

Summary of K&P Tonal Harmony by Leon Couch

To help students “see the forest through the trees,” I’ve summarized the main points of each chapter from CH6 to CH27. I.e., the things you should know after taking two years of harmony.

FIRST-SEMESTER THEORY

CH1–CH5 Fundamentals

Won’t summarize this. Lots of vital skills needing to be detailed and practiced thoroughly.

CH6 Root-position Partwriting

(0. Use complete triads.)

1. Double the root (bass) of root-position chords, except $V \rightarrow vi$ where may double the tonic.
2. Move voices as little as possible (by step or repeated note, whenever possible).
3. When bass moves by step, upper voices move contrary motion to avoid parallels.
4. If LT is in the outer voice, it must resolve by step.

CH7 Harmonic Progression

1. Memorize progression charts, described below.
2. Harmonic progression based on progression by fifths with chord substitutions, e.g., IV for ii, vii^{o6} for V.
3. Exceptions include (a) deceptive motions $V \rightarrow vi$, $V \rightarrow IV^6$, (b) plagal motion $IV \rightarrow I$, (c) contrapuntal motion $iii \rightarrow IV$, and (d) any harmonic sequence.
4. Chart and exceptions can be remembered by this rule: Never have root motion descend by step; i.e., $V \rightarrow IV$ and $ii \rightarrow I$ are considered bad. (Exception to this is $V \rightarrow IV^6$, which is considered good.)

CH8 First-inversion Partwriting

(0. Use same rules as CH6, with the following changes for doublings.)

1. Double (a) root of I^6 , IV^6 , or V^6 chords (scale steps 1, 4, 5 are doubled);
(b) otherwise, double bass (scale step 2 doubled in vii^{o6} , and 4 in ii^{o6}).
2. If 6-6 pattern, make sure to alternate doublings between root and bass, in order to avoid parallels. If permitted, reducing to 3v is the easiest solution for avoiding forbidden parallelism.

CH9 Second-inversion Partwriting

(0. Use the rules from CH6, with the following changes and additions.)

1. Double the bass of second-inversion chords.
2. Observe the metric placement of each stock type: (a) Cadential 6/4 occurs on strong beats and usually prolongs the $V^{6/4-5/3}$ chord, and (b) All other dissonant 6/4s occur on weak beats with a stepwise or held bass.

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SECOND-SEMESTER THEORY

CH10 Phrasing (sometimes put in a separate form & analysis course)

See fourth-semester theory.

CH11 Common non-chord tones

1. Definitions of common NCTs: (a) passing tone, (b) neighbor tone, and (c) suspension. All require approach and resolution by step or tie.
2. Pt and nt occur on weak part of the beat, while suspensions occur on strong part of beat.
3. Put pt in between a skip of a third, put nt on repeated notes, and put suspension on a descending line.

CH12 Unusual non-chord tones

1. All the rest of the non-chord tones are pt, nt, susp, with either the approach or the resolution disrupted. The only absolutely forbidden NCT is one with leaps on both sides of a dissonance; i.e., arpeggios must outline a chord.
2. The pedal point is considered dissonant by K&P while harmonies progress above it; but, this is wrong—the pedal point is the harmonic pillar on which passing harmonies occur. Represent this with a RN for the pedal point and with figured bass showing the voice-leading above. Put any shimmering harmonies above the pedal point in parentheses.

CH13–15 Seventh chords

1. The seventh of a chord must resolve downwards by step in the next harmony.
2. Whenever possible, the seventh of the chord should be prepared by step or tie.
3. Circle-of-fifths with root-position harmonies requires alternating between complete and incomplete chords (omit the fifth on incomplete ones).
4. Likewise, the V7-I in root position usually requires one of the following exceptions to avoid parallels: (a) triple the root of the I chord (omit the fifth), (b) omit the fifth of the V7 chord, (c) frustrate the leading tone in an inner voice. If permitted, another solution is (d) changing inversion of one of the chords.

CH16–17 Secondary Functions

1. Major & minor chords can have their own dominant/leading-tone chord placed in front of them in a progression.
2. The secondary LT goes up and the seventh (if present) goes down by step.
3. To recognize, (a) take sharp up $\frac{1}{2}$ step to find what the chord is “of” and that RN goes under the slash. (b) Place the quality of the chord above the slash (V, V7, vii^o, vii^{o7}, vii^{o7}). E.g., vii^{o7}/V. (d) common exception is V⁷/IV, which looks like I chord with b7.
4. To spell V/x, go up five steps from the x and spell a M or Dom7 chord.
5. To spell vii^o/x, go down $\frac{1}{2}$ step from x and spell o, o7, or ø7 chord.

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CH18 Diatonic Common-chord Modulation

1. Distinguish between modulation and secondary functions by how long accidentals appear.
2. Scan for modulations in a score by looking for accidentals, esp. sharps. Can also look for cadences (5-1 in bass).
3. To find a pivot chord, spell chords in both keys and find chord that are common between both.
4. To write a modulation, write a progression in one key that leads to the pivot. Then, write progression from that chord in the new key.

CH19 Other Modulatory Techniques

1. Using secondary functions as pivots. Same concept as diatonic pivots, but this opens the door to using chromatic chords as pivots. For instance, V^7/V could be a pivot to the dominant key.
2. Using sequence. Repeat the same music up or down a step, adding the accidentals you need. The common method is so easy and such a smooth way to modulate, theorists don't want to tell you about it.
3. Modulation by common tone. Pick a pitch in of any chord in one key and repeat it a lot. Then use that pitch in any chord of the next key and proceed in the next key. Good for chromatic mediant relationships.
4. Direct (phrase) modulation. Cadence in one key. Then start in the next key. No pivot.

CH20 Small Forms (sometimes put in a separate form & analysis course)

See fourth-semester theory.

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THIRD-SEMESTER THEORY

CH21 Mode Mixture

1. You can use chords from the parallel minor in a major key.
2. Borrowed chords work just like diatonic chords, e.g., iv^b works like IV.
3. Notation: The quality of the borrowed chord changes and thus the quality of the Roman numeral will change. If the root of the chord is flatted, a flat goes in front of the RN, e.g., $bIII^{5b}$.
4. Introduce only one new accidental at a time in a progression (including modulating progressions) in order to write a smooth progression.
5. Flats want to resolve downwards. If $b6$ goes up, usually one gets a VL error.

CH22 Neapolitan Chord

1. Use bII^{6b} as symbol instead of N.
2. Use in progression just like a ii chord.
3. Use 1st inversion.
4. Double bass (4^\wedge).
5. $b2$ eventually leads to $\#7$ (leading tone), even if through a $V^{5/3-6/4}$ (" $i^{6/4} V$ ").
6. $b6$ wants to descend.
7. Put $b2$ above $b6$ when using $i^{6/4}$ to avoid parallel fifths.
8. To recognize, simply notice $b2$.

CH23 Augmented-sixth chords

1. Put $b6$ in bass. It will descend to 5 (by half step).
2. Put $\#4$ in an upper voice. It will ascend to 5 (by half step).
3. Put 1 in an upper voice.
4. Flavors: add 1 for It^{+6} , 2 for $Fr^{+6/4/3}$, and $b3$ for $Gr^{+6/5}$.
(Remember that, in minor, scale steps 3, 6, 7 are already flat and don't require another flat.)
5. Resolves to V directly or through $i^{6/4}$. $Gr^{+6/5}$ requires $i^{6/4}$ in order to avoid parallel fifths.
6. If $+6$ goes to V^7 , the $\#4$ will go to the seventh (natural 4).
7. If $Gr^{+6/5}$ goes to $I^{6/4}$ in major, the $b3$ is usually spelled enharmonically as $\#2$.
8. Can recognize by (a) seeing the two $\frac{1}{2}$ steps resolving out to an octave (scale-step 5), (b) identifying the $+6$ interval in the chord, (c) doing the figured bass for the chord, (d) recognizing all the scale steps in the chord ($b6, 1, b3, \#4$ in $Gr^{+6/5}$ for instance).

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CH24 Augmented-sixth chords (delayed to fifth-semester)

1. Other bass positions. The pitches of the +6 chords can be rearranged, but they resolve the same way (#4 goes to 5, etc.). K&P use the same notation as in CH23, but some theorists write things such as Gr^{03} .
2. Resolutions to other scale degrees. The normal +6 chords are “of V”. Others are possible, such as $Gr^{+6/5}/I$. (a) write a $\frac{1}{2}$ step below the chord’s root, (b) write a $\frac{1}{2}$ step above the chord’s root, and c) fill in the requested “flavor”. Notation is “ $Gr^{+6/5}/I$ ”, like secondary functions.
3. Resolutions to other chord members. Same as #2, but doesn’t always resolve the root of the chord. Notation is “[$Ger^{+6/5}$]”, recognizing that these are chromatic passing chords.
4. Other flavors. Put other pitches in the middle, but nothing significant about this. “[+6]”

CH25 Enharmonic modulation

1. Two types of enharmonic spelling: (a) for convenience (ease of reading), and (b) to indicate change of normal function (for modulation).
2. V^7 and $Gr^{+6/5}$ are the same sonority. Can respell V^7 as $Gr^{+6/5}$ by changing seventh to a sharp, or visa versa for $Gr^{+6/5}$ respelled as V^7 . I.e., the direction of the seventh/#4 determines the chord’s function.
3. Learn specific respellings for modulation: $V^7=Gr^{+6/5}$ modulates up $\frac{1}{2}$ step, visa versa is down $\frac{1}{2}$ step; $V^7/IV=Gr^{+6/5}$ modulates up M3, visa versa is down M3.
3. vii^{07} can be respelled with any chord tone serving as a leading tone to a new key. With the new spelling, resolve the LT and 7th correctly to modulate.
4. Learn specific respellings for modulation: vii^{07} . Up m3, down m3, and up/down TT.

CH26 Miscellaneous items (delayed to fifth semester)

1. Sub6 chords. Spelling sometimes looks different than function. E.g., a V^{sub6} looks like a iii^6 chord, but can tell the difference by context ($V \rightarrow I$ w/5-1 in bass vs. $iii^6 \rightarrow vi$).
2. + chords. These chords work like V^7 or V^7/x chords.
3. 9, 11, 13 chords. Add these dissonances above a 7th chord and resolve them downwards by step.
4. ct^{07} chords. Tie the root of a chord to these chords, spell a o7 as you wish, and tie a pitch of the o7 to the root of the next chord. Has no function—just for color.
5. Weird stuff they don’t know how to label. Give up and use pop-music symbols. Often counterpoint and motives are holding the music together, or the composer is purposefully thwarting normalcy.

CH27 Harder analyses (delayed to fifth semester)

1. Look at counterpoint, including sequence.
2. Look for motives.
3. Look for dominant harmony to find key areas.

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CH28 20th-c music

1. Scale spellings. (a) Look at the modes written out for you, and memorize them as alterations of either major or minor (e.g., Lydian is major w/#4). (b) Memorize the pentatonic and octatonic scales from their example.
2. Chord terms. Look up vocabulary terms in New Harvard Dictionary & memorize.
3. Rhythm & Meter terms. Look up vocabulary terms in New Harvard Dictionary & memorize definitions.
4. 12-tone and set-theory stuff. Too complicated to summarize here.
5. Various stuff not really discussed in any detail. Look up vocabulary terms in New Harvard Dictionary & memorize definitions.

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FOURTH-SEMESTER THEORY (Form & Analysis)

CH10 Phrasing

1. Phases are marked by cadences.
2. Cadences are: PAC, IAC, HC, PC, Phrygian HC, and other.
3. Period is made of weaker cadence(s) (antecedent phrases) followed by stronger cadence(s) (consequent phrases).
4. Periods with similar material are called “parallel”. Those with dissimilar material are “contrasting”.
5. Double period has structure such as HC-IAC-HC-PAC.
6. Phrase group is several phrases in a row without antecedent/consequent relationships.
7. Harmonic rhythm. Usually Bach chorales have one harmony per beat, while classical/romantic works often have only one per measure.

CH20 Small Forms

1. Binary is in two pieces. Usually B section has a brief digression from the main discourse.
2. Ternary is in three pieces, with the B section constituting a significant contrast.
3. In both forms, if the first A section ends with the tonic chord in the tonic key (closed), it is “sectional”. Otherwise, it is called “continuous”.
4. In binary, if the opening material returns briefly at the end, it is called “rounded” rather than “simple”.

Note: Many other topics in form & analysis beyond the scope of K&P, and one usually uses a different textbook.