



*AP Music Theory Curriculum Survey
Spring 2004*

The following is a report of the results of the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) Music Theory curriculum survey, followed by a list of participating institutions. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact one of the consultants for AP Music Theory listed below.

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AP Music Theory Curriculum Survey: Methodology

The AP Music Theory Test Development Committee periodically surveys the music theory departments of various colleges and universities to gather information about the topics covered in first-year music theory courses, and to ensure that the AP Music Theory Exam and course outline reflect current trends in theory pedagogy. In order to do this, the Committee developed an online curriculum survey for distribution in the spring semester of 2004.

To encourage responses to the online survey, an e-mail invitation message from Jane Clendinning, the Chair of the Committee, was sent in April 2004 to 333 college instructors identified as teaching first year courses in music theory. Invited instructors included faculty from the top 250 receiving schools for AP Music Theory grade reports, all approved college readers for the AP Music Theory Exam, and instructors at approximately 20 additional schools that were added to the sample in order to ensure a diversity of school type, size, and location. A follow-up reminder was sent during the first week of June 2004 to instructors who had not responded to the initial invitation. A total of 112 instructors representing 101 colleges and universities responded to the survey by June 30, 2004. The list of participating schools is found at the end of this report. Results from the survey are presented in the order of the questionnaire. Selected comments and additional information from survey respondents is provided where appropriate.

1. How does your department organize the instruction of aural skills and written skills in your first-year theory curriculum?

Same course	25	22.9%
Separate courses	66	60.6%
Other	18	16.5%
Total	109	

Other comments by five or more respondents included: separate courses, but taken simultaneously; curricula linked together.

2. Please indicate whether your courses are organized by semesters, trimesters, or quarters.

Semesters	97	89.0%
Trimesters	5	4.6%
Quarters	7	6.4%
Total	109	

3. Please list your first-year courses in music theory and aural skills and indicate the number of credit hours for each.

The most common methods of organizing course curricula are shown below.

Separate Semester Courses for Aural Skills/Written Skills

	Aural Skills	Written Skills	Number of Colleges and Universities
Credits hours per semester course	1	3	24
	2	2	8
	1	2	8
	2	3	6
	3	3	4
Other			5
TOTAL			55

(Note: Data are included above only for schools reporting semester course organization and for schools that did not indicate “Combined aural and written skills” or “Other” methods of organizing course curricular content. Data refer to credit hours awarded, not to contact hours in the classroom.)

Semester Courses Combining Aural Skills and Written Skills

	Combined Course	Number of Colleges and Universities
Credits hours per semester course	5	3
	4	5
	3	10
Other		2
TOTAL		30

(Note: Data are included above only for schools reporting semester course organization and for schools that did not indicate “Separate” aural and written skills classes or “Other” methods of organizing course curricular content. Data refer to credit hours awarded, not to contact hours in the classroom.)

4. Please list the texts, materials, and software used to teach aural skills and aural analysis in your first-year theory curriculum. (NOTE: Respondents could list more than one text.)

Texts and/or authors listed by five or more respondents:

- Benjamin, Horvit, Nelson: Music for Sight-Singing
- Benward and Kolosick: Ear Training: A Technique for Listening
- Berkowitz, Frontier, and Kraft: A New Approach to Sight Singing
- Damschroder: Listen and Sing
- Hall: Studying Rhythm
- Horvit, Koozin, and Nelson: Music for Ear Training: CD-ROM and Workbook
- Ottman: Music for Sight-Singing

In addition to instructor-produced course materials, other authors cited included: Aldwell and Schachter, Bach: Chorales, Benward and Carr, Burkhart, Damschroder, Duckworth, Durham, Edlund, Francoli, Frackenpohl, Gauldin, Karpinski, Kostka and Payne, Laitz, Lefkowitz, McHose, Starer, Stevenson and Porterfield.

Software used to teach aural skills and aural analysis listed by five or more respondents included:

- Auralia
- Benward: Ear Training text software
- Benward and Kolosick: CD packaged with text
- Instructor-produced materials or departmental Web site
- Horvit, Koozin and Nelson: Ear-Training text CD
- MacGamut
- Practica Musica
- None

Materials used to teach aural skills and aural analysis listed by five or more respondents included:

- Instructor or Departmental Web site
- Instructor or Departmental handouts, course packs, exercises on CD, anthologies

5. Please list the texts, materials, and software used to teach written skills and written analysis in your first-year theory curriculum.

Texts listed by five or more respondents included:

- Aldwell and Schachter: Harmony and Voice Leading
- Benward and Saker: Music in Theory and Practice
- Burkhart: Anthology for Music Analysis
- Kostka and Payne: Tonal Harmony
- Laitz: The Complete Musician
- Turek: Elements of Music Vol. 1

Other authors listed included texts by Arlin, Benjamin, Horvit, and Nelson; Duckworth; Fux; Gauldin; Harder; Houlahan and Tacka; Kennan; Melcher, March, and Mast; Merryman, Nelson, Roig-Francoli, Salzer and Schachter; Spencer; Spencer and Temko; Turek.

Materials listed by five or more respondents included:

- Burkhart: Anthology
- Instructor Homework packets/Handouts/Coursepacks or Departmental Web site
- Workbooks that accompany texts

Other materials listed included materials such as books written by: Benjamin, Horvit, and Nelson (Anthology); Murphy, Melcher and Mast; Harder: Basic Materials in Music Theory; Clough and Conley: Basic Harmonic Progressions; Norton Recordings.

Software that was listed more than five times included:

- Finale
- None

Other software that was listed included Blackboard, MacGamut, Musition, Performer, Practica Musica, Sibelius, and department- or instructor-developed software.

6. Please check the relative importance of the following topics in your first-year theory and/or aural skills course(s).

Basic Terminology and Notational Skills

Clefs and pitch notation

Emphasized	82	77.4%
Included	19	17.9%
Not included	5	4.7%
Total	106	

Key signatures, scales, and modes

Emphasized	89	84.0%
Included	15	14.2%
Not included	2	1.9%
Total	106	

Rhythmic and metric notation

Emphasized	73	68.9%
Included	31	29.2%
Not included	2	1.9%
Total	106	

Intervals and chords

Emphasized	94	89.5%
Included	9	8.6%
Not included	2	1.9%
Total	105	

Written transposition skills

Emphasized	19	18.1%
Included	63	60.0%
Not included	23	21.9%
Total	105	

Other topics that were provided by five or more respondents included: Music Notation Fundamentals and Notation Software (e.g., Finale, Sibelius)

Other topics related to basic terminology and notation skills provided by at least one respondent included: “foreign terms (tempo),” “lead sheet symbols,” and “transposition by clef and instrument.”

Writing Skills

Four-part realizations of Roman numerals

Emphasized	87	81.3%
Included	15	14.0%
Not included	5	4.7%
Total	107	

Four-part realizations of figured-bass symbols

Emphasized	91	85.0%
Included	12	11.2%
Not included	4	3.7%
Total	107	

Harmonization of a given melody

Emphasized	60	57.1%
Included	44	41.9%
Not included	1	1.0%
Total	105	

Two-voiced tonal counterpoint in 18th-century style

Emphasized	16	15.4%
Included	27	26.0%
Not included	61	58.7%
Total	104	

Writing a melody to specifications

Emphasized	24	23.1%
Included	59	56.7%
Not included	21	20.2%
Total	104	

Composing a melody for a given text

Emphasized	6	5.8%
Included	29	28.2%
Not included	68	66.0%
Total	103	

Original composition

Emphasized	24	22.6%
Included	50	47.2%
Not included	32	30.2%
Total	106	

Orchestration

Emphasized	1	1.0%
Included	20	19.6%
Not included	81	79.4%
Total	102	

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Species counterpoint

Emphasized	24	23.8%
Included	24	23.8%
Not included	53	52.5%
<i>Total</i>	101	

Other topics that were provided by respondents included: 3-part writing; blues; realizing a chord chart; composing 4-voice settings of text; four-part realizations of unfigured bass lines; voice-leading for keyboard/keyboard arranging; prose writing (papers, essays); Roman numeral analysis of tonal literature; formal analysis (category could include ABA, rounded binary, sentence, period, binary, ternary, rondo); secondary dominants; tonicization/modulation; acceptable chord progressions; Neapolitan, augmented 6th chords and realization of partwriting in string quartet scores.

Keyboard Skills

Keyboard harmony

Emphasized	45	44.1%
Included	21	20.6%
Not included	36	35.3%
<i>Total</i>	102	

Realization of figured bass

Emphasized	21	21.0%
Included	25	25.0%
Not included	54	54.0%
<i>Total</i>	100	

Melody harmonizations

Emphasized	20	20.6%
Included	31	32.0%
Not included	46	47.4%
<i>Total</i>	97	

Improvisation

Emphasized	7	7.4%
Included	27	28.7%
Not included	60	63.8%
<i>Total</i>	94	

Other comments related to keyboard skills provided by respondents included: score reading, 1-octave scales, realizing simple lead sheets, and sightreading.

Score Analysis

Identification of key centers and relationships

Emphasized	85	80.2%
Included	18	17.0%
Not included	3	2.8%
Total	106	

Harmonic procedures

Emphasized	88	84.6%
Included	13	12.5%
Not included	3	2.9%
Total	104	

Roman numeral and figured-bass analysis

Emphasized	95	88.8%
Included	11	10.3%
Not included	1	0.9%
Total	107	

Identification of cadence types

Emphasized	98	91.6%
Included	9	8.4%
Not included	0	0%
Total	107	

Non-harmonic tones

Emphasized	91	85.0%
Included	14	13.1%
Not included	2	1.9%
Total	107	

Seventh chords

Emphasized	90	84.9%
Included	16	15.1%
Not included	0	0%
Total	126	

Secondary dominants

Emphasized	67	63.2%
Included	20	18.9%
Not included	19	17.9%
Total	106	

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Melodic organization and development	Emphasized	48	45.7%
	Included	50	47.6%
	Not included	7	6.7%
	Total	105	
Rhythmic/metric organization and devices	Emphasized	34	32.7%
	Included	63	60.6%
	Not included	7	6.7%
	Total	104	
Texture types and devices	Emphasized	23	21.9%
	Included	62	59.0%
	Not included	20	19.0%
	Total	105	
Formal devices and procedures	Emphasized	38	35.8%
	Included	53	50.0%
	Not included	15	14.2%
	Total	106	
Large-scale forms	Emphasized	21	20.8%
	Included	25	24.8%
	Not included	55	54.5%
	Total	101	
Schenkerian analysis	Emphasized	0	0%
	Included	28	27.7%
	Not included	73	72.3%
	Total	101	
20th-century techniques	Emphasized	1	1.0%
	Included	8	7.9%
	Not included	92	91.1%
	Total	101	

Other topics related to score analysis provided by respondents included: binary and ternary form, introduction to pre-tonal music and some non-western music, modal mixture, and other chromatic harmonies (augmented 6th and Neapolitan chords).

Aural Skills

Identification of discrete pitch and rhythm patterns

Emphasized	78	75.7%
Included	24	23.3%
Not included	1	1.0%
Total	103	

Melodic dictation

Emphasized	95	90.5%
Included	10	9.5%
Not included	0	0%
Total	105	

Harmonic dictation

Emphasized	87	83.7%
Included	12	11.5%
Not included	5	4.8%
Total	104	

Rhythmic dictation

Emphasized	77	74.0%
Included	25	24.0%
Not included	2	1.9%
Total	104	

Sight-singing

Emphasized	93	88.6%
Included	10	9.5%
Not included	2	1.9%
Total	105	

Solfège (fixed Do)

Emphasized	14	14.9%
Included	9	9.6%
Not included	71	75.5%
Total	94	

Solfège (movable Do)

Emphasized	62	62.6%
Included	14	14.1%
Not included	23	23.2%
Total	99	

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Solfège (scale degree numbers)

Emphasized	36	37.5%
Included	21	21.9%
Not included	39	40.6%
Total	96	

Recognition of errors in performance

Emphasized	25	25.0%
Included	56	56.0%
Not included	19	19.0%
Total	100	

Identification of musical processes and materials in the context of hearing music literature

Emphasized	25	25.5%
Included	51	52.0%
Not included	22	22.4%
Total	98	

If you indicated “included” or “emphasized” in response to Aural Skills, please check the relative importance of the following:

Melodic organization

Emphasized	60	62.5%
Included	35	36.5%
Not included	1	1.0%
Total	96	

Harmonic organization

Emphasized	66	68.8%
Included	27	28.1%
Not included	3	3.1%
Total	96	

Tonal organization

Emphasized	54	56.8%
Included	32	33.7%
Not included	9	9.5%
Total	95	

Meter and rhythmic patterns

Emphasized	54	56.3%
Included	41	42.7%
Not included	1	1.0%
Total	96	

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Instrumentation

Emphasized	4	4.3%
Included	29	30.9%
Not included	61	64.9%
Total	94	

Texture

Emphasized	8	8.5%
Included	46	48.9%
Not included	40	42.6%
Total	94	

Formal procedure

Emphasized	17	18.3%
Included	42	45.2%
Not included	34	36.6%
Total	93	

Other listening skills that were listed by respondents included: harmonic rhythm, 2-voice tonal counterpoint, articulation, hearing nonharmonic tones, performing/singing back after hearing, reduction (large scale organization), two-part dictation, cadence types, "cadence" chords, and 2-voice rhythmic dictation.

7. Please indicate the relative emphasis given in your first-year theory curriculum to music of the following types:

Medieval and Renaissance

Emphasized	6	5.7%
Included	41	39.0%
Not included	58	55.2%
Total	105	

Baroque

Emphasized	72	67.3%
Included	33	30.8%
Not included	2	1.9%
Total	107	

Classical

Emphasized	83	79.0%
Included	22	21.0%
Not included	0	0%
Total	105	

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Romantic	Emphasized	42	40.4%
	Included	50	48.1%
	Not included	12	11.5%
	Total	104	
Twentieth century through present	Emphasized	2	2.0%
	Included	26	25.5%
	Not included	74	72.5%
	Total	102	
Jazz	Emphasized	1	1.0%
	Included	53	52.0%
	Not included	48	47.1%
	Total	102	
Pop or Rock	Emphasized	4	4.0%
	Included	50	50.0%
	Not included	46	46.0%
	Total	100	
Non-western	Emphasized	2	2.0%
	Included	12	12.1%
	Not included	85	85.9%
	Total	99	

8. How appropriate are AP sample questions for your first-year theory course?

Multiple-choice questions with aural stimulus	Very Appropriate	50	54.9%
	Somewhat Appropriate	31	34.1%
	Not Very Appropriate	10	11.0%
	Total	91	
Multiple-choice questions with non-aural stimulus	Very Appropriate	50	54.3%
	Somewhat Appropriate	29	31.5%
	Not Very Appropriate	13	14.1%
	Total	92	

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Written free-response questions

Very Appropriate	63	68.5%
Somewhat Appropriate	22	23.9%
Not Very Appropriate	7	7.6%
<i>Total</i>	92	

Sight-singing questions

Very Appropriate	61	67.8%
Somewhat Appropriate	24	26.7%
Not Very Appropriate	5	5.6%
<i>Total</i>	90	

9. Comments on the AP Music Theory course and Exam are welcome. Please include any comments you may have regarding this questionnaire.

A sample of comments is provided below:

- “I have found that students scoring a 3 or above are well prepared for the written theory courses, but not for the aural course. Their dictation skills are quite good, but sight-singing tends to be poor. I am not convinced that sight-singing is necessary.”
- “It is very rare for [a] student to bypass all first year on AP alone. I’m happy if they avoid Fundamentals and thrilled if they bypass Harmony I. I wonder if there are ways to cover less, but w/ more skill building, depth, inquiry?”
- “It is well conceived and challenging. I use sample questions with my class. I particularly like the “real music” examples included in the listening section.”
- “Needs 2-part species counterpoint”
- “Basically AP Theory classes try to include too much information. Students need more solid grounding in basics. Sometimes they do not really KNOW key signatures and chord quality, etc. Drill!”
- “The exam asks for a good amount of 2nd year information. I was surprised to see that.”
- “Some of the multiple-choice questions are far beyond the difficulty of material covered in our first year.”
- “Sight singing examples are somewhat below the level of the final exam for 2nd semester (end of Berkowitz Unit 2). It is the weakness of the sight singing (esp. when compared to the levels expected on other parts of the exam) that has been discouraging.”
- “Exam seems entirely reasonable”

10. For students majoring or minoring in music at your institution, is there a specific policy for granting credit and/or placement related to the overall grade or subscore grades on the AP Music Theory Exam?

Yes	54	51.9%
No	50	48.1%
Total	104	

Editor's note: In the fall of 2004, the College Board established an online tool that provides links to credit and placement information at many colleges and universities for all AP subjects, including AP Music Theory. The URL for the online placement tool is <http://www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy/>.

11. If you answered yes, please describe that policy below.

AP Music Aural Subscore Grade, Nonaural Subscore Grade (Responses have been grouped together)

A variety of policies were provided by respondents, including:

- Credit for all students for first semester aural or nonaural skills class with an aural or nonaural subscore grade of 4 or 5.
- No credit given for work on AP (students must pass departmental examination for placement or credit).
- No credit given for work on AP (all students must start the theory program with the first semester course sequence).
- Music majors with a 4 or 5 allowed to take departmental test for placement or credit; nonmajors or music minors receive credit for a subscore grade of 4 or 5.
- Students who receive subscore grades of 4 or 5 can automatically place into the second semester aural/nonaural course; students who receive a 5 can choose to take a placement examination to determine whether they can place into the sophomore level course.
- Students must take departmental placement examinations regardless of how they scored on AP; however, the school gives graduation course credits to students who have a 4 or higher on AP.
- Students scoring 4 or 5 are eligible for placement into the honors sequence.
- Students with aural/nonaural subscore grades of 4 or higher are exempted from the music fundamentals course.
- AP Music Theory credits do not count toward the major; students may count the credits granted by the university as elective credit.

AP Music Overall (Composite) Grade

A variety of policies were provided by respondents, including:

- A composite grade of 3 or higher exempts students from the first semester course sequence.
- A composite grade of 5 exempts the first semester courses in written and aural skills.
- AP credit is not accepted for course placement or credit.
- A grade of 4 or 5 waives the first semester courses.
- A grade of 4 or 5 waives the first semester written theory course; exemption from the aural skills course is based on departmental examination.
- Students are placed in courses based on departmental examinations. Students with an AP composite of 3 or higher who pass departmental examinations are also given course credits toward graduation.
- An AP score of 3 or higher gives credit for a one-semester “Music for Nonmajors” course.

12. Has your department kept any records or done any special studies on the progress of AP Music Theory students in your program?

Yes	9	8.5%
No	97	91.5%
<i>Total</i>	106	

13. For students NOT majoring or minoring in music at your institution, is there a specific policy for granting general humanities, fine arts, or liberal studies credits for the overall grade on the AP Music Theory Exam?

Yes	30	31.3%
No	66	68.8%
<i>Total</i>	96	



Participating Colleges and Universities

Abilene Christian University
Appalachian State University
Arizona State University
Auburn University
Austin College
Baylor University
Belmont University
Binghamton University
Bowling Green State University
Brigham Young University
Brigham Young University-Idaho
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
Carleton College
Carnegie Mellon University
Clark Atlanta University
Clemson University
Cleveland Institute of Music
Columbia University
Columbus State University
Converse College
Dallas Baptist University
Dartmouth College
Drake University
Emory University
Florida State University
George Mason University
Hampton University
Harding University
Harvard University
Indiana State University
Indiana University
Ithaca College
James Madison University
Johns Hopkins University- Peabody Conservatory of Music
Lawrence University
Lebanon Valley College
Luther College
Macalester College
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Millersville University
North Carolina School of the Arts
Northeastern University
Northwestern University
Oberlin College Conservatory
Ocean County College, New Jersey
Oklahoma City University
Oklahoma State University
Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Reed College
Rice University
Roosevelt University
Rutgers University
Scripps College
Southern Methodist University
Southwest Missouri State University
State University of New York College at Oneonta
Stephen F. Austin State University
Stetson University
SUNY Potsdam - Crane School of Music
Texas Tech University
The College of New Jersey
Tufts University
Tulane University
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music
University of Dayton
University of Houston
University of Iowa
University of Kansas
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
University of Maryland
University of Massachusetts

University of Miami (Florida)
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of Missouri-Columbia
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina-Greensboro
University of Oklahoma
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Puget Sound
*University of Rochester Eastman School of
Music*
University of South Florida
University of Southern Mississippi
University of Tulsa
University of Utah
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Utah Valley State College
Valdosta State University
Virginia Commonwealth University
Wesleyan College
West Virginia University
Yale University