

TIVY HIGH SCHOOL

Advanced Placement Music Theory

Course Outline

Instructor: Seth A. Lafler

Office Room Number: C105

Telephone: 830-257-2212 x3618

Email: Seth.Lafler@kerrvilleisd.net

Office Hours: 7th Period

Mr. Lafler's Schedule:

- 1) Dept.
- 2) Varsity Treble
- 3) Non-Varsity Treble
- 4) AP Music Theory
- 5) Show Choir / Chorale
- 6) Tenor-Bass
- 7) Conference

Course Description:

The AP Music Theory course roughly parallels the content of a college freshman year theory course although some of the topics included are usually covered quite late in the undergraduate course of study. The material is covered very rapidly so that it can all be fitted into the course. Significant critical/analytical/ creative thinking skills are fostered in most parts of the course, and especially in considerations of texture, harmonic progression, formal structuring, and style. AP Examination questions emphasize the synthesis of musical knowledge into usable musical understanding; the final question on the test asks students to show understanding of harmonic progression in the common practice style.

In addition, the instructor maintains a policy of teaching an advanced theory course that is of significant relevance to students who will not go on to major in music. Thus, the subject matter is much wider than required by the AP Music Theory Examination, and the challenge is all the greater for the inclusion of this material.

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.

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

1. Aural Skills
 - a. Students will be able to sing various melodies in different tonalities and meters at sight.
 - 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 & 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. Composition 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.

Course Requirements:

A. Required Materials

Each student should maintain a loose-leaf notebook of materials written and compiled specifically for this course. These materials will include charts, examples, and worksheets. They are used in class every day, and are provided free of charge. The notebook will increase in size throughout the year as tests, quizzes, and other assignments are added (all are 3-hole punched for easy insertion into a three-ring binder).

B. Classroom Rules and Expectations

- NO FOOD OR DRINK IN THE CLASSROOM (that includes gum, candy, etc.). All trash must be put in the receptacles at the front of the room—NOT under the keyboards at the workstations!)
- Students should be prepared and ready at the scheduled beginning of class.

- All students will bring a **pencil** (NOT pen) and the theory notebook to class every day. Any worksheets assigned for homework will be finished and returned to their proper places in the notebook.
- As with any arts class emphasizing skill acquisition, regular attendance is vital. If a student is absent, it is expected that the student will ask for the make-up work.
- It is expected that any student requiring extra help will ask for it. Appointments are recommended since the instructor is not always here before and after school hours.
- Mature behavior, respectful of instructor and colleagues, is expected at all times.

C. Supplies Necessary for Course

- A three ring binder and a PENCIL with an eraser are all that is needed. Students will need access to a microphone that can connect to a computer for recorded aural and melodic reading exercises. Access to a keyboard instrument and internet access at home is extremely advantageous.

D. Computer Lab Procedures

- Do not turn the computers on unless instructed by the teacher.
- Do not unplug any part of the computer, keyboard, sequencer, or MIDI port unless instructed by the teacher.
- Turn on the keyboard only when instructed to do so by the teacher.
- Do not pound on the keyboards—they break easily!
- Be mature and use good judgment when using the music theory lab equipment.

Student Evaluation:

Corresponding with district policy, final grades will be weighted 40% for daily grades and 60% for major evaluations. Students will be assessed on their oral, aural, writing, and analytical skills as well as general knowledge (such as vocabulary). Within these daily and major grade categories, *every effort will be made* to weight the assignments with percentages similar to that of the national AP[®] Exam scoring formula. Approximate percentages are as follows:

Multiple Choice/General Knowledge: 45%
questions with aural stimulus questions without aural stimulus <i>(weighted in equal parts)</i>

Free Response: 55%			
	aural skills: 50%	melodic dictation harmonic dictation sight-singing	<i>(weighted in equal parts)</i>
	Non-aural skills: 50%	realization of figured bass (33%) realization of Roman numerals (25%) composition of a bass line (42%)	

Course Planner:

The main texts used in this course are *Tonal Harmony* by Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne and the *Musician's Guide to Aural Skills, Volume 1*, by Joel Phillips, Jane Clendinning and Elizabeth Marvin. We will also explore various exercises using the *SmartMusic* software provided by the District. Each year is a new year, and each class is a unique class, so the schedule must be flexible enough to allow students to work ahead when possible and take a little more time when necessary. This course incorporates numerous cursory analyses of pieces to illustrate current topics. Also placed throughout the AP Music Theory curriculum are various sight-singing and ear training exercises. Singing every day is a part of the daily routine. Intensive drilling and testing of musical terminology also occurs throughout the year as new terms are introduced in support of new topics. Practice questions from previous AP Music Theory exams are also covered throughout the course.

1. ELEMENTS OF PITCH

- A. Notation
 - a. The aspects of sound: pitch, amplitude, timbre, articulation, and duration
 - b. Aspects of notation as they relate to aspects of sound
 - c. The representation of pitch and the musical alphabet
- B. The Keyboard and Octave Registers
 - a. Knowledge of the keyboard as a visual and kinesthetic means of understanding the musical alphabet
 - b. Range identification and the influence of MIDI
 - c. Patterns of white and black keys
- C. Notation of the Staff & Clefs
 - a. G clef vs. treble clef, etc.
 - b. Discuss the use of clefs as it relates to instrument range
 - c. Read and sing melodies in the various clefs
 - d. Transcribe melodies from one clef to the other
 - e. Evoking pitch memory
 - f. Introduction of solfege syllables
- D. Scales, Keys, and Key Signatures
 - a. Scales covered are the major and three forms of the minor scale

- b. Introduction of the scale as a pattern of half steps and whole steps and exploration of a variety of possibilities using the white keys of the piano
 - c. The pattern of the major scale
 - d. The position of the half steps and their "tendencies"
 - e. Using accidentals to make the scale conform to the "major" pattern
 - f. Exercises emphasizing aural recognition
 - g. Major key signatures
 - h. Mnemonic devices for key signatures, the circle of 5ths and accidental order
 - i. The pattern of the natural (pure) minor scale
 - j. Minor scale relationship to the major key signature and the concept of relative keys
 - k. Harmonic and melodic minor scales
 - l. Scale degree names
 - m. Relative and parallel key relationships
- E. Intervals
- a. Quantity and quality as a means of relating two notes
 - b. Aural recognition and oral reproduction
 - c. Familiar contexts
 - d. Melodic vs. harmonic intervals
 - e. Written study – recognition of Perfect and Major intervals in relation to the major key signature
 - f. Other intervallic qualities (minor, Aug, dim, etc.)
 - g. Interval inversion
 - h. Compound intervals
 - i. Exercises: Singing, interval identification, intervallic tendencies as they relate to structural position
 - j. Harmonic Study: Prevalent chordal intervals, simple and compound intervals, inversion study
 - k. Singing and dictation of intervals

2. ELEMENTS OF RHYTHM

- A. Definitions (duration, rhythm, meter, pulse, beat, tempo)
- B. Durational symbols
- C. Beat and tempo
- D. Meter and Division of the Beat
 - a. Reading and writing rhythms, rhythmic groupings and metrical coordination
 - b. Oral and aural exercises
- E. Simple Meter vs. Compound Meter
 - a. Rhythmic and metrical study of familiar songs (with and without the score)
 - b. Basics of conducting as they relate to rhythm and meter
 - c. Score study of rhythm, meter, and notation
 - d. Writing music in different meters

3. INTRODUCTION TO TRIADS AND SEVENTH CHORDS

- A. Triads
 - a. The importance of the third in chordal construction
 - b. Using thirds and fifths to construct triads
 - c. Visual and aural recognition of chords
- B. Seventh Chords
 - a. Use of the 5 common practice seventh chords
 - b. Using thirds, fifths and sevenths to construct seventh chords
 - c. Visual and aural recognition of chords
- C. Inversions of Chords
 - a. Inversion symbols and figured bass
 - b. Lead sheet symbols
 - c. Recognizing chords in different textures
- D. Diatonic chords in major and minor keys
 - a. Diatonic triads found in the major key, including V7, ii7, vii^o7
 - b. Common diatonic triads found in the minor key, including V7, ii^o7, vii^o7
 - c. Discuss scalar variants dependent upon scale form

4. INTRODUCTION TO PART-WRITING

- A. The grand staff and vocal ranges
- B. Vertical guidelines
 - a. Spacing and voice crossing
 - b. Standard doublings in major and minor triads, inversions and standard doubling
 - c. Similar, contrary, and oblique motion, parallelisms
- C. Horizontal guidelines
 - a. General concerns of contour
 - b. Conjunct vs. disjunct motion and characteristic motion for each of the four parts
 - c. Implications based upon bass line or melody line
 - d. Writing progressions
 - e. Dictation involving progressions
 - f. Singing progressions
- D. Special uses of the 6-4 chord
 - a. Bass arpeggiation
 - b. Cadential 6-4, Passing 6-4, Pedal 6-4
- E. Implications of figured bass and Roman numerals

5. HARMONIC PROGRESSION

- A. Sequences and the Circle of 5ths
- B. Chord progression chart based on most stable and most unstable chords
- C. Analyzing and writing progressions using these chords
- D. Proper resolution of tendency tones

- E. Analysis and singing of appropriate melodies
- F. Simple melodic harmonization
- G. Beginning harmonic dictation

6. EXPANDING THE BASIC PHRASE

- A. Progressions using the I, V and V⁷ and their inversions
- B. The subdominant chord and introduction to the supertonic
- C. The secondary chords from the main functional areas: ii, ii⁷, vi, vii^o, vii^{o7} (their inversions and minor key equivalents)

7. CADENCES, PHRASES, AND PERIODS

- A. Musical form
 - a. Comparing phrases and cadences to language structures
 - b. Comparing small forms to large forms
- B. Cadences
 - a. Introduction of authentic and half cadences
 - b. Use of the plagal cadence
 - c. The vi as a substitute for I (deceptive cadence)
 - d. Cadences and harmonic rhythm
 - e. Aural exercises using different cadences
- C. Motives and Phrases
 - a. Phrases vs. subphrases
 - b. Identifying phrases in familiar contexts
 - c. The importance of tempo and context to determine phrases
 - d. Similar and contrasting phrases
- D. Period forms
 - a. Repeated phrases vs. parallel period
 - b. Periodic structure and familiar songs
 - c. Enlarged, expanded, and double periods (parallel and contrasting)
 - d. Phrase groups

8. NON-CHORD TONES

- A. Classification of Non-Chord Tones
- B. Use of passing tones and neighbor tones to embellish a simple texture
- C. Suspensions and retardations
 - a. Classification of suspensions
 - b. Use of suspensions as implied by figured bass
- D. Introduction of appoggiaturas and escape tones (also neighbor group)
- E. Anticipations and pedal point
- F. Problems in the analysis of non-chord tones
- G. Recognizing non-chord tones in common-practice period scores
- H. Writing non-chord tones within a four-voice texture as implied by figured bass

9. SECONDARY FUNCTIONS

- A. Secondary dominants
 - a. General considerations of spelling and resolutions of V7 chords
 - b. Identifying and constructing secondary dominants
 - c. Study of music using secondary dominants (harmonization and analysis)
 - d. Four-part writing with secondary dominants
 - e. Aural practice
- B. Secondary leading tone chords
 - a. General considerations of spelling and resolutions of viio(7) chords
 - b. Identifying and constructing secondary leading tone chords
 - c. Study of music using secondary leading tone chords (harmonization and analysis)
 - d. Four-part writing with secondary leading tone chords
 - e. Aural practice
- C. Sequences involving secondary functions

10. DIATONIC MODULATIONS

- A. Modulation vs. change of key vs. tonicization
- B. Key relationships
 - a. Modulation to closely related keys
 - b. Common-chord or Pivot-chord modulation
- C. Writing and analyzing modulations to closely related keys
- D. Aural progressions modulating to closely related keys

11. OTHER MODULATIONS (dependent on progress of class)

- A. Other modulatory techniques
 - a. Altered chords as common chords
 - b. Sequential modulation
 - c. Modulation by common tone
 - d. Monophonic modulation
 - e. Direct modulation
- B. Writing and analyzing other modulatory techniques
- C. Aural progressions involving other modulatory techniques

12. BINARY, TERNARY, AND OTHER LARGE FORMS

- A. Binary Forms
 - a. Sectional vs. continuous
 - b. Two-reprise
 - c. Balanced vs. unbalanced
 - d. Aural and visual examples from the common practice period
- B. Ternary Forms
 - a. Sectional vs. continuous
 - b. Two-reprise

- c. Minuet-trio-minuet
- d. Aural and visual examples from the common practice period
- C. Rounded Binary Forms
 - a. Sectional vs. continuous
 - b. Two-reprise
 - c. Aural and visual examples from the common practice period
- D. Other Formal Designs
 - a. 12-Bar Blues
 - b. American Ballad Form
 - c. Sonata Form
 - d. Rondo Form

13. CHROMATICISM

- A. Modal Mixture
 - a. Use of borrowed chords in minor keys
 - b. Use of the lowered sixth scale degree in major keys
 - c. Modulations involving mode mixture

14. INTRODUCTION TO 20TH CENTURY MUSIC

- A. Scales
 - a. Modes, pentatonic scales, and other modern scales
 - b. Visual and aural representation
- B. Introduction to 20th Century composition techniques
 - a. Serialism
 - b. Aleatoric music
 - c. Electronic music

Teaching Strategies/Student Activities:

Aural Skills: Students perform various activities to strengthen their aural skills. For instance, melodic dictation skills are built using singing first. All students in my class must learn solfege in addition to scale degree names and numbers. After students understand the concept of using solfege for scale degrees, I sing three to four note patterns on solfege and the students echo the patterns back on solfege. On the staff paper in front of them, I ask them to notate one of the patterns. This continues as I sing, they echo, and then they notate. The next step in the process is thus: I sing on a neutral syllable, students echo in solfege, and then they notate. As they begin to master this, the patterns get longer and begin to resemble melodies from past AP Music Theory exams. My singing is eventually replaced by different instrumental sounds, and the students will audiate the patterns rather than sing out loud. This process also helps students notate the soprano and bass lines in harmonic dictation exercises.

Analytical Skills: Students begin looking at scores from the first day of class. It is important that students see a variety of scores with different instrumentation, clefs, and

notation. Students in my class are expected to analyze piano music, orchestral scores, string quartets, solo vocal or instrumental music, choral music, and even popular music. Even if the students are unable to identify every element in a score, they can point out significant musical elements from the very beginning. I will usually focus their attention on a particular clef, measure, staff, marking, chord, passage, etc. to guide their learning. They must discuss what they see, sometimes in small student-directed groups, sometimes as a class. Even in the most complicated score, as the year progresses, students are able to make sense of the music, discussing Roman numerals, inversions, chord spellings, non-chord tones, voice leading, form, cadences, etc.

Writing Skills: Students have frequent practice realizing figured bass examples, part writing from a Roman numeral progression, and harmonizing a melody. To expand these basic writing skills, students are given a lead sheet of a folk melody and asked to write a variation of the melody with harmonization for the instrumental or vocal ensemble of their choice using *Finale* music software. Students have chosen to write for solo piano, brass quartet, string quartet, choir, and various other instrumental and vocal combinations. They write their variations by altering the mode, adding appropriate chromatic chords, embellishing the melody with non-chord tones, expanding harmonic progressions, modifying the form, and other compositional techniques they have studied throughout the year. This is an excellent way for the students to synthesize and apply their knowledge creatively.

Performance Skills: Students perform in class daily, usually singing melodies or chorales at sight. Occasionally, students are asked to bring their instruments to class. One activity using instruments also involves realization of a figured bass. Students are grouped, not necessarily by like instruments, and given a bass line with figures. They must work as a group to realize the figured bass correctly with proper chord spellings, voicings, and voice leading. After all the groups have completed their realizations, they perform their realizations for the class. The different timbres of the instruments bring out the individual lines and students are better able to hear both errors and successful part-writing.