music Theory Course Description). It is designed to help students develop a thorough understanding of music theory. Primary emphasis is placed on music and styles of the Common Practice Period (1600–1750); music of other periods and styles is also studied. A brief introduction to twentieth-century music is also presented.

I am a strong believer in the AP Theory Curriculum. It is rigorous and students who have taken the course stand in good stead for future music study if they so choose. Regardless of whether a student chooses to continue music study beyond high school, they are more successful in music with skills learned in this class.

AP Exam: Upon completion of this course, it is the expectation that all students will take the AP Music Theory Exam and be prepared to pass it with a score of 3 or higher. “The AP Music Theory exam is intended for secondary school students who have completed music studies comparable to a first-year college course in music theory” (Course Description). As an Advanced Placement® course, this class carries a weighted grade and as such will require as much or more effort as any other weighted class. By enrollment in the AP Music Theory course at Lafayette, students signify their intention to take the AP Exam in May. Please contact Mr. Marsh ASAP with any concerns. Financial assistance is available for students who qualify.

How Parents Can Help: For a course of this level of challenge, it is important that parents continue to play an active role in assisting their student. Even though your student is a senior, please continue to be involved in their academics. You can do this by consultation with Mr. Marsh, grade checks, Canvas parent access, encouragement, and high expectations. We will be using Canvas for course management. Parent access is available via app and web.

Continuous Improvement: A cornerstone of this course is continuous improvement. Students have the opportunity (and often requirement) to retake exams until they have reached mastery level. This allows for every student's success. All students will be successful in this course if they communicate regularly with the teacher, work with persistence, and stay current with work.

Summer Preparation: As with many AP courses, we provide a summer preparation list. We have a lot of content to cover during the year including extensive aural training therefore students are expected to do preparatory work prior to the first day of class. Since most of the students enrolled are students with previous music theory experience, this work will primarily be review. We have found that even students with prior theory background need review. Those students with no prior music theory experience will benefit from this summer study and help you prepare for the coming year.

Will I Be Successful? One of the questions I get most is from students who have not yet had a music theory class, asking if they will be successful in the course. Because we have a diverse background and varying skill levels in the class, we begin with page one of the first chapter. This is a good review for those who have had previous experience, but ensures all students have a chance to succeed. I have found that study habits and work ethic are better indicators of success rather than previous music theory background. This, along with retake opportunities should ensure students have the best chance to succeed.



Syllabus: The course syllabus including a list of topics is available at bit.ly/APTheorySyll.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have when making your decision about enrolling in AP Music Theory.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan Marsh".

Ryan Marsh

ryan.marsh@fayette.kyschools.us