MUSIC HARMONY 2025-2026

Mr. Brady Ritland

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The goal of the Music Department at West Fargo High School is to develop **Independent Musicians** and **Informed Consumers** who can perform and appreciate music to its fullest. This class will serve as an introductory music theory course, encompassing topics that one would see in their first semester of college level theory classes. We will also reserve time to compose and arrange music for multiple ensembles. After taking this course, students will understand music on a deeper level, influencing individual and ensemble performances at WFHS and beyond.

Course of Study

Unit 1: The Basics

The Staff, Clefs, Note Names, Ledger Lines, Keyboard Keys, Note and Rest Duration, Dots and Ties, Time Signatures, Score Markings, Steps and Accidentals.

Unit 2: Scales and Intervals

The Major Scale, The Minor Scales, Scale Degrees, Key Signatures, Intervals (Generic, Specific, Written, and Inversion).

Unit 3: Chords

Triads, Triad Inversion, Seventh Chords, Seventh Chord Inversion, Diatonic Triads and Seventh Chords, Chord Voicing.

Unit 4: Chord Progressions and Melody

Common Harmonic Movement, Non-Harmonic Tones, Phrases and Cadences, Harmonizing a Melody, Composing a Melody.

Unit 5: Arranging

Unit 6: Composing

Music Harmony Rules

A. Work hard, be kind.
B. Use common sense.
C. Come to class prepared and on time.
D. When others are talking, listen and don't be a distraction.
E. Absolutely no phones in class. (**ND STATE LAW. See WFHS Cell Phone Policy**). *1st offense = phone goes to office.*
F. Food and drinks can be allowed in class as long as you clear it with Mr. Ritland. (He reserves the right to say no.) Keep my floor clean, please!
G. Take care of the piano!!! (No food or drinks on top, keep hands out of piano body, only move with 3 people or more, keep plugged in, ask for permission to play.)

Grading Procedures

Activity	*Approximate weight:*
Homework	50%
Composition Projects	25%
Tests	20%
Weekly Ear Training	10%

A. Attendance:

1. **Excused** absences do not have to be made up. If it is excused by the school, it is excused by me.
2. An **unexcused** absence will result in a UV – no exceptions. Music Harmony is a very sequential subject, and skipping class will greatly hurt your chances of passing.
    i. Attending class more than 30 min after the bell will also result in a UV, per school policy.
3. **Tardies** will be given out to anyone arriving after the bell.

B. Homework

1. Students will be assigned a homework assignment once a week. Homework will be assigned at the end of the week and turned in during the first class period the following week.
    i. Homework will vary between written assignments, listening/response exercises, and online coursework.
    ii. Students will be given time to finish homework in class as time permits.
    iii. Assignments can be retaken as many times as a student wishes by signing up for a study session with Mr. Ritland (see below).

C. Weekly Ear Training

1. Once a week students will take a small ear training quiz for **5 points**. The quizzes will be **graded on completion**, and immediately graded/corrected in class.
    i. Ear training quizzes will vary in content and be directly related to the topics we are learning in class.
2. Each unit test will include a small, graded ear training section which will be identical to the exercises students complete weekly.

D. Tests

1. Units 1 – 4 will conclude in a comprehensive test worth **50 points**, encompassing everything learned in the unit, and a small review section of previous units.
    i. Tests can be retaken as many times as a student wishes by signing up for a study session with Mr. Ritland (see below).

E. Composition Projects

1. Units 5 and 6 will consist of work time for 2 composition projects – the latter serving as the "final exam" for this course. **Each project will be worth 100 points.**
    i. Unit 5 will be an **arrangement project**, where students will re-imagine a song of their choice for a musical ensemble of their choice. Depending on the ensemble chosen, students will be able to hear their arrangement performed by other students.
    ii. Unit 6 will be a **composition project**, where students will compose a completely original piece of music for an ensemble of their choice. Depending on the ensemble chosen, students will be able to hear their composition performed by other students.

F. Study Sessions

1. Students are able to sign up for a study session with Mr. Ritland by utilizing the voice lesson signup sheet outside of his office. These sessions can be used for help with homework, extra help on current subjects/units, retaking assignments and tests, and composing/arranging workshops for the final projects.
    i. Students can come to a study session as a group only if asking for help with homework or getting extra help on a subject. Test retakes and composing/arranging workshops must be individual.

H. Class Resources

- Manuscript paper notebook provided by Mr. Ritland

- Musictheory.net
    - There is no textbook for this class, so this comprehensive website will serve as the primary study tool for students. It also has many drills/games for students to practice class topics.
- MakeMusic Compose
    - Free music notation software that students can download onto a personal computer.
- MuseScore
    - Another free notation software option.
- Finale
    - Advanced music notation software installed on select computers in the choir computer lab.

- Various iPad notation apps will be shared with students at a later date.

Please detach and return the bottom of this page by Friday, September 12th.
(15 points)

I have read and understand the rules and requirements for Music Harmony at WFHS.
By signing, the student agrees to abide by the content of this syllabus.

Parent/Guardian Name *Parent/Guardian Signature* *Date*

Student Name *Student Signature* *Date*