

Commercial Piano I

MUSA 2255

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

Office Hours:

Monday/Wednesday 11:30AM, Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:30PM

*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. 22-Sept. 7

Major Key Diatonic Chords, Functional Tonality and Secondary Dominants

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

PERFORMANCE EXAM #1 - Sept. 12

- grooves (LH bass notes, RH chords)

Module 2: Sept. 14-Oct. 5

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

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

PERFORMANCE EXAM #2 - Oct. 10

- 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. 12-Nov. 2

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. 7

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

Module 4: Nov. 9-Nov. 30

UNIT 4: Blue Bossa

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

Final Exam Monday, Dec. 5, 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.

Required Attendance

Music+: an audience-collaborative music composition in 10 streams by Chris Reyman
 Tuesday, September 6, 10:30AM
 Centennial Plaza

Saturday, November 5, 11am & 3pm

Experiencing the Bosque: A Performance at the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

<http://tinyurl.com/bdd44shp>

Growing out of a collaboration between the Center for Environmental Resource Management (CERM) and the Rubin Center for the Visual Arts, [Experiencing the Bosque](#) is a multigenerational project radically integrating community organizing, art-making and environmental stewardship through the activity of creating performances together. Grounded on embodied practices that reconnect us to land and what Robin Wall Kimmerer calls “more-than-human nature,” this project is a deep investigation of the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park— a 372-acre ecological restoration project of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo valley ecosystem on the U.S.-Mexico border. During this multi-year project, we are offering ongoing public workshops, performances and other events that use the creative process as a vehicle to bring together university faculty and students from The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), public schools, non-profit organizations, independent artists and members of the public.

After 12 months of public workshops, [Somos Agua/We Are Water](#) is excited to bring together everything our 300+ workshop participants contributed during the first phase of the project into our first big public performance on November 5th, 2022. Don't miss it!

**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.