

Commercial Piano I

MUSA 2255

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Class Time: Mondays 8:30AM-9:20AM
Location: Digital Keyboard Lab, FFA

Office Hours:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 10:30-11:30AM

*Please let me if you'd like to meet (even if it is during my scheduled office hours). I will do my best to make myself available at times other than these listed - just ask!

Attendance Policy

Students will be given daily grades for participation and progress in class. If a student is not in class (including tardiness), they will not receive credit for that class period. Of course, you will be excused for university-related events as long as they are approved by me at least two weeks in advance via email correspondence. **DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE SICK.** Each student will be given 3 excused absences due to illness; further absences can be made up on a case by case basis. Please stay in communication with me when you miss class for any reason.

Course Description

An introduction to commercial piano styles and techniques through listening, transcribing, analysis, improvisation and performance.

Course Goals

- Understand and execute fundamental elements of commercial piano styles and technique
- Develop an understanding of jazz/commercial theory and notation
- Build "Ears to Fingers" skills through ear training and call and response exercises
- Develop improvisational skills at the keyboard

Course Overview

- diatonic chords and secondary dominants (root position and R/H chord-L/H bass note)

- hearing basic functional tonality (major and minor) and playing (ears to fingers)
- improvising (bass lines to melody lines)
- blues (form, melody, variations and voicings)
- ii- V I harmony (major/Ionian, minor/Dorian and dominant/Mixolydian)
- rootless 9th chords
- 3/7 voicings
- 4-note spread voicings
- tritone substitution
- basic accompaniment for melody instrument
- turnarounds

Course Activities/Assignments

- comping and improvising over jazz harmonies
- transcribing, notating lead sheet and performing commercial/pop songs
- reading lead sheets

Course Schedule

**All assignments will be given on Mondays and due the following Monday, unless otherwise indicated. All these dates are in the syllabus, but are subject to change throughout the semester.

Module 1: Aug. 23-Sept. 8

Major Key Diatonic Chords, Functional Tonality and Secondary Dominants

- root position triads
- chord-scale relationships
- grooves: 2-beat, waltz, bolero

PERFORMANCE EXAM #1 - Sept. 13

- grooves (LH bass notes, RH chords)

Module 2: Sept. 15-Oct. 6

7th chords and rootless voicings and The Blues (in C)

- 3/7 and 7/3 guidetones
- The Blues (I IV V) form
- riff blues heads by ear
- walking bass lines
- improvise with blues scales

PERFORMANCE EXAM #2 - Oct. 11

- LH bass notes, RH chord voicings through blues
- LH walking bass line, RH 3/7 guide tones through blues
- RH riff blues melodies
- improvisation

Module 3: Oct. 13-Nov. 3

UNIT 3: ii-7 V7 I and the Jazz Blues progression (altered dominant chords in F)

- 9th chords
- rootless 3-5-7-9 and 7-9-3-5 voicings
- ii-7 V7 I progressions in all 12 keys
- LH bass lines and RH chords
- melody and LH chords (Pfrancing)

PERFORMANCE EXAM #3 - Nov. 8

- LH bass lines and RH chords
- RH melody, LH chords

Module 4: Nov. 10-Dec. 1

UNIT 4: Blue Bossa

- altered dominant chords
- minor tonality
- bossa groove
- melody and LH chords
- improvisation

Final Exam Dec. 6, 10AM-12:45PM

- Blue Bossa
- GROOVE: LH bass lines, RH chords
- RH melody, LH chords
- RH improvisation

Grade Breakdown

Weekly Progress Quizzes: 45%

Module Exams: 30%

Final Exam: 25%

Statement for Accommodations and Support

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact *The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS)* at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/CASS.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with

communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org

**I want this class to be beneficial to you individually. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns you may have about a particular assignment, the class as a whole or anything else.

***The content of this course is subject to change at any time. I will be adjusting the course to fit the particular needs and interests of this group of students. If anything changes in how I will evaluate you, I will let you know as soon as I can.