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WELCOME TO MUSIC THEORY/YOUR GOAL

You are here because you are curious about how music “works.” This could be for a variety of reasons – you are an aspiring songwriter, you play in a band, you are an instrumentalist looking for ways to understand your material more clearly, you are a singer who wants to get ear training in order to learn your material more efficiently, you are a musician who plays only “by ear” and wants to be able to read and write the musical language, you are a composer who wants to learn how to arrange or orchestrate – the list could go on and on.

Take a moment and write your musical aspiration—your “goal” in taking this class, in the space below.

Now, think for a moment about how great it will feel to achieve that goal.

This paper will go in your 3-ring binder. Whenever you are doing an assignment or project for this class and you begin to feel the material is frustrating/meaningless/tedious/boring/difficult, or you simply forget why you signed on for this in the first place, look back at this piece of paper, and at what you wrote. Take a minute to remember what you are doing and why. *Renew your faith in the process of learning.* Then do your assignment to the best of your ability.

GRADING

If you are in this class simply because you are looking for an “easy A,” then I am sorry to disappoint you. You will be required to work on a daily basis. HOWEVER, this work is carefully designed to be very manageable.

If you do what I assign *when I assign it*, you are much more likely to feel confident that you understand everything we cover. Assume that all tests, quizzes, projects and homeworks are CUMULATIVE!

Your marking period grade will be determined as follows:

Quizzes (25%)

I assess your reading assignments by giving frequent, short quizzes. These quizzes are not announced, but you can count on them to happen the day after a reading assignment.

Reading assignments are usually two or three pages, and never longer than four.

Also, these very short reading assignments are never given on the same night as a written homework. The quizzes almost always come from the “Try It” activities in your textbook.

In this course we cover roughly the first 150 pages of the textbook (up through Chapter 8).

BIG HINT: If you do the assigned reading on the night it is assigned, and you do the “Try It” activities for yourself when reading, you are practically guaranteed to ace the quizzes!

BIG HINT #2: Take a really good look around your theory textbook because it offers A LOT of additional help! (The preface especially, though it mentions a workbook we will not be using.)

Homework (25%)

Your assignments will typically alternate between reading on one night and written work the next.

Written homework assignments are never longer than one double-sided page.

Written homework is typically graded as Complete or Incomplete and handed back the next school day to give you feedback on your understanding of the material. **It is your responsibility to seek extra help PROMPTLY if you do not understand an assignment!**

Composition Projects (25%)

For every Textbook chapter we cover, we will have at least one Composition Project that you will complete and perform in class. These are very important because they show me (but more importantly, **you**) that you truly understand the material covered.

Tests (25%)

Tests are scheduled at the conclusion of each chapter. There will always be at least one review period before the test. *If you did the readings, the homework, and the composition, working out any problems along the way, then you should be well prepared for the test.*

Make a personal commitment right now to do your best. Remember the goal you wrote down. You can do this!

EXPECTATIONS

I think my expectations of you are straightforward and reasonable, and I hope you will agree.

You are expected to:

Come to class prepared and on time.

Behave appropriately in class.

Work well with others AND independently.

Show respect to your classmates and your teacher.

Complete homework assignments.

Actively participate in the classroom. This includes asking questions, giving answers when asked, taking notes, participating in discussions and group projects, and completing any assigned class work.

Follow school policies. (See Student Handbook.)

Follow the Student Honor Code (see Student Handbook) and avoid any forms of academic dishonesty including copying assignments and cheating on tests.

Incidents of academic dishonesty, even if minor, are taken seriously and are grounds for removal from the course.

MATERIALS

-- Textbook: Clendinning, Jane Piper, and Elizabeth West Marvin. 2005. *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis, with 3-CD Anthology*. New York: W. W. Norton.

-- 3-ring binder

-- Access to a piano or keyboard for home practice is strongly advised. Please see me if you do not have a keyboard and I will try to help.

Every day each student should bring:

their 3-ring binder, and

a Pencil (NOT pen -- you will be erasing and correcting yourself frequently!)

Your textbook will stay at home where you will do your reading assignments. You are responsible for returning the textbook and 3-cd set in good condition at the end of the school year. (You may want to "rip" the CD's for your personal use and return them immediately so you have fewer things to lose!)

Although not graded, the 3-ring binder is required and should come with you every day. This paper will go into it first (after handing in the last page signed). I will have music manuscript paper on hand for notes and in-class work; you will keep these in your binder. All quizzes and homework will be 3-hole punched as well. Simply putting each new thing on top should keep you sufficiently organized.

ABSENCE AND LATENESS

When a student is absent, he/she is expected to make up any missed work and is responsible for any material covered. The student will be expected to get the notes for the missed lesson(s) from a classmate. Homework assigned the day of the absence should be completed the day following the student's return to class. Homework that was due on the day of the absence is due the day the student returns to class.

If a student is/will be absent for an extended period of time, arrangements can be made for the student to receive the assignments at home.

If a student is absent during a test or quiz, he/she must make up the test or quiz promptly. Most of the time, the student will be expected to take the test on the day of returning to class. The student is responsible for seeing me about any work that must be made up.

A student is considered late to class when arriving without a pass after the bell has rung.

CONTACTING ME

If you have any questions for me or there are any matters you would like to discuss, now or any time throughout the year, feel free to speak with me outside of class time or email me at andpfa@bergen.org.

This invitation also extends to your parents and/or guardians, who are encouraged to contact me at any time. They may also contact me by phone at (201) 343-6000 xt 5148.

MY GOAL

You will recall that you were asked to write down your aspiration or goal in taking this class. You were asked to think about just what it is you hope to accomplish by being here and studying music theory.

As your music theory teacher, I have a goal too. My goal is to provide each of you with the clearest possible pathway to an understanding of music that allows you to do *whatever you want with it*. The lessons, plans, assignments and projects have all been designed with this pathway in mind.

I know from personal experience that if you thoroughly master the fundamentals of music presented in this course, you can learn anything else in music that you wish to know. I want to inspire you to work for the solid foundation upon which you build the rest of your musical life, whatever it may hold.

Good luck!

Mr. Pfaff

BY SIGNING BELOW, YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING:

I have received and read the information given to me by my teacher. This includes student expectations, the grading policy, and the materials needed. I understand the policies explained by my teacher. I have also shown this material to my parent / guardian.

STUDENT INFORMATION -- Please fill out and return this page. The other pages will stay in your binder.

Students name

Students signature

Parent or Guardians name(s)

Parent or Guardians signature

Hometown / Sending district

Mailing Address

Home phone number

Best Time to Call

Daytime phone number

Best Time to Call

Parent / Guardians Email address(es)
