Syllabus Template for The Informed Beginning Pianist

MUSIC 2031:The Informed Beginning Pianist

MWF 9:05-10:00am, Reed Hall 115

3 contact hours: Lecture

Instructor Name:

Office:

Email:

Phone:

Office hours:

**Course Description:**

Welcome to Music 2031! This class is designed for people who have no – or very little – musical experience, and who want to learn how to play the piano as well as gain valuable insights into how piano music has shaped cultural values and norms. While this is a fun subject, you will only get as much out of it as you put into it. You should expect to practice an average of 30 minutes a day, although the load may vary a little from student to student. Between classes, your practice will consist of reviewing the material we covered in class with the hopes of improving your fluency and accuracy in each of the pieces and exercises we worked on together. We will have a discussion of effective practice strategies early in the semester to ensure that you know how to direct your time outside of class to get the most out of the class.

Prior to most class meetings, I expect that you will have watched a short video about a technique or skills that we will apply in class. These videos ensure that we can spend the bulk of our time in class applying new knowledge and skills at the keyboard, analyze how the various iterations of keyboard instruments have influenced composers and performers; and, engage in meaningful discussions regarding the role of piano and music across various cultures.

**Course Materials:**

*eNovative Piano*: A semester’s subscription is available through the bookstore.

Carmen is essential in order to retrieve and upload class assignments.

**Course Expectations:**

By the end of this course, students will:

* Read basic music notation and terminology.
* Describe the acoustics of the piano.
* Apply basic music theory to the creation, analysis, and interpretation of music.
* Discuss musical performances using appropriate terminology.
* Understand the relationship between the history of western art music and the culture of that time.
* Perform a variety of piano works including historical, contemporary, and popular pieces.

**General Education (GE) Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes:**

1. Visual and Performing Arts:

Goals: Students evaluate significant works of art in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students analyze, appreciate, and interpret significant works of art.
2. Students engage in informed observation and/or active participation in a discipline within the visual, spatial and performing arts.

Using piano as a medium through which to explore the acquisition of performance skills and music knowledge as well as the process through which individuals make artistic judgements, this course addresses the historical and modern proliferation of music performance contexts, which students will learn to understand, evaluate, and interpret through regular performing, reading, and listening.

**Assignments:**

Each of these assignments is included to enhance your understanding of music, improve your performance skills, and give you multiple opportunities to demonstrate your mastery of the course expectations and expected learning outcomes. For example, the short videos assigned prior to each class meeting are to ensure that you have thought about the material prior to the start of class time so that the skills and knowledge introduced in those videos can be refined and applied during the class.

Weekly performance assignments: You will be asked to upload videos or audio recordings of you performing the material we cover each week on Carmen. These weekly assignments will all be graded on a 5-point scale and Carmen will drop the lowest two grades.

Weekly written assignments: Each week you will be assigned brief music theory assignments to reinforce the concepts introduced in class. There may be more than one theory assignment each week so check Carmen for the due dates for each of those deadlines. The Music Theory assignments are completed in your eNovative Piano workbook and - following the completion of each assignment - I receive a report of your completed work and will upload your grade to Carmen. Again, the lowest two grades for these assignments will be dropped, and each assignment will be worth 5 points.

Performance critiques: Students in this course will attend a live performance featuring a pianist. Check Carmen under the Pages tab for a listing of area piano recitals during the term. There will be at least four recitals listed, but you will need to plan ahead in order to fulfill this assignment. If attending a live concert is not feasible for a student, then the instructor will provide the student with a link to a full-length concert to be watched online. Watching a previously recorded or online concert is a different kind of experience than watching a concert live, so please make every effort to attend a concert in person.

Following the performance, you will write a critique of what you heard. The critique itself should be between 2-3 pages double spaced using 12-point Times New Roman font. The critique should feature the following elements:

* The date, time, and location of the recital.
* The name of the performer.
* The names and dates of the pieces performed and the names of the composers who wrote the pieces.
* Did any of the pieces have individual movements listed on the program?
* What are the meanings of any titles of pieces or titles of movements?
* Compare the styles of the different pieces on the program. How do pieces written earlier in history sound different from pieces written later? You should talk about dynamics, tempo, and the ways in which the piano is used. Is the piano used to make song-like melodies, or is it used for rhythmic effect? Are lots of notes used at the same time, or just a few? Be sure to talk about all pieces included on the recital.
* From your own knowledge of piano playing so far, describe the physical approach that the performer had to the piano. Describe the performer’s posture movement, and overall use of their body?
* What parts of the recital did you really like? Why? Be sure to talk about aspects of the music here – talk about pieces in terms of their melody, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and so on. You can also talk about the performer’s interpretation.
* What parts of the recital did you enjoy less? Why? Again, be sure to give details about the music and the performer.
* One of the main jobs of a pianist is to make sure that the audience can hear the melody (when there is one) – even when there are lots of other things happening in the music. How did the pianist succeed in the pieces included on this program?

These critiques will be graded as follows:

*Clarity of writing* 5 points

*Details of recital and performer* 5 points

*Discussion of compositional style* 10 points

*Discussion of the performance* 10 points

Feel free to visit: <https://cstw.osu.edu/writing-resources> for assistance with this project.

Midterm and Final Jury: Your midterm and final exams will consist of you performing the skills gained in the course. You’ll be asked to perform pieces, technical exercises, and basic harmonic theory. The midterm and final juries will take place outside of class time and you can sign up for a time with your professor as the test date approaches.

This syllabus is designed so that you can prepare for class material ahead of time. For example, you are expected to have watched the relevant videos and practiced the previously introduced concepts and skills for the first class period of that week. Your instructor will announce those items required for preparation for each class period, and it is expected that you will come ready to perform those pieces and or exercises. If you are absent for any reason, it will be assumed that you are using this syllabus to keep up with class content.

**Attendance:**

*Class attendance is obligatory.* Further, getting to class in a timely manner is a good virtue. All absences or late arrivals must be cleared with the instructor in advance or, in the case of a medical emergency, be accounted for in writing after the fact. Unexcused absences and late arrivals demonstrate a lack of respect to your professor and peers and will significantly lower your grade. Two unexcused absences will lower your grade by a half step (for example, from a B+ to a B). A third unexcused absence will lower your grade by a full step (for example, from a B to a C). Four unexcused absences will result in an automatic fail.

**Grading:**

Equal weight will be given to all classroom assignments and tests. No late work will be accepted.

Grading Breakdown:

Weekly Performance Assignments: 30%

Weekly Written Assignments: 30%

Performance Critique: 10%

Midterm Exam: 15%

Final Exam: 15%

Total: 100%

Grading Scale:

94-100% A 74-76% C

90-93% A- 70-73% C-

87-89% B+ 67-69% D+

84-86% B 64-66% D

80-83% B- 63% E

77-79% C+

**Statement on Disability Services:**

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know privately as soon as possible such that we can discuss accommodation options. To establish reasonable accommodations, you may want to register with Student Life Disability Services. After that registration, please make arrangements with me as soon as possible to review the recommended accommodations for you so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. The contact information for Ohio State Lima Disability Services follows: Karen Meyer, 154 Student Services Building, 567-242-7510, [meyer.193@osu.edu](mailto:meyer.193@osu.edu).

**Statement on Academic Misconduct:**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct at: <http://studentconduct.osu.edu/>

**Statement on Sexual Misconduct/Relationship Violence**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu>. You may also contact the university’s Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu) or Ohio State Lima’s Title IX contact at [mccrory.6@osu.edu](mailto:mccrory.6@osu.edu).

**Statement on Counseling Services:**

Should you find yourself experiencing personal difficulties, whether related to class or not, please know that you have access to confidential services provided by the Ohio State Lima Counseling and Consultation Service (LCCS). All current Ohio State Lima students [are eligible for services at no charge. You may contact LCCS](http://lima.osu.edu/) at 567-242-7158 or 567-242-7189 to schedule an appointment or visit: <https://lima.osu.edu/current-students/health-and-wellness-services/counseling/>

**Statement regarding Tobacco Free Campus policy:**

Ohio State has adopted a tobacco free policy that supports a healthy environment for all members of the campus community. The use of all types of tobacco products is prohibited in all university buildings and on all university-owned properties, including parking lots and all outside areas. The full policy can be found at: <http://hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/resources/720faq.pdf?t=2014724155314>

**Statement on University Expectations regarding 2:1 ratio of student effort:**

In an effort to establish educational standards and expectations for all institutions of higher education in the state, the Ohio Department of Higher Education (formerly the Ohio Board of Regents) has established formal guidelines to standardize the length of semesters, academic years, and define the practical meaning of each semester hour of credit. In these guidelines, one semester credit hour is awarded for a minimum of 750 minutes of formalized instruction and “students will be expected to work at out-of-class assignments on a regular basis, which, over the length of the course, would normally average two hours of out-of-class study for each hour of formal class activity.”

**Course Schedule**

*All assignments in italics should be completed before class.*

Note: Performance tasks covered in class and to be practiced independently are listed below each week’s assignments.

Week 1:

Monday - Policies and Procedures, Syllabus overview, Effective Practice Techniques discussion.

Wednesday: *watch the following videos (~5 minutes) be prepared to discuss and implement the techniques: Posture at the piano, Numbering Your Fingers and Keyboard Topography*

Friday – *Complete Aural ID: Repeat, Step or Skip and submit your score on the electronic workbook.*

Posture at the Piano

Numbering Your Fingers

Keyboard Topography

Aural ID: Repeat, Step or Skips

Aural Playback – matching Pitch and Rhythm at the keyboard

Week 2:

Monday – *watch videos: Pulse & Tempo and Rhythmic Notation: Whole, Half, Quarter Notes and Rests (Instructional) (~8 minutes) be prepared to discuss in class.*

Wednesday – *watch Dynamics – Loud and Soft (Instructional) (~4 minutes)* and be prepared to discuss in class and implement in the repertoire for this week: Close Quarters & Saturday Night

Friday – Review repertoire for unit 1 (Close Quarters, Toy Soldiers, & Lonely Evening)

Rhythmic Drills using Basic Rhythmic Notation

Improvisation: Creating Melodies on the Black Keys

Repertoire: Close Quarters, Toy Soldiers, & Lonely Evening.

Week 3:

Monday – *Submit recording of Unit 1 repertoire on Carmen. Watch video: The Musical Alphabet (~ 3 minutes) and be prepared to apply concepts in class.*

Wednesday – *read: The Acoustics of the Piano (chapter six) in The Cambridge Companion to the Piano edited by David Rowland: DOI:* [*https://doi.org/10/107/CCOL9780521474702.008*](https://doi.org/10/107/CCOL9780521474702.008) and be prepared to discuss in class.

Friday – *submit score of Finding the White Keys 1 to instructor. Watch video: hand Shape at the piano (~3 minutes)* *for application in class.*

Finger Dexterity Drill

Reading on Black Keys

Keyboard Topography Finding the White Keys & Naming Keys of the Piano

New Repertoire: Black Key Ska, Solid Ground

Week 4:

Monday – *watch video: Metrical Counting in 4/4 time* (~ 4 minutes) *and be prepared to discuss and apply it in class. Create an image, mind map, or video that demonstrates your knowledge of the acoustics of the piano.*

Wednesday – *watch video: Hand Shape at the piano (~ 3 minutes) and be ready to apply to new repertoire.*

Friday – *submit score for Measures and Time Signature assignment through online workbook.*

Five Finger Position

Meter and Time Signatures

Rhythm Drill using 4/4 time

New Repertoire: Temple Dance, Name that Tune!

Week 5:

Monday – *watch video: Articulation: Legato & Staccato (~5 minutes) for discussion and application in class.*

Wednesday – upload *video of unit 2 repertoire performance – pick from: Name that Tune! Little Song, Solid Ground or Black Key Ska.*

Friday – *submit score for keyboard reverse identification on online workbook*.

Aural ID: Up, Down or Repeat

Aural Playback: Matching Pitch and Rhythms in 5-finger positions

Keyboard Orientation Drill

Improvisation Creating melodies on the White Keys

New Repertoire: Little Song

Week 6:

Monday – *watch video: Rhythm extensions – Ties & Dots (~4 minutes)* *for application in class*.

Wednesday – *watch video: reading on the reduced staff (~4 minutes)* *for application in class.*

Friday – *submit score for Dots and Ties on online workbook.*

Keyboard Topography: Finding the intervals 2nds and 3rds on the piano

Aural ID: Identifying 2nds and 3rds

Understanding Rhythmic Extensions – Ties and Dots

New Repertoire: Sneaky Pie & The Happy Warrior

Reading on a reduced staff Hands separately

Week 7:

Monday – *watch video Octave Signs* *(~3 minutes)* for preparation in Worried Man Blues.

Wednesday – *submit Interval identification score on online workbook.*

Friday – *upload video of Unit 3 repertoire, pick from:* The Cowgirl, Holding Back, Petals in the Wind, Worried Man Blues, Sneaky Pie & The Happy Warrior.

Reading on a reduced staff hands together

New Repertoire: Little Tune, Rain on the Roof, Fanfare, Petals in the Wind, the Cowgirl, Worried Man Blues, Holding Back.

Week 8:

Monday –*In class performances of repertoire Unit 3 repertoire.*

Wednesday – Review

Friday - Midterm Jury

Week 9:

Monday – *watch the video the Grand Staff & Landmark Notes (~10 minutes)*

Wednesday – *submit score of notes on the grand staff on online workbook.*

Friday – *watch videos on metrical counting ¾ time, & Dynamics: Crescendo & Diminuendo in preparation for application in class. (~15 minutes).*

Rhythm Drill using ¾ time signatures

Identifying Notes on the Keyboard using the Grand Staff

Three Mirror Fingering Drills

Reading on the Grand Staff

Improvisation: creating two-handed melodies

New Repertoire: Little Waltz and Feelin’ Alright

Week 10:

Monday – *submit score for ledger lines assignment on online workbook* *and watch videos on Interval reading melodic and harmonic 4ths (~4 minutes)* for application in class.

Wednesday – *submit score for Aural ID: 2nds, 3rds and 4ths in C Major and A Minor on online workbook*.

Friday – *upload video of your performance of Unit 4 repertoire*: pick from Saturn’s Rings, Aura Lee, I’ve been working on the railroad, Little Waltz & Feelin’ Alright.

Staff identification: reading intervals 2nds-4ths

Keyboard topography: intervals 2nds – 4ths

Aural Playback: Matching Pitches and Rhythms in 5-finger patterns

New Repertoire: Aura Lee & I’ve Been Working on the Railroad

Week 11:

Monday – *watch video interval reading melodic to harmonic 5ths* *(~5 minutes)* for application in Lead sheets.

Wednesday – *submit score for staff ID: Intervals 2nd – 5ths on online workbook.*

Friday – *submit score for Aural ID: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5ths (C major and A minor) on online workbook.*

Understanding popular notation: Lead Sheets

Extending interval study to include 5ths (2nds -5ths)

Improvisation using larger intervals – Saturn’s Rings

Keyboard Topography: Using 2nds-5ths

New Repertoire: Merrily We Roll Along, The Nightingale, & Whistle Daughter, Whistle

Week 12:

Monday – *Listen to this broadcast from the BBC about the role of piano in culture in preparation for discussion in class:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b01msj6v> *(~45 minutes)*

Wednesday – *watch video: major and minor five-finger patterns (~3 minutes) for application in class.*

Friday – *submit score for staff to keyboard: grand staff 2 on online workbook.*

Identifying Major and minor scale sounds –

Reading on the Grand Staff

Exploring Intervals through Improvisation

New Repertoire: In the Pink & Lazybones

Week 13:

Monday – *In class performance of Lead Sheets*, *watch video of Chordal and Melody in Accompaniment Textures* for discussion in class.

Wednesday – *submit score for Interval Identifications 2nds-5ths in online workbook.*

Friday – *Read:* [*https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.proxy.ohiolink.edu:9100/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195178265.001.0001/acprof-9780195178265-chapter-1*](https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.proxy.ohiolink.edu:9100/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195178265.001.0001/acprof-9780195178265-chapter-1) *in preparation for in-class discussion*

Musical Texture – expanding on popular music styles with varying accompaniment configurations

Five-finger scales in Major and minor

Aural Playback: Matching Pitches and Rhythms in a 5-finger position

New Repertoire: Long Wait, Blue Echoes, Baroque & Student’s choice of lead sheet

Week 14:

Monday – *watch video: The Pentatonic scale (~3 minutes)* for application in Steps of the Lantern Boy.

Wednesday – *Famous Pianist discussion – bring to class the name of a famous pianist (past or present/ classical or popular musician) as well as a brief synopsis of their training and career for in-class discussion.*

Friday – *Piano Recital Critique Due*.

Two-handed Rhythm Coordination Drill

Improvising with Major and Minor scales

Lead Sheets: Lightly Row, The Birch Tree

New Repertoire: March of the Lemmings, Little Dance, The Wayfarin’ Stranger, & Over and Back

Week 15:

Monday – *Piano Showcase – public piano performance for students enrolled in course.*

Wednesday – Review

Friday – Final Jury