

Music Theory I (MUS 215)  
Binghamton University  
Fall 2009  
MWF, 12-1 P.M., FA-27

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Music Theory I is designed for music majors and minors. It does not count towards Gen Ed "A" requirements (Aesthetic Perspective). Musicianship is a co-requisite: everyone in this class should also be taking Musicianship I (MUS 216) this semester.

### Text

Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne, *Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (McGraw-Hill). Students will also need the accompanying *Workbook for Tonal Harmony*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., which will be the source of most of the graded assignments.

The new 6<sup>th</sup> edition differs substantially from previous versions of this textbook, so please do not substitute another edition. Students will also need a supply of music manuscript paper, and manuscript paper should be brought to every class. Course work should be done in pencil.

### Learning Objectives

In a very real sense Theory I is the gateway to the music department: students passing through it should become equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for future study in the field of music. The course aims to provide a beginning understanding of how classical music "works" through a systematic exploration of pitch, notation, scales, key signatures, intervals, rhythms, meter, beat, tempo, time signatures, triads, seventh chords, inversions, figured bass, voice leading, part writing, and the rudiments of orchestration. Familiarity with these topics is to be gained through readings, lectures, written exercises, and optional computer-related instruction. Students should constantly strive to relate the concepts they are learning in class to the actual music they are studying in their lessons and rehearsing and performing in the course of their practical work as musicians.

### MIDI Lab

Students in this class will have the opportunity to use the music department's MIDI Lab (FA-146), where it will be possible to work with the program *Practica Musica* for individual practice in ear training and musicianship. An introduction to this resource will be given during the first few weeks of class.

### Attendance

In Theory I each aspect of the course builds on prior work. It will not be possible to miss one part of the course and then start afresh later. Attendance is expected at every class.

Students should be aware of Binghamton University attendance policies as set forth in the bulletin: "Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and laboratories. An instructor may deny a student the privilege of taking the final examination or of receiving credit for the course, or may prescribe other academic penalties, if the student misses more than 25 percent of the total class sessions. Excessive tardiness may count as absence. In cases of excessive absence, the instructor may request the appropriate academic advising office to investigate."

The specific attendance policy for this course will be as follows: Attendance will be carefully taken at the beginning of every class. Four absences over the course of the semester will be overlooked, but beginning with a student's fifth absence, his or her final grade will be lowered by a letter grade for every absence: A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-.

### Grading

Theory I is a subject that lends itself to frequent exercises. Therefore, written assignments will be due most weeks, usually on Friday. These are expected to be turned in on time (late assignments cannot be accepted) and will be returned promptly, usually the following Monday. These weekly assignments will be graded and will count for 50% of the final grade. There will also be three examinations, two during the course of the semester, and a cumulative final during finals week. The first two exams together will count for 25% of the grade. The final will count for 25% of the total grade for the semester.

Numerical grades will be translated as follows:

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| 92-100=A   | 78-79.9=C+ |
| 90-91.9=A- | 72-77.9=C  |
| 88-89.9=B+ | 70-71.9=C- |
| 82-87.9=B  | 65-69.9=D  |
| 80-81.9=B- | below 65=F |

Be aware that the music department views the grade of D as passing but unsatisfactory. Therefore, a course in which a grade of D was received cannot be used to fulfill the requirements for the major or minor in music.

### Course Outline

Week One: 31 August—4 September

Chapter One: Elements of Pitch

Week Two: 7—11 September

N.B. No class 7 September (Labor Day), 11 September course add and drop/delete deadline

Continuation of Chapter One

Week Three: 14—18 September

N.B. 18 September classes recess at 1 P.M. (*after* our class).

Continuation of Chapter One

Week Four: 21—25 September

N.B. 21 September classes resume after Rosh Hashanah.

Continuation of Chapter One

Week Five: 28 September—2 October

N.B. No class 28 September (Yom Kippur); classes resume 29 September after Yom Kippur.

Chapter Two: Elements of Rhythm

TEST ONE 2 October

Week Six: 5—9 October

Continuation of Chapter Two

Week Seven: 12—16 October

Continuation of Chapter Two

Week Eight: 19—23 October

Chapter Three: Introduction to Triads and Seventh Chords

TEST TWO 23 October

Week Nine: 26—30 October

N.B. 30 October course withdraw (with a “W”) / Change grade option deadline

Chapter Four: Diatonic Chords in Major and Minor Keys

Week Ten: 2—6 November

Chapter Five: Principles of Voice Leading

Week Eleven: 9—13 November

Continuation of Chapter Five

Week Twelve: 16—20 November

Chapter Six: Root Position Part Writing

Week Thirteen: 23—27 November

N.B. 25 November classes recess at 1 P.M. (*after* our class).

No classes 26—30 November (Thanksgiving)

Continuation of Chapter Six

Week Fourteen: 30 November—4 December

Continuation of Chapter Six

Week Fifteen: 7—11 December

N.B. 11 December last day of classes

Continuation of Chapter Six and review

Our goal will be to complete Chapter 6, working through p. 102, and thereby prepared for Theory II next semester.

Final Examinations: 14—18 December

The Theory I final is scheduled for Tuesday, 15 December.

I LOOK FORWARD TO A GREAT SEMESTER WITH ALL OF YOU.