
PETERS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

COURSE SYLLABUS: AP MUSIC THEORY

Course Overview and Essential Skills

AP Music Theory is structured around musical skill development, theory terminology, function, and composition. Skill development is required for literacy, i.e. rhythmic or melodic dictation. Terminology is required for understanding musical concepts, i.e. cadences, chord inversions, etc. Function is the application of concepts, and composition is the application and creative aspect of theory manifested.

AP Music Theory is focused on developing the students skill sets, understanding musical components, and their application in the compositional process.

General musicianship terms are used for dynamics, articulation, ranges, etc. in the process of understanding the expressive nature of music.

Digital notation software is used to assist the student in "writing" their assignments or original compositions in the end of the course.

The culmination of these skills, terms, and functions will result in a broad understanding of music theories applied to an original composition.

Required Materials

- Manuscript Paper
- Pencil
- Binder

Provided Materials

- Laptop or desktop computer
- MIDI Keyboard controller

Extra/Optional Resources:

- www.musictheory.net (Ricci Adam's free online music theory supplemental resource)

Course Outline of Material Covered:

Unit or Topic	Concepts/Skills/Resources	Timeframe
Fundamental Notation	Pitches, clefs, staff, rhythms, rests, beaming, meters, key signatures, tonalities, dictation	4 weeks
Melodic/Rhythmic Dictation	Skill development in dictation via aural exercises/assessments	2 weeks
Solfege	Symbols/syllables, usage in scales, melodies, performance of solfege	2 weeks
Chord Study	Construction, inversion, function, progressions, types	4 weeks

4 Part Writing	Voicing/parts, relationships, clefs, ranges, voice leading and general rules for 4 part writing, figured bass, nomenclature	4 weeks
Modes, nonharmonic tones, cadences	Definitions, variety of modes within tonality, passing/neighbor tones, cadence construction	4 weeks
Melodic Writing/ composition	Melodic devices, melodic analysis with descriptive labels, harmonic writing, expression, instrument/vocal ranges, orchestration	8 weeks
Preparation for the AP Exam and course final	Review and Exam practice problems	4 weeks
Project-based applications and additional topics	Final Project - original composition	4 weeks

****The course outline is subject to alteration based on class pacing and/or school district calendar changes***