

Syllabus Rationale

Although the text is not ideal, and not the one I would use for classes, this is the text I use for teaching MUS 1001 at the University of Minnesota. I have changed the order in which concepts are introduced to cater to what works best for me as a teacher, and would use a text book to cater to this ordering. I may even consider writing my own text book as my music theory teacher during my undergrad career did the same thing.

The syllabus begins with introducing the basic vocabulary of music (which fulfills the first goal of the course). Learning a new language, one must learn the alphabet and where the letters go on a page, as does musical notes. From there the students will learn how to construct scales, the next building block. From there they learn the key signatures which allow the students to construct scales in all 12 keys. The students learn intervals followed by triads, the source of chords. These chords are the basis of all music. Each week while the students learn material in class, they can use the material hands-on by playing exercises on the keyboard. They also practice singing and counting rhythms (fulfills goals number 2 and 3).

As the course progresses examples of music from all genres, classical to rock will be played so the students can also hear how the theory is put into practice by other musicians and composers (fulfills goal number 4). Three exams (the last one being cumulative) is the choice so students will not have yet another midterm during spring break. Instead the exams are a few weeks before and after; now they can focus on other courses when life is the busiest.

Sample Learning Tool

Below is a lesson plan from a given week which outlines the objectives and a lesson plan that organizes how the objectives will be introduced.

WEEK 9 (Mar 22, 24)

Topic/Goals: Construction of Chords in Root Position and First Inversion, Sixteenth notes in simple and compound meter/rests

Reading: Chapter 8

Due: Chapter 7 Homework, Quiz #5

Lecture Notes- Class 7

- I. Staff Layout
 - A. Sixteenth notes
 - B. Counting subdivision
 - C. Dotted eighth sixteenth notes
 - D. Sixteenth and dotted eighth rest
- II. Harmonic Material
 - A. Making Chords
 - 1. Derived from triads
 - 2. Four notes like four part harmony
 - 3. Soprano, alto, tenor, bass
 - 4. One note must be doubled, usually is the root
 - 5. Intervals become greater than an octave (compound vs simple interval)
 - 6. Chords have function names (tonic, subdominant etc)
 - B. Root Position Chords
 - 1. Bottom note, the bass is the root of the chord
 - 2. parent triad- the triad the chord comes from
 - 3. Figured Bass- determines what kind of chord you have if given just the bass.
 - 1. Helps figure out what kind of chord it is
 - 2. Each type of chord has different figured bass (5/3 for root position chords)
 - 3. Figured Bass numbers are based on the intervals relative to the bass note (reduced to its lowest octave form).
 - 4. Read Page 154- defines root vs bass very well. This is IMPORTANT.
 - 5. Guitar Tabs rock music → equivalent of figured bass in the rock world.
 - C. Rules on Doubling/Voicing
 - 1. Doubling the root is first choice, but depending on the circumstance the third or fifth may be doubled.
 - 2. V Chord- cannot double the third (because it is the leading tone)

3. vii chord, the third is the only note that can be doubled. (will explain why later, but is in the reading).
4. The three upper voices cannot be more than an octave apart from its adjacent interval (tenor→ alto, alto→ soprano etc), but tenor to bass can (and usually needs to be) more than an octave. Three upper voices need to be within an octave for performance practice.
5. Given roman numeral and key, make the triads and derive the chord from there.
6. Look at guitar tabs with students. Determine chords from the tabs → explain how this connects with figured bass.

Lesson Plan Rationale

During this unit the objectives will include the introduction of chords, which stem from a triad in music. This is the first point in the course where students have the skills to do basic analysis of a piece of music. The students are introduced to chords in root position (where the root is the bass or bottom note of the chord) and first inversion (where the third of the chord is the bass or bottom note). Most songs in pop music use these two types of chords exclusively and classical tonal music uses these chords quite often.

The goal of this unit is to not only test whether or not the student can construct the chords, but can also look at a piece of music and write out the chords when given some basic information. Tonal music uses a series of numbers known as Figured Bass to determine the type of chord that is to be played. Rock music uses a deviation of this called Tablature. If the student has learned the material, he or she will be able to write the chords out in the music. I will write a sample chord progression and discuss with the students what notes belong in each chord as a precursor to the assessment tool.

Assessment and Rationale

Below is an assignment that the students will be given to evaluate how well they grasped the concepts taught during week nine. They may work in pairs or groups of three and will use manuscript paper to write a four part chord progression based on the guitar tabs given. After a given amount of time the students will report their answers to the rest of the class. They may find there is more than one way to stack the chords and multiple answers will be welcomed.

The next page contains the lyrics and tabs for the song *Hallelujah* by Leonard Cohen. Construct the root position chords using good voice leading on some manuscript paper.

<p>C C am Well I heard there was a secret chord C C am That David played and it pleased please the Lord F G C G But you don't really care for music, do ya C F E Well it goes like this, the fourth, the fifth am F The minor fall and the major lift G E am</p> <p>The baffled king composes Hallelujah</p> <p>REF:F Am F C G C G Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah Hallelujah</p> <p>C C am Well your faith was strong, but you needed proof C C am You saw her bathing on the roof F G C G Her beauty in the moonlight overthrew ya C F E She tied you to her kitchen chair AM F And she broke your throne, and she cut your hair G E AM And from your lips you drew Hallelujah</p> <p>REF: C C am Well baby I've been here before C C am I've seen this room and I've walked this floor, you know F G C G I used to live alone before I knew ya C F E And I've seen your flag on the marble arch AM F And love is not a victory march G E AM It's a cold and it's a broken Hallelujah</p>	<p>C C am Well the was a time when you let me know C C am What's really going on below F G C G But now you never show that to me do ya C F E But remember when I moved in you AM F And the Holy Dove was moving too G E AM And every breath we drew was Hallelujah</p> <p>REF: C c am Maybe there's a God above C c am But all I have ever learned from love F G C G Was how to shoot somebody who outdrew ya C F E And it's not a cry that you hear at night AM F It's not somebody who's seen the light G E AM It's a cold and it's a broken Hallelujah</p>
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