Course Syllabus
MUS121: Piano Techniques 1
Mon/Weds 9:00-10:00am
Grand Rapids Community College
Fall 2013

Instructor: Dr. Kenneth Bos
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Office location: 134 Music Center
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Course Description

This class is intended for the student with some minimal keyboard background and some prior music-reading experience. The emphasis of the course will be on the development of piano techniques: sight-reading, use of primary chords, transposition, and acquisition of standard piano repertoire. This class meets two hours per week.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:
- Read simple pieces with note and rhythmic accuracy
- Understand and play major and minor scales, arpeggios, and primary triads using correct fingering at specified tempo markings
- Demonstrate skill in harmonizing melodies using chord progressions consisting of primary triads
- Demonstrate skill in transposition of a given melody
- Demonstrate knowledge of terminology relating to articulation, style, and musical interpretation and be able to apply these concepts to each of the areas studied
Required Materials

All students must obtain the following textbook:


The textbook is available in the GRCC Bookstore or at various websites (e.g., amazon.com or half.com). Students are expected to have the textbook with them to use in every class session.

Attendance and Assignments

Students are expected to be present for every class session. No more than three absences are allowed for any reason without penalties being incurred. After the third absence, each additional absence will result in a **25-point deduction** (out of 500 points) from the final semester grade.

Class will begin on time and students are expected to be ready to begin at the designated hour. Latecomers will be marked tardy, and every three tardies (or instances of leaving class early) will be treated as one absence.

In order to pass this course and ensure continued progress and academic success, a minimum of **3 hours** of practice is expected every week. There are piano practice rooms available for student use on the first floor of the Music Center, and the Piano Tech classroom (Room 206) is available for practice at posted times.

Grading Procedures

Playing assignments will be given for each class session, and playing and/or written quizzes may be expected at every class. It is the student’s responsibility to make arrangements to make up any quiz that was missed due to an absence. Any quiz that is not made up within five school days will be graded as a **zero**.

The grade for this class is based on a point system and each student begins the semester with zero points. Points are accumulated through quizzes, tests, and a final exam. Points may be lost through excessive absences or tardies. The maximum number of points for the semester is as follows:
15 Quizzes (6 points each) 90 points
2 Skills Tests (45 points each) 90 points
2 Individual Playing Tests (90 points each) 180 points
1 Final Exam 140 points

Total 500 points

Note: if more than 15 quizzes are given during the semester, the lowest scores will be removed from your point total at the end of the semester.

The grading scale to be used for the course is as follows:

- **A**: 465-500 points (93-100%)
- **A-**: 450-464 points (90-92%)
- **B+**: 440-449 points (88-89%)
- **B**: 410-439 points (82-87%)
- **B-**: 400-409 points (80-81%)
- **C+**: 390-399 points (78-79%)
- **C**: 360-389 points (72-77%)
- **C-**: 350-359 points (70-71%)
- **D+**: 340-349 points (68-69%)
- **D**: 310-339 points (62-67%)
- **D-**: 300-309 points (60-61%)
- **E**: 0-299 points (0-59%)

It is necessary to pass this course with a grade of at least **C** in order to advance to MUS122. Current grades may be accessed at any time on Blackboard.

**Grading Guidelines**

For 6-point Quizzes (on Studies, Repertoire Pieces, Transpositions, and Accompanying Exercises):

- **6 points**: Accurate notes and rhythms; appropriate dynamics and articulations; good tempo; correct fingerings and pedal usage
- **4 points**: Mostly accurate notes and rhythms; some carelessness in dynamics and articulations; cautious tempo; some sloppiness in fingerings and pedal usage
- **2 points**: Inaccuracies in notes and rhythms; insufficient attention to dynamics and articulations; plodding or unstable tempo; careless fingerings and use of pedal
- **0 points**: No evidence of preparation for this piece outside of class

For 45-point Skills Tests (on Arpeggios, Cadences, and Scales; tests consist of 5 items, each worth 9 points):

- **9 points**: Complete accuracy in notes and fingerings; perfectly steady beat; moderate to quick tempo
- **6 points**: Some uncertainty in notes and fingerings; mostly steady beat; moderate tempo
3 points  Inaccurate notes and fingerings; somewhat unsteady beat; slow tempo
0 points  No evidence of preparation for this exercise outside of class

Scores for items in the Comprehensive Tests and Final Exam will be calculated in the same way in which similar items in the Quizzes and Skills Tests are calculated.

College Policies

Communications: Students are responsible for all communications sent via Blackboard and to their GRCC email account. GRCC student email can be accessed through Student Email (http://email.grcc.edu) and Blackboard at Blackboard (http://bb.grcc.edu).

Disability Support Services: Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations must be registered with the Disability Support Services Office (DSS) in Room 368 of the Student Center. You may contact DSS at (616) 234-4140 for more information. Once you are registered with the DSS Office, you will receive an Accommodations Agreement to present to me to verify your registration. Please see me as soon as possible so we may have a private conversation to discuss accommodations.

Student Code of Conduct: All GRCC students are held accountable to the Student Code of Conduct, which outlines expectations pertaining to academic honesty (including cheating and plagiarism), classroom conduct, and general conduct. The Code can be found in full at Student Code of Conduct.

Changes to the Syllabus: The instructor reserves the right to change the contents of this syllabus due to unforeseen circumstances. Students will be given notice of relevant changes in class, through a Blackboard Announcement, or through GRCC e-mail.

Tutoring: GRCC provides many learning resources for remedial help. Students may consult with members of GRCC’s counseling center regarding tutoring opportunities for individual help in this course.

Additional Class Policy: Cell phones, personal headphones, and electronic devices which may disrupt the learning process or environment are not allowed to be used while this class is meeting.