

## MUSI 251 - Harmony 1 - Required Objectives

The first harmony course focuses on the basics of tonal harmony, as it was commonly practiced in the classical and early romantic periods, while tying it with contemporary examples from pop/film music whenever possible. At the end, students should be able to understand and analyze pieces such as Bach's Prelude in C (WTC 1) or Mozart's Rondo Alla Turca. All material in the class should be examined both in writing exercises (4-parts figured bass) and analysis exercises.

Specific topics required to be covered:

- Voice leading rules of 4-part harmonization over a figured bass.
- Harmonization of a given soprano / melody, according to standard voice-leading principles
- Presentation of the *cycle* of 5<sup>ths</sup> as the core structure governing tonal harmonic progressions, and insistence on the functional role of the dominant in the tonal establishment.
- Presentation of the *circle* of 5<sup>ths</sup> and the way the 24 keys form an interrelated system.
- Structure of tonal major and minor modes. In particular, understanding the difference between the minor mode as a whole and the different minor scales, which are subsets of the mode (eg, no piece is in "minor harmonic"). Also, insistence that V in minor is always a major chord in its dominant function. The minor dominant (Vm) is very rare, usually only appears in harmonic sequences, in tonicization contexts, or as a passing harmony (between I and VI or I and IV usually).
- Triads in root position, 1<sup>st</sup> inversion and 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion. For 6/4 chords, presentation of standard passing, neighbor and appoggiatura forms, and insistence that these chords are ornamental and do not have an actual harmonic function (for example, the function of I 6/4 is V).
- Basic non-harmonic tones: passing, neighbor, suspension, appoggiatura, etc.
- Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chords, complete or incomplete, in all inversions.
- Using the diminished triad to introduce the distinction between structure (what the chord is in a void) and harmonic function (what role the chord plays based on its actual place in a harmonic progression). Understanding that the diminished triad (like VII in major), often acts functionally as a rootless dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord. For example, in a I-VII-I progression in, the apparent "root" of the diminished triad is actually the leading tone of the key, must resolve properly, must not be doubled, and the "apparent 5<sup>th</sup>" must follow the rules concerning resolution of 7<sup>ths</sup>. But in other cases, such as in a circle of fifths in major, I – IV – VII – III..., or in II in minor, the diminished triad is a normal triad, its root, even if its the leading tone, is usually doubled and does not have to resolve to the tonic, as its not functionally a dominant in this case.
- All secondary dominants in major and minor.
- Neapolitan degree. Usually presented in 1<sup>st</sup> inversion, but not always. Specify that N can be a secondary tonic, for example V/N – N.

- Mixed mode. Understanding how parallel modes can exchange chords since they share the same dominant. For example, an Eb chord in C major is IIIImm.
- Modulations to closely related keys. Presentation of basic modulation mechanisms: by imbrication (using a pivot chord, for modulations happening in a continuous way) or by juxtaposition (without a pivot chord, for modulations happening over a formal division, between two sentences, two sections, etc.).
- Understanding that, tonal harmony being goal-oriented, the tonality of an event is determined by its point of arrival, so in analysis, the modulation process usually starts the earliest possible moment, before becoming manifest to the ear.
- Illustration of tonal plans in short ABA forms.
- Non-modulating harmonic sequences. Understanding how harmonic sequences suspend the normal course of tonal progressions and replace it momentarily with the sequence repeating logic, allowing chord progressions that would be otherwise impossible. Diatonic and chromatic (with secondary dominants) sequences. Understanding also how sequences suspend some voice-leading rules.
- Non-dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chords (I7, II7, IV7...) in all inversions.
- Diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chords in all inversions. Understanding that the diminished 7<sup>th</sup> is usually functionally a minor V9 without a root.

Optional topics:

- “White-key” modal scales. These are studied in the first composition course, as well as in Aural Perception, but can be introduced here if time permits.