Commercial Piano I  
MUSA 2255

Instructor: Dr. Chris Reyman  
Office: FFA 438  
Contact: 747-7805, cereyman@utep.edu

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

Office Hours:

Monday/Wednesday 11:30AM-12:00PM, Tuesdays/Thursdays 9AM

*Please let me know 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 chord symbols and lead sheets
• reading traditional notation

Course Schedule

**All assignments are subject to change throughout the semester.

Module 1: Weeks 1-4
Major Key Diatonic Chords, Functional Tonality and Secondary Dominants
• root position triads
• chord-scale relationships
• grooves: 2-beat, waltz, bolero

PERFORMANCE EXAM #1 - Sept. 20
• grooves (LH bass notes, RH chords)

Module 2: Weeks 5-8
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. 18
• 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: Weeks 9-12
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. 15
• LH bass lines and RH chords
• RH melody, LH chords

Module 4: Weeks 13-16
UNIT 4: Blue Bossa
• altered dominant chords
• minor tonality
• bossa groove
• melody and LH chords
• improvisation

Final Exam Monday, Dec. 4, 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

October 10, 2023, 7:30PM, Fox Fine Arts Recital Hall
Jazz Band concert

November 17, 2023, 7:30PM, Fox Fine Arts Recital Hall
Dr. Dena Kay Jones Faculty Recital

December 9, 2023, 7:30PM, Fox Fine Arts Recital Hall
Commercial Music Ensemble Recital

**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.