

Beginning Piano Course Syllabus

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Course Description

Class piano is designed to teach the concepts and fundamentals needed to perform on the piano. It will increase musical understanding by teaching students a vocabulary of chords, keys, accompaniment patterns, and improvisational techniques. Students will develop proactive practice habits, learn techniques to increase the muscular agility and flexibility of their hands. We will discover music at its source, find out how music is constructed, and discover the history behind western music.

Upon completion of this course students will have learned to play some of the standards of piano repertoire while gaining a thorough understanding of the history and basic concepts of music.

Course Philosophy

The piano is a performance instrument, and the primary goal of this course is for students to become competent, independent performers on the piano. For this reason, students will be assessed primarily on their performances at the piano. It is equally important that a student develop the skills, discipline, and determination to prepare for a performance, therefore an portion of the overall grade is derived from how well the student prepares and uses his or her practice time. Because not everyone has a piano at home, home practice is optional. However, students should come to class every day prepared to get the most out of time they are given in class.

Course Outcomes – Students will be able to:

1. Follow classroom procedures regarding practice and instruction.
2. Demonstrate basic competencies of piano performance in the areas of tone production, technique, and phrasing.
3. Identify music notation and symbols relative to the level of proficiency
4. Identify basic musical forms within learned pieces.
5. Identify proper performance habits.

Daily Required Materials

A portion of the student's daily Practice/Preparation grade will be determined based on bringing the following required materials to class.

Textbook– Alfred's Basic Adult All-In-one Level 1 and Alfred's Basic adult Piano Course Theory Book 1

Pencil & Paper – provided by the student

Additional Music – additional music will occasionally be specified by the instructor.

Headphones – headphones are provided. However, instructor **HIGHLY** recommends bringing your own headphones.

Practice - Preparation

30%

Throughout the course of daily instruction, students will be scored based on the extent that they...

Are seated at their workstation ready to start when class begins;

Late arrivals will cause a deduction in the student's practice-preparation grade for that day

Unlawful absences will result in a zero for that day's practice-preparation grade.

Have the required materials ready at the start of class;

Demonstrate discipline, focus, and good time management during their practice time;

Demonstrate appropriate posture as taught by the instructor;

Demonstrate appropriate music reading skills;

Demonstrate appropriate listening skills;

Execute directions given by the instructor;

Demonstrate active listening, offer supportive commentary, and work respectfully with peers;

Demonstrate progressive improvement in musicianship.

Performance - Recitals

30%

All students will be graded on a solo performance every week during class. As the repertoire becomes longer and more difficult, graded performances will take place on alternate weeks.

The solo performances will be in the form of a recital in which the student performs for the class, and receives constructive remarks from their classmates.

Music to be performed for the recitals will be announced at least a week in advance of the recital.

Students are encouraged to play the music as a "dry run" for the teacher prior to the recital date.

Students who are unprepared for the recitals will receive a zero.

Recitals can be made up within three days only if the absence was excused.

Since the skills learned in piano are cumulative, students must make every effort to master the recital music.

Technique/Theory

25%

Students will be graded weekly on their mastery of techniques to improve manual dexterity, such as...

Pentatonic scales;

Major and minor scales; and various repetitive exercises.

Technique proficiencies will take place weekly in conjunction with the recitals.

Later in the year, technique proficiencies will alternate with the recitals.

Students who are unprepared for their technique proficiency will receive a zero.

Students' understanding of music theory will be graded based on their completion of the written assessments included in the textbook.

Due dates for the written assessments will be announced at least a week in advance.

Technique proficiencies and theory assignments can be made up within three days only if the absence was excused.

Quarterly Project

15%

At the beginning of each quarter, students will be assigned a project which is to be completed by the end of the quarter.

The project will be selected by the instructor, and could include (but are not limited to) the following:

Composer Presentation – the student will research a composer and make a presentation to the class.

Recital Program – the student will select appropriate pieces and design a piano recital program complete with program notes for each piece.

Recording Project – the student will use Cakewalk to make and record a new arrangement of an existing.

Research Paper – the student will select an aspect of music to research and create a substantial report which will be presented to the class.