

# NAME OF COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

## Applied Piano & Piano Proficiency

### Syllabus

Course number, Spring 2023

Credit Hours (depending on student's course of study)

Professor: Dr. Gretchen L. Hull

Office:

Email:

Phone: (585) 831-7708

Office hours:

### **Example Catalog Description**

Applied (private lesson) study is available only by permission of the appropriate studio faculty, and requires an audition. May be taken for major, minor, elective, or proficiency credit. 1-6 credit hours. Each level number must be taken for a minimum of two credit hours before advancing to the next number. A minimum of two semesters at level (-10,-20, etc.) is required before advancing to the next level. Minimum four hours of practice per credit per week. Applied study does not carry Integrative Studies first-level credit.

### **General Objectives**

The primary objective of applied piano is to systematically develop one's musical and technical abilities, through the study of a wide range of repertoire, styles, and techniques, to learn from fellow piano majors, and to encourage one another to become more conversant in the principles that constitute good music-making. Regardless of past or present level of playing, every student is expected to make significant progress towards artistic and solid performance, commensurate to their abilities. The refinement of your musicianship and artistry, as well as the general discipline required to hone your performance ability on the instrument, will equip you with the tools that will serve you well in any future musical capacity. The corporate goal of the studio is for students to encourage and enlighten each other, creating an effective learning environment.

## **General Arrangement of Subject Matter**

Performance and music education majors with piano concentration will assemble, with guidance from the professor, a recital program of varying works, and work each piece up to performance level, by memory, for recitals, juries, departmentals, and/or studio classes. This normally equates to 3-6 works per semester.

Proficiency students must work on specific material assigned by the professor to pass each of their required piano proficiency benchmarks.

## **Required Texts**

Piano Performance and Music Education majors with Piano Concentration:

Students must own their own copies of the repertoire being performed. No photocopies are allowed. If library scores are checked out, students must not write any fingerings or put markings into the scores.

Class Piano for Proficiency students:

Class piano section 1: Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults Book 1; Ronald Chioldi, Geoffrey Haydon, Tony Caramia, James Lyke

Class piano section 2: Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults Book 2; Ronald Chioldi, Geoffrey Haydon, Tony Caramia, James Lyke

Class Piano for non-music majors:

*Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1 & 2*, 2nd Edition, by E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow. Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.

## **Lesson Scheduling:**

Lesson times are scheduled by email before the first week of class. For new students, the first lesson will largely entail going over details of your musical and performance 'history.' Please provide a copy of your complete repertoire, i.e. works learned, memorized, and performed, to this first lesson. If you do not already have this, please take the time to craft an original—this is very valuable, not only for me, but for you as well!

## Studio Policies

**Attendance and Communication.** Applied lessons are scheduled in in-person sessions, with each student participating at a distance, or in online synchronous zoom meetings. It is important for everyone to be present and engaged at each scheduled lesson. **If you are unable to attend, arrangements must be made to reschedule the lesson within 24 hours of the lesson, except in the case of emergencies or other completely unforeseen circumstances.** If you miss a lesson and have not given sufficient notice to the teacher, your grade for the course may be affected.

Consistent attendance and preparation for weekly lessons is of utmost importance. You are allowed two excused absences from lessons per semester. However, **unexcused absences will lower your grade by half a letter each time,** and these lessons will not be made up. If you are more than 15 minutes late to your lesson, it will count as an unexcused absence, and I may no longer be waiting for you.

Emails should be responded to within 24 hours; this is a good rule of thumb not just for communicating with your professors, but in most of life!

**Preparation for Lessons (piano majors).** Your preparation for each lesson is crucial, and will count toward your final grade. *All fingerings must be decided intentionally and marked clearly in the score prior to the lesson.* Failure to do this will result in a lowered grade. I am here to guide fingerings only after this preparatory work has been done. You are expected to bring all scores and a pencil to every lesson. You are welcome to come prepared with questions or technical issues that have arisen in your practicing.

### Grading Scale

The standardized grading scale used for this class is as follows:

A = 94-100

A- = 90-93

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86

B- = 80-83

C+ = 77-79

C = 74-76

C- (minimum passing grade) = 70-73

D = 65-69

F = anything below 65

## **Grading Policy for Performance Majors**

Pre-jury studio grade comprises of:

- **Preparation:** 40 %  
Includes practicing for lessons, assignments, and being on time for lessons
- **Level of improvement:** 30%  
Improvement throughout semester
- **Performances:** 30%  
Includes Student Performer Series (2), studio classes (2), and recordings done for class (1)
- **Attendance:** Unexcused absences lower total grade by half a letter grade each.

**Please note:** Your pre-jury studio grade accounts for 60% of your entire semester applied piano grade. The remaining 40% is determined by your juries or degree recital. As three keyboard faculty are required to grade juries, each faculty member determines 13.3% of your grade. Thus, my combined total grade for you is 73.3% of your final grade. Degree recitals are graded, and the final letter grade for your recital will be reported to you, but not to Academic Records (it will be calculated into your applied semester grade). For each semester in which you give a degree recital, you must also pass an independent piece, performed at the time of juries. Every piano student must also play accompaniments for instrumental and vocal students.

## **Grading Policy & Requirements for Music Ed Majors**

Studio grade comprises of:

- **Preparation:** 45 %  
Includes practicing for lessons, assignments, and being on time for lessons
- **Level of improvement:** 35%  
Improvement throughout semester
- **Performances:** 20%  
Includes Student Performer Series, studio classes, etc. **Music Ed piano majors must perform in at least one studio class and one student performer series recital, though more is encouraged.**
- **Attendance:** Unexcused absences lower total grade by half a letter grade each.

**Please note:** Your pre-jury studio grade accounts for 60% of your entire semester applied piano grade. The remaining 40% is determined by your juries or degree recital. As three keyboard faculty are required to grade juries, each faculty member determines 13.3% of your grade. Thus, my combined total grade for you is 73.3% of your final grade. Degree recitals are graded, and the final letter grade for your recital will be reported to you, but not to Academic Records (it will be calculated into your applied semester grade). For each semester in which you give a degree recital, you must also pass an independent piece, performed at the time of juries. Every piano student must also play accompaniments for instrumental and vocal students.

### **Grading Policy for Proficiency Students**

Studio grade comprises of:

- **Preparation:** 45 %  
Includes practicing for lessons, assignments, and being on time for lessons
- **Level of improvement:** 35%  
Improvement throughout semester
- **Benchmark exam performance:** 20%
- **Attendance:** Unexcused absences lower total grade by half a letter grade each.

### **Grading Policy for Minors and other Non-Majors without Benchmark Requirement\***

- **Preparation:** 55 %  
Includes practicing for lessons, assignments, and being on time for lessons
- **Level of improvement:** 45%  
Improvement throughout semester
- **Attendance:** Unexcused absences lower total grade by half a letter grade each.

\*If you must perform a jury, your pre-jury studio grade accounts for 60% of your entire semester applied piano grade. The remaining 40% is determined by your juries or degree recital. As three keyboard faculty are required to grade juries, each faculty member determines 13.3% of your grade. Thus, my combined total grade for you is 73.3% of your final grade. Degree recitals are graded, and the final letter grade for your recital will be reported to you, but not to Academic Records (it will be calculated into your applied semester grade). For each semester in which you give a degree

recital, you must also pass an independent piece, performed at the time of juries. Every piano student must also play accompaniments for instrumental and vocal students.

### **Grading Rubric:**

An **"A"** grade means:

- Having a positive attitude in all facets of your piano study, and being receptive to being taught in lessons.
- Being proactive in choosing your repertoire and organizing your study of these works to maximize your practice and lesson time.
- Being consistent and diligent in your practice, and coming to all lessons prepared.
- Demonstrating significant progress from lesson to lesson.
- Taking initiative for discovering the depths of music and making strides on your own to cultivate the critical elements that constitute artistic pianism
- Developing a solid performance 'platform'– that is, learning works soon enough (mid semester) that you have immersion with the character of the music, solid technical achievement, memory assuredness, and confidence on stage by the end of the semester.
- Delivering excellence in all of your performances regardless of what works are being performed
- Completing all assignments on time and with consistently excellent quality

A **"B"** grade means:

- Generally positive, and showing some desire to learn.
- Neutral in searching for new works to learn; instead, waiting to be told
- Coming to some lessons prepared, but not all
- Good progress, but not as much as your full potential
- Assimilating some concepts from lessons, but not learning how to discover musicality and refine technicality on your own
- Performance largely solid, but having some weak spots
- Completing all assignments on time, with acceptable quality

A **"C"** grade means:

- Being somewhat interested in lesson, but unenergetic
- Lacking any ideas for appropriate repertoire, and not making effort to discover new works
- Coming to many lessons not prepared, not correcting errors and having to be retold
- Mediocre progress

- Lack of cognizance about the fundamentals of quality piano performance, and an unwillingness to learn and grasp these crucial concepts.
- Performance mostly weak and revealing lack of preparation
- Incomplete assignments, with inconsistent quality

A “**D**” grade means:

- Having a negative attitude; unreceptive to being taught
- Not putting forth much, if any, effort to repertoire consideration, practice, or studio participation
- Total disregard for style, musicality, and technique in performance.
- Failure to complete assignments on time, with total neglect of requirements for given assignments

**Academic Honesty:** The piano is essentially an ‘honesty machine,’ and will indicate whether or not you have done your work! It is expected that all students and members of the College and community will uphold the highest standards of honesty in all of their studies and academic work, as doing everything unto the Lord.

### **Practice time expectations:**

Majors are expected to do a minimum of *four hours of piano practice, per credit hour, per week*. Thus, if you are taking 1 credit, you must do at least four hours per week, divided however you like. 2 credits would equate to 8 hours, or roughly 1.5 hours per weekday. 3 credits would be 12 hours, or roughly 2.5 hours per day, and so on. Again, this is the minimum requirement. Adding extra practice time is always advisable and beneficial! When preparing for a performance, you should always plan to perform your program at least once in advance. You should increase the numbers of hours of practice leading up to a performance, but not play too much the day of the performance.

### **Professional Assignments & Requirements for Performance Majors**

- Performance majors this semester will prepare, for their own future use, a professionally formatted and thorough CV and repertoire list.
- In addition, they will choose one of their jury pieces (minimum of 4 minutes if not a virtuosic etude) to make single-take high quality video and audio recording files. This will be divided into multiple steps throughout the semester.
- Performance majors are also required to play in 2 Student Performers Series recitals. If for any reason, two such recitals are not scheduled within the semester, let me know, and the requirement will be amended accordingly.

- Performance majors must be present at studio class, and are expected to prepare pieces for at least 2 studio classes each semester.

## **Piano Proficiency Benchmarks**

*The following list includes final piano requirements for all music students (non-keyboard majors) including Mus. Ed. vocal & instrumental, composition, BMus with non-music elective studies, vocal & instrumental performance majors.*

*\*\*The BA and BS majors should be able to complete #'s 1-6 at a slightly lower benchmark*

1. **Repertoire:** students will study a variety of pieces which demonstrate musical sensitivity to articulation, pedaling, dynamics, voicing and rhythm.
2. **Technique:** All major and harmonic minor scales and arpeggios in 4 octaves, hands together.  
Beginning students will start with 5 note finger patterns, hands separately.  
Then one octave and 2 octave scales, hands separately  
Then hands together for 2 octaves, then 3, and finally 4 octaves  
The BA and BS major should achieve 2 octaves hands together - all keys
3. **Harmonization and Transposition:** Ability to harmonize and transpose printed melodies with the harmony in the LH and then gradually use a variety of accompaniment patterns (waltz-bass, broken chord, swing-bass, alberti bass, etc.
4. **Playing by Ear:** Ability to play simple melodies by ear and harmonize with primary and secondary chords. Beginning students will play a melody line without chords. The next step will be to harmonize a melody with I and V, then I, IV and V7.
5. **Sight-Reading:** Ability to sight-read with rhythmic and note accuracy.
6. **Lead Sheets:** Ability to play from a lead sheet and create a lead sheet with chord symbols/"reduce" an accompaniment to something playable if the difficulty level of the piece is not within reach. (particularly important for vocal majors)

7. **Open-Score Reading:** ability to read 2, 3 and then 4 part open-scores.
8. **Accompaniment:** Ability to accompany a 4 part choral setting (hymn playing, patriotic songs, etc.) with strong tone and clean pedaling

## **Safety, Health, and Wellness**

### **Please note the following cautions in the course of your piano study:**

- Repetitive motion injury--  
Piano playing and practice involves repetitive motions. To avoid repetitive motion injuries (and other injuries and conditions such as tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, shoulder tension, and back pain), keep good sitting posture, maintain relaxed shoulders, arms, and wrists at all times, and get up to stretch and increase your circulation at regular intervals. At the first sign of pain, stop practicing immediately, do some stretches, and consult me. The cause could be incorrect posture, playing technique, awkward fingerings, or practicing for too extended a period of time. If the problem persists, the cause may be physiological or even anatomical, and may require pain medicine, cold or heat treatment, stretching therapy, or other medical treatment. If this is necessary, I will have you consult your physician.
- Decibel levels--  
Solo piano playing sound level usually falls within the safe limits of 80 dbls. The wearing of soft earplugs would only be necessary if a piano is unusually loud. However, the pianist needs to hear subtle details of sound, so earplugs are not generally recommended, nor needed.
- Safety around the instrument--  
Pianos are large and very heavy instruments. Never try to move a piano by yourself! To move a piano, seek the help of several people. Use caution also when lifting the lid. For grand pianos, place the large stick at the perpendicular slot, not the upper slot for the small stick. Additionally, make sure that the key cover is fully retracted, so it does not fall forward onto your hands while playing!

**Academic Support and Accessibility Services:** *If you have an academic or physical disability that requires accommodations, it is up to you to self-report any such disability to the office of Academic Success and Accessibility Services in the Center for Student Success, located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Chamberlain. (585-567-9622). With appropriate*

*documentation, you will be afforded the necessary accommodations. For more information about Academic Support and Accessibility Services, go to:*  
<https://www.houghton.edu/current-students/center-for-student-success/academic-support-and-accessibility-services/>

Although some lessons will be held online/remotely, all COVID guidelines must be followed by all students on campus. Here is a set of general guidelines as put forth by the college:

### **Laboratory and Studio COVID-19 Guidelines**

Guidelines for class sessions in which everyone sits or stands in one location for the duration of the class are quite straightforward. Washing or disinfecting hands, doorknobs, and desks; wearing masks; and staying at least six feet apart are manageable. Laboratory and studio meetings often include people moving around, sharing equipment, and sometimes having to work closely together for brief periods of time. For situations like these, where social distancing may not be practicable for the entire session, please use the following guidelines.

The guidelines in our re-opening plans apply in laboratories and studios: careful hygiene, personal protective equipment, and adequate distance between people.

**1. Hygiene.** Careful and thorough hygiene will be necessary: Everyone in the room should wash or disinfect their hands before entering the space, and immediately upon leaving. Anyone with signs or symptoms of illness should not attend labs, studios, or classes.

Work spaces, such as lab tables, doorknobs, and other surfaces that are commonly touched should be disinfected before beginning to use the space, and again at the end of the session. The students or lab assistants can be responsible for cleaning. Shared apparatus that requires a lot of touching, like computer keyboards or touchpads on instruments, should be disinfected between sessions. For some items, such as delicate or small parts, clay, specimens, and paint, routine disinfection may not be practicable. When such items are shared or passed from one student to another, please emphasize the importance of good hygiene practices, like washing hands and not touching one's face.

**Personal Protective Equipment.** Masks should be worn at all times in laboratories and studios. Careful use of masks is essential when people may be closer than six feet (twelve feet for singing), even for a moment. Clear face shields have not been shown to be as effective as masks, so professors should also wear a mask if they might come closer than six feet to another person. Additional protective equipment, such as gloves, goggles, and face masks may be used if the professor considers them necessary.

**Social distance.** Spread students out in the lab or studio so that they are at least six feet apart. Since laboratories last longer than most classes, if more than six feet of separation is possible, please make it so.

Each student group, e. g. lab partners, should consist of the same members throughout the semester, and seating in the laboratory or studio should be assigned. These practices will help with contact tracing in the event of an infection. Student groups and seating charts can be formed during the first week of the semester, when we are using remote instruction. Please keep careful records of attendance throughout the semester.

For some learning activities, it may be possible to use more than one room to increase the distance between people.

With thorough hygiene and careful use of personal protective equipment, it will be permissible for students to work in small groups at distances closer than 6 feet for short periods of time. The length of time in proximity should be as short as possible, ideally no more than 10 minutes at a time.

**Additional considerations.** If the laboratory or studio space has hoods or exhaust fans, they should be turned on all of the time when people are in the lab. We are adding MERV-11 or better filters to the air handling systems in the classroom buildings, too.

If a learning activity for a lab or studio can be conducted outdoors, please consider doing so. If people might come closer to each other than six feet, masks must be worn even outdoors.

Students who have to be isolated or quarantined for two weeks or more during the semester will have to miss sessions in your labs or studios, if they cannot participate remotely. You should help them as you would students who are ill in any other semester. If possible, you would offer opportunities for them to make up the learning experiences once they return from quarantine, and not penalize them for the absences. If a student starts a course in person and then chooses (or is required) to complete the class remotely, they will have to acknowledge that the lab or studio experience will be different than if they participated in person, including that they may not meet all of the learning outcomes for the lab or studio. We will allow late withdrawals if that is the student's preference. At the same time, we are obligated to enable them to complete the semester and learn well even if they do not return to class in person.

**Other ideas.** It may be possible to hang clear shower curtains perpendicular to the front of each hood, to separate students while they are using the hood. Such separations between people does not replace the requirement to wear masks.

Some professors are arranging some learning activities so that they can be completed at different times by different students, so that fewer students at a time are in a space or using the same equipment. It may help to stagger the start times for a session, so that fewer students need the same piece of equipment at the same time. Students may be able to complete some learning activities at times other than those scheduled for the lab or studio.

Other methods have been explored that are in between what can happen when everyone is fully in lab on one end, and having the professor run the experiment alone and send students the data to analyze on the other. In one method, the remote students work with a lab partner who is present in the lab, giving direction on the next steps to take or figuring out the process to be carried out by the person who is present. The lab partner who is present in the lab provides feedback to the remote partner about the conditions, including observations that do not transmit digitally, like temperature, texture, and odor cues. In another, the remote students collect data through video and audio of the lab instruments, taking and recording readings themselves for analysis.