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Brazosport College  
MUSI 1181: Piano Class 1

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**Instructor:** Dr. Carla Salas-Ruiz/she, her, hers

**Email:** [carla.saruiz@gmail.com](mailto:carla.saruiz@gmail.com).

**Note:** institutional email coming soon!

**Office location:** 110, The Clarion

**Office hours:** by appointment

**Prerequisite:** None

**Fall 2023**

**Monday &**

**Wednesday**

**9:00AM-10:00AM**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides a foundational understanding of piano technique and sight-reading. Students taking this course will develop the ability to play fundamental scales and perform music in both hands at the keyboard. Students will learn to recognize key signatures, time signatures, and rhythmic patterns through the study of technical exercises and elementary pieces. This class emphasizes the development of aural, theory, and keyboard skills to provide a useful tool for students to succeed in their current music courses, but also in their future professional life. It has a functional orientation emphasizing aspects such as: improvisation, harmonization, accompaniment, transposition, sight reading, and repertoire.

## **GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

As a result of this course, you will be able to:

- To demonstrate understanding of the fundamentals of music notation and terminology
- To demonstrate understanding of scales, chords, and chord functions
- To demonstrate the ability to use proper piano technique
- To demonstrate the ability to realize musical notation, scales, chords and chord progressions at the keyboard

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND COURSE CONTENT**

Upon successful completion of this course, you will learn basic musical notation and principles by covering the following topics:

- Pitch notation in treble and bass clef / Grand staff
- Rhythmic notation / time signatures / counting language
- Major scales / key signatures
- Major and minor chords / Chord speller
- Chord inversions
- Chord function
- Chord progression I-IV<sup>6</sup>/<sub>4</sub> - I - V<sup>6</sup> - I
- Harmonization using I, IV, V

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You will also learn the following keyboard skills:

- All major and minor pentascales with chords
- Selected technical exercises
- Tetrascales in all 12 major keys
- Chain of chord Inversions - I - I<sub>6</sub> - I<sub>6/4</sub> – I, all Major and Minor Triads
- Major scales
  - B, G<sup>b</sup>, D<sup>b</sup> - hands together, 2 octaves
  - C, D, E, G, A - hands separate, 2 octaves, and hands together contrary
- Chord progression I - IV<sub>6/4</sub> - I - V<sub>6</sub> - I in all major keys
- Accompaniment patterns
- Repertoire
- Bartok Mikrokosmos #s 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18-23
- Varied solo and/or ensemble pieces
- Selected supplement works

## REQUIRED MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Four Start Sight Reading and Ear Tests Book 1 by Boris Berlin and Andrew Markow (Cost: \$10 approx)
- The Complete Book of Scales, Chords, Arpeggios & Cadences by Alfred's Basic Library (Cost: \$10 approx)
- Selected technical studies & repertoire provided by your instructor during the first two weeks of classes after individual hearing
- A resource to take notes (notebook, cellphone, tablet...)
- Staff paper - buy a spiral or print for free from [freesheetmusic.net](http://freesheetmusic.net)
- Binder dedicated to this course – bring it with you to every class

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

As an educator, I work on being comfortable recognizing my privileges, strengths, and weaknesses in hopes that it will foster the same abilities in my students and allow them to be engaged with their learning processes. As a music educator/piano teacher, I strive to achieve a profound understanding and level of reflection about music education, performance, and piano pedagogy. The student that leaves my class is one who loves experiencing music in all its dimensions, a student that loves learning, and that is not afraid of to ask the BIG questions. I aspire for the students who leave my class to be not only the ones that read music effectively and participate with a fulfillment feeling in recitals, or small and informal ensembles, but also feel free to take their own path and express their own creativity by exploring their unique voice. They are aware of their sociocultural environment and recognize the crucial role that they have in the community.

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## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Due to the participatory nature of the course, attendance is required for each class period. Also, since the development of professional behavior is one of the course goals, attendance is essential. The committed and respectful discussion of ideas will be vital to the achievement of the course objectives. Inform me when you have an important reason that does not allow you to arrive on time or will prevent you from attending. Excused absences include personal emergencies, health/medical appointments, and audition/sports tournament travel. You must email me prior to your absence for it to be excused – unless it is an emergency.

## COMMUNICATION

Students may contact me via e-mail since I check email at least once a day. I am also available via office hours, or meeting via Skype, Zoom, or any other videoconference platform. Any problem or concern related to exam dates, due dates, or quizzes may be discussed at length beforehand.

## PRACTICE

Your success is my success too! To be successful in this class, you will need at least 30 minutes of daily practice. For this, the student must remember that during their practice sessions, the main objective is to maintain an attitude of constant listening, and therefore, it will be necessary to maintain an absolute physical and mental awareness of the work being done. In other words, organize each study session with defined objectives.

## CLASSROOM POLICIES

The work in the classroom will be collaborative and an opportunity to apply new knowledge, contribute to the generation of ideas, analyze what has been produced, give feedback, and critically discuss the assigned materials. Each class will cover improvisation, harmonization, technical/sight reading exercises and repertoire. In this class, you will be treated with respect and dignity and where all individuals are provided equitable opportunity to participate, contribute, and succeed. In Class Piano I, all students are welcome regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, citizenship status, nationality, and other diverse identities that we each bring to class. The success of an inclusive classroom relies on the participation, support, and understanding of you and your peers. We encourage you to speak up and share your views, but also understand that you are doing so in a learning environment in which we all are expected to engage respectfully and with regard to the dignity of all others.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cte.ku.edu/creating-inclusive-syllabus>

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## FOOD RISK

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect your performance in the course please contact me. <sup>2</sup>

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### Assignments & Evaluations

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Deadlines for all assignments are listed in the course calendar at the end of this syllabus.

**Class Participation** ..... **20%**

**Practice Log Assignment #1** ..... **5%**

During 2 weeks, you'll complete a practice log that was individually designed. After two weeks, you will prepare a written reflection based on your main discoveries from the practice log.

**Practice Log Assignment #2** ..... **5%**

During 2 weeks, you'll complete a practice log that was individually design. After two weeks, you will prepare a written reflection based on your main discoveries from the practice log.

**Practice Video Project** ..... **10%**

Video record one personal practice session from about 30-45 minutes of practicing. In this practice session, you will cover repertoire, sight reading, improvisation and transposition. During the recording, you will say aloud the practice strategies that you're using and why are you going to use it.

**Exam 1** ..... **15%**

Exam requirements (performance based) will be provided a week before the exam day.

**Exam 2** ..... **15%**

Exam requirements (performance based) will be provided a week before the exam day.

**Quizzes** ..... **15%**

Expect weekly quizzes from your assigned homework

**Final Jury** ..... **15%**

Exam requirements (performance based) will be provided a week before the exam day.

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**GRADING:** To determine your final grade in the course, I will calculate your percentage by dividing your total earned points by the total points possible. These will be converted to letter grades as follows:

90-100% = A    80-89% = B    70-79% = C    60-69% = D    < 60% = F

**QUIZZES:** Weekly quizzes will be addressed based on instructor’s discretion. The exercise might be without prior notice, at the beginning, half, or end of the class. Group piano classes is about working with your friends, so you need to be ready to play. The quizzes will come from any of the homework assignment. No sight reading or new content will be part of your quizzes.

**ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION:** The written assignments will be submitted via email following the instructions indicated. Regular homework will be the basis for class activities, so it is vital for you to come prepared to class. Also, group activity (ensembles, pairs) will happen during class, so your classmates count on you to perform a successful exercise.

**MAKE-UP POLICY:** Each student is responsible for all assignments and work covered in class. Following an excused absence, any missed assignment must be turned in by or before the next class meeting. Also, make-up quizzes and exams are available for excused absences situations of documented illness or emergency and must be completed no later than one week after the absence. No-shows for make-ups (or for other specially arranged times) will be assigned a “0” (zero) and cannot be further disputed or made up.

#### **ASPECTS TO BE EVALUATED IN EXAMS/QUIZZES**

- Technique: good hand position—accurate fingerings/pitches—steady beat and divisions—firm tone
- Repertoire: appropriate tempo—steady beat with accurate rhythms—consistent and correct fingerings, phrasing, dynamics, articulation—balance of melody with accompaniment—appropriate use of the pedal(s)
- Harmonization/transposition/sight-reading/improvisation/score-reading): appropriate tempo—steady beat with accurate rhythms—consistently accurate fingering choices—appropriate chord choice and texture.

**ASPECTS TO BE EVALUATED IN EXAM PRACTICE LOG PROJECT:** To be design by students during first day of class.

\*Teacher will fill out this space after group discussion and general agreement

**ASPECTS TO BE EVALUATED IN WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:** To be design by students during first day of class.

\*Teacher will fill out this space after group discussion and general agreement

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**ASPECTS TO BE EVALUATED IN INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE-VIDEO PROJECT:** To be design by students during first day of class.

\*Teacher will fill out this space after group discussion and general agreement

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY**

Brazosport College assumes that students eligible to perform on the college level are familiar with the ordinary rules governing proper conduct including academic honesty. The principle of academic honesty is that all work presented by you is yours alone. Academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion shall be treated appropriately. Please refer to the Brazosport College Student Guide for more information. This is available online at <http://www.brazosport.edu>. Academic dishonesty violates both the policies of this course and the Student Code of Conduct. In this class, any occurrence of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Dean of Student Services for prompt adjudication, and may, at a minimum, result in failing this course. Sanctions may be imposed beyond your grade in this course by the Dean of Student Services.

## **TITLE IX STATEMENT**

Brazosport College faculty and staff are committed to supporting students and upholding the College District's non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX and Brazosport College's policy FFDA (Local), discrimination based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression is prohibited. If you experience an incident of discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty or staff member at BC, please understand that they are "Responsible Employees" and must report what you tell them to college officials. You can also contact the Title IX Coordinators directly by using the contact information below. Additional information is found on the Sexual Misconduct webpage at [www.brazosport.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.brazosport.edu/sexualmisconduct).

Alex Crouse, Director of Student Life and Deputy Title IX Coordinator; 979-230-3355; [alex.crouse@brazosport.edu](mailto:alex.crouse@brazosport.edu)

Mareille Rolon, HR Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinator Office C-114; 979-230-3303; [mareille.rolon@brazosport.edu](mailto:mareille.rolon@brazosport.edu)

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Brazosport College is committed to providing equal education opportunities to every student. BC offers services for individuals with special needs and capabilities including counseling, tutoring, equipment, and software to assist students with special needs. For student to receive any accommodation, documentation must be completed in the Office

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of Disability Services. Please contact Phil Robertson, Special Populations Counselor at 979-230-3236 for further information.

## STUDENT SUPPORT

To help you on your educational pathway, Brazosport College provides all students with access to TimelyCare. If you're stressed, challenged, or need help, download the TimelyCare app today! It's your free virtual health and well-being service platform, available 24/7, 365 days of the year. Search “TimelyCare” in your app store. Then, register with your student email to access your health care services.

COURSE CALENDAR			
These dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor			
Week	Date	Agenda/Topic	Due on this Date
1	08/28	Syllabus  Defining aspects to be evaluated of individual projects  Getting to know you!	
	08/30	Introduction to the Grand Staff, Finger Numbers, 5 finger position 5-finger pattern: Cmaj and Gmaj	
2	09/04	Labor Day – class will not meet	<input type="checkbox"/> Come to class with your assigned music scores, Alfred's book, and sight-reading book.
	09/06	How do I organize my practicing?  Piano introductory concepts continued: hand position, fingering, posture.  C Major Scale/Arpeggio  C Major triad	

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		Introduction to key signatures	
3	09/11 - 09/13	<p>How many practice strategies can I use? (Part 1)</p> <p>G Major Scale/Arpeggio</p> <p>G Major triad</p> <p>Sight reading</p> <p>Transposition</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> C Major scale/arpeggio</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bring your personal plan with specific goals for your music (include dates, numbers and practice strategies to use)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> First measures of your selected piece (Hands separated)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> First measures of your assigned technical study (Hands separated)</p>
4	09/18 - 09/20	<p>How many practice strategies can I use? (Part 2)</p> <p>D Major Scale/Arpeggio</p> <p>D Major triad</p> <p>Sight reading</p> <p>Transposition</p> <p>Practice Log #1</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> G Major scale/arpeggio</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> First section of your selected piece (Hands together)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> First section of your assigned technical study (Hands together)</p>
5	09/25 - 09/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing legato and staccato: articulation in piano playing</li> <li>• A Major Scale/Arpeggio (relative minor)</li> <li>• A Major triad</li> <li>• <b>Primary chord progressions</b></li> <li>• Sight reading</li> <li>• Transposition</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> D Major scale/arpeggio (relative minor)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Second section of your selected piece (Hands separated)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Second section of your assigned technical study (Hands separated)</p>
6	10/02 - 10/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phrasing in piano playing</li> <li>• E Major Scale/Arpeggio</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Practice Log #1 DUE at the beginning of the class</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A Major scale/arpeggio</p>



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E Major triad</li> <li>• Primary chord progressions</li> <li>• Sight reading</li> <li>• Transposition</li> <li>• Introduction to relative minor keys</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Second section of your selected piece (Hands together) <input type="checkbox"/> Second section of your assigned technical study (Hands together)
7	10/09 - 10/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Exam #1</b></li> <li>• B Major Scale/Arpeggio</li> <li>• B Major triad</li> <li>• Primary chord progressions</li> <li>• Sight reading</li> <li>• Transposition</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Relative minor keys <input type="checkbox"/> Selected piece (Hands together) <input type="checkbox"/> Technical study (Hands together)
8	10/16 - 10/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary chord progressions</li> <li>• Sight reading</li> <li>• Transposition</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Selected piece (Hands together) <input type="checkbox"/> Technical study (Hands together) <input type="checkbox"/> Sight-reading <input type="checkbox"/> Transposition <input type="checkbox"/> New rep pieces!
9	10/23 - 10/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of scales, sight-reading, and improvisation exercises</li> <li>• Primary chord progressions (inversions)</li> <li>• F Major</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring your personal plan with specific goals for your music (include dates, numbers, and practice strategies to use) <input type="checkbox"/> First measures of your selected piece (Hands separated) <input type="checkbox"/> First measures of your assigned technical study (Hands separated)
10	10/30 - 11/01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open mic: What do you want to explore?</li> <li>• Db Major Scale/Arpeggio (relative minor)</li> <li>• Db Major triad</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> F Major scale/arpeggio (relative minor) <input type="checkbox"/> First section of your selected piece (Hands together) <input type="checkbox"/> First section of your assigned technical study (Hands together)

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmonization</li> <li>• Sight reading</li> <li>• Transposition</li> <li>• Practice Log #2</li> </ul>	
11	11/06 - 11/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open mic: What do you want to explore?</li> <li>• Gb Major Scale/Arpeggio (relative minor)</li> <li>• Gb Major triad</li> <li>• Sight reading</li> <li>• Transposition</li> <li>• Primary chord progressions</li> <li>• Harmonization</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Bb Major scale/arpeggio (relative minor) <input type="checkbox"/> Second section of your baroque piece (Hands separated) <input type="checkbox"/> Second section of your assigned technical study (Hands separated)
12	11/13 - 11/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open mic: What do you want to explore?</li> <li>• Ab Major Scale/Arpeggio (relative minor)</li> <li>• Ab Major triad</li> <li>• Sight reading</li> <li>• Transposition</li> <li>• Primary chord progressions</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Practice Log #2 DUE at the beginning of the class</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Eb Major scale/arpeggio (relative minor) <input type="checkbox"/> Second section of your selected piece (Hands together) <input type="checkbox"/> Second section of your assigned technical study (Hands together)
13	11/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Exam #2</b></li> <li>• Open mic: What do you want to explore?</li> <li>• Db Major Scale/Arpeggio (relative minor)</li> <li>• Sight reading</li> <li>• Transposition</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ab Major scale/arpeggio (relative minor) <input type="checkbox"/> Selected piece (Hands together) <input type="checkbox"/> Technical study (Hands together)

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmonization</li> <li>• Primary chord progressions</li> </ul>	
14	11/27 - 11/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open mic: What do you want to explore?</li> <li>• Gb Major Scale/Arpeggio (relative minor)</li> <li>• Eb Major triad</li> <li>• Sight reading</li> <li>• Transposition</li> <li>• Primary chord progressions</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Practice video project DUE at the beginning of the class</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Ab Major scale/arpeggio (relative minor) <input type="checkbox"/> Selected piece (Hands together-tempo, dynamics, articulation) <input type="checkbox"/> Technical study (Hands together-tempo, dynamics, articulation)
15	12/04 - 12/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Exam</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Jury TBD depending on college schedule for final examination

### Getting to know you!

Please answer some questions about yourself. If you like, you can also read my answers here!

- What name/pronoun do you prefer to be called in this of class? Outside of class?
- Where are you from?
- What is your major (or intended major)?
- What courses are you taking this term?
- Tell me a little bit about your background with piano classes?
- What do you hope to learn or gain from this course?
- What are your biggest concerns for this course?
- What, if anything, would you like to know about me?