

AP Music Theory “Summer Preparation Guide”

Instructor Information:

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Greetings! I am glad that you are interested in taking AP Music Theory during the 2009-2010 school year. This document has several details that you should be aware of **prior** to taking the class next year. Currently, this course is scheduled for the 2nd semester. **A detailed course syllabus will be sent home on the first day of class.**

Overview:

Advanced Placement (AP) Music Theory is a one-semester course that covers a variety of musical topics and concepts. Elements taught in this course should help prepare students for the AP examination that is administered in May, which though not required, is highly recommended for all students registered.

A pre-test will be given before the start of the class, as described above. Students who discover that there is some deficit in their skills and concepts that are addressed on the pretest may find it wise to consider another elective class, as the pacing of this course is quite quick and students can easily get lost as we move through some difficult topics. Music reading proficiency is **REQUIRED** to pass this class.

Instructional materials for AP Music Theory are based on concepts that are consistent with university music theory courses for freshman music majors. In general, Music Theory is an objective overview of the many aspects that are involved in the writing, reading and interpreting of music literature. Students will learn how written music has evolved in its structure and style through history, though mainly from about 1200AD through 1900AD. Understanding what compositional tools and customs were used by the “great composers” is a main focus of the course and has practical application to contemporary music composition and performance.

Additionally, the development of aural skills is intrinsic to the course curriculum. Such skills include the sight-singing of melodies, identifying aural mistakes in performed music and dictating aural music examples. In this sense, singing will be an expectation in daily class routines, but the students will not be assessed or critiqued on the quality of the singing voice.

Preparation:

Students need to master the following concepts **before** our first day of class:

- Musical staff and note names for both treble and bass clef (including ledger lines)
- Understanding of piano keyboard—both white and black keys with enharmonic names.
- Basic rhythms including whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth and dotted variations (including rest equivalents)
- Basic music symbols for dynamics, tempos, repeats, etc.
- Time signatures in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8 etc.
- Full understanding of major scales

To be prepared, many web-based sites can offer a thorough review of the concepts listed above.

I would recommend visiting the following:

- www.musictheory.net :Select drop down menu “lessons” and **read the first 9 lessons down to “major scales”** (students should do this prior to the first day of class); you also **MUST** be familiar with the notes on the piano keyboard—you may need to research this on your own if you are not familiar with the instrument. It may be helpful to practice on the “keyboard trainer” under “trainers” on the musictheory.net site.
- http://musictheoryresources.com/members/FA_TOC.htm : This site goes into depth on concepts that will be covered in class. Really, this is a good site to use as a study aid during the class)

ASSIGNMENT:

On www.musictheory.net, you must complete:

- 1) Under “trainers,” select “**Note Trainer**”; go to “settings” and click on the bass clef to enable it. Click “settings” again and then **complete 30 questions** on notes in the treble and bass clefs. When you have done 30 of these, please use your web-browser’s print command to print a copy of your score.
- 2) Under “trainers,” select “**Keyboard Trainer**” and **complete 20 questions** and print as above.
- 3) Under “trainers,” select “**Key Trainer**” and **complete 30 questions**. When you have done 30 of these, please use your web-browser’s print command to print a copy of your score.

You may do these “trainers” as many times as you wish to get the score you desire—it **will be your first quiz grade** and it will be due when we return after the summer; please bring it to me and introduce yourself on the first day of school!

Feel free to contact me with any questions!

Brad Bensen