

||||| Pop & Rock Theory I |||||

12 – Week Course Outline

Textbook – SPINNING GOLD: A Musical Analysis of Pop & Rock, vol. 1

Week 1. Elements of Rhythm (Textbook Chapter 1)

- Locating and counting the beat with measures
- Note & rest values
- Time signatures 4/4, 3/4, 2/4
- The backbeat
- Sub-dividing the beat, 8th-note and 16th-note pulse.

PROJECT : Choose a song and analyze rhythmic elements.

WRITTEN EXERCISES 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

Week 2. Elements of Rhythm, continued

- Triplet 8th note pulse and 12/8 meter
- 6/8 meter
- 8th note and 16th note syncopation
- Swing 8ths & swing 16ths

QUIZ (Chapter 1)

Week 3.

Introduction to the Major Key (Text Chapter 2)

- Treble & bass clef pitches and notation
- The major scale and key signatures
- Triad chord formulas
- Diatonic triads & roman numerals
- Intro to tension/resolution and ear training
- Two-chord vamps
- Progressions with I, IV, V – root bass
- Major pentatonic scale
- Progressions with I, IV, V – active bass

PROJECT: Analysis of a I, IV, V song.

WRITTEN EXERCISES 2.1 – 2.13

Week 4.

Introduction to the Major Key, continued

- Circular major progression
- Adding occasional VI m chords
- Doowop I – VI m – IV – V
- Modern Rock progressions
- Signature riffs
- Dotted notes
- Songwriting focal points

QUIZ (Chapter 2)

Week 5.

Introduction to the Minor Key (Text Chapter 3)

- The minor scale
- Diatonic triads – minor key
- One-chord songs and minor pentatonic scale
- Two-chord vamps
- Progressions with I m, IVm, Vm
- Stair-step I m, bVII, bVI
- Stair-step with variations
- Signature riffs
- Songwriting focal points

PROJECT: Song with a repeated riff.

WRITTEN EXERCISES 3.1, 3.2

QUIZ (Chapter 3)

Week 6.

The Blues – Major meets Minor (Text Chapter 4)

- Origins of the blues
- Blue notes
- Vocal melisma
- Dominant 7th chords & the tritone
- Blues cover songs
- Importance of timbre

PROJECT: Blues cover that transforms the original.

- Blues scales and improvisation
- One-chord songs
- Two-chord vamp I 7 – IV7
- 12-bar blues form

WRITTEN EXERCISES 4.1 – 4.4

Week 7. The Blues, continued

- 12-bar variations
- 12-bar with stop time/refrain
- Non 12-bar songs in blues tonality
- Circular blues progression
- Boogie bass patterns
- Signature riffs
- Turnaround riffs
- Songwriting focal points

QUIZ (Chapter 4)

Week 8. Development of the Major Key (Text Chapter 5)

- II m – V – I progression
- Ascending I – III m – IV – (V)
- Other progressions with the III m chord
- Chord inversions
- Ascending I – I /3 – IV – (V)
- m7, maj7, m7b5 chord formulas
- Diatonic 7ths – major key
- Progressions with I maj7, IVmaj7
- Two-chord vamp I maj7 – II m7
- Descending bass progressions with inversions

PROJECT: Analysis of a major key song.

WRITTEN EXERCISES 5.1 – 5.3

Week 9. Development of the Major Key, continued

- Signature riffs
- sus2 chord
- sus4 chord
- Bass drone
- Treble drone 1 & 5
- Drone riffs
- Songwriting focal points

WRITTEN EXERCISE 5.4

QUIZ (Chapter 5)

Week 10. Development of the Minor Key (Text Chapter 6)

- The harmonic minor scale
- Harmonic minor V chord
- Stair-step progression descending to V
- Diatonic 7ths - natural minor key
- Progressions with bVI maj7
- Progressions with II m7b5

PROJECT: Analysis of a minor key song.

- Signature riffs
- sus2 and sus4 chord in minor key
- Drones in minor key
- Songwriting focal points

WRITTEN EXERCISES 6.1 – 6.4

QUIZ (Chapter 6)

Week 11.

Mixolydian Tonality (Text Chapter 7)

- The mixolydian scale
- Diatonic Triads and 7ths – mixolydian
- One-chord songs
- Two-chord vamp I – bVII
- I – bVII – IV progression
- Progressions with Vm (7)
- Progressions with V as major chord
- Circular mixolydian progression
- Signature riffs
- Drones in mixolydian
- Songwriting focal points

PROJECT: Analysis of a song with a strong focal point.

WRITTEN EXERCISES 7.1, 7.2

QUIZ (Chapter 7)

Week 12.

Dorian Tonality (Text Chapter 8)

- The dorian scale
- Diatonic Triads and 7ths – dorian
- One-chord songs
- Two-chord vamps
- I m – bVII – IV progression
- Dorian with V as major chord
- Circular dorian progression
- Signature riffs
- Drones in dorian
- Songwriting focal points

PROJECT : Analysis of a mixolydian or dorian song.

WRITTEN EXERCISES 8.1, 8.2

QUIZ (Chapter 8)