

LSMSA Course Syllabus

MU 101 – Intro to Music Theory I

TR 8:00-9:15 OR 9:30-10:45

Room 201 MAB and 215 MAB

Dr. Al Benner (318) 357-2537

Room 214 MAB - office hours as posted on office door or on website

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COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

This course will encompass two elements—a theory portion and a piano playing portion. There are many overlaps between these two elements, but in general:

Theory

To gain knowledge and comprehension of the basic fundamentals of music and to serve as an introduction to the common practice period of music theory. This will include, but is not limited to, a study of the rudiments of musical materials including reading music, key and time signatures, intervals, basic harmony, rhythms, major and minor scales, chord structures. We will also do a rudiment discussion on how Western music developed and discuss each Musical Era from Medieval through 20th-century. Proper preparation in the above will aid the student in a basic understanding of musical language and also prepare them for further study in music theory. The student will be given the opportunity to be challenged; to develop musical skills that will express his/her abilities that will aid in future instrumental and/or vocal playing, and will be beneficial in other music courses.

Piano

To gain knowledge and understanding of the piano; to develop skills that will aid the individual in effectively performing piano literature that suits his/her abilities and challenges them; to learn proper technique and a strong foundation of correct and healthy ways to play the piano; and to develop other musical skills that will aid in the future study of the piano and other music courses. If one already plays the piano, appropriate material will be substituted. Overall, however, the main purpose of this portion of the course is to have fun playing the piano.

MATERIALS

Pencil, paper and manuscript paper brought to each class.

TEXT

Ottman, Robert W.: *Elementary Harmony: Theory and Practice, 5th ed.*

The Instructor will also provide individual music sheets as needed.

Bastien, James.: *The Older Beginner Piano Course, Level 1 OR Level 2*

OR Lancaster, E. L. and Kenon, D.: *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1*

OR other appropriate piano music as assigned. If needed, the Instructor will also provide individual music sheets. It is the student's responsibility, however, to bring outside music on those days that are given to the student to learn music that they wish to play.

THEORY EXAMINATIONS AND GRADING

Specifics about grading procedures will be discussed in class by the Instructor. In general:

- The Instructor expects material to be learned in a timely manner. Exams will be given to ensure proper understanding of the material covered and as a review.
- There will be an individual mid-term exam on material covered up to that point. There will also be a final exam covering material for the entire semester.
- There will be class assignments (or homework) fairly frequently. These assignments will either be on materials already discussed and/or materials we will be discussing in the next class period. Credit will be given for all homework assignments. Assignments not turned in will receive 0 points. You have up to one week after the due date to turn in homework assignments to receive partial credit. It is better, however, to turn in all assignments, no matter how late. Some credit may be awarded depending upon circumstances. Homework assignment points come particularly in play for those in "gray" areas.
- Students are required to attend **two** musical performances (as described by the Instructor) during the semester and turn in a written (computer or typed) report, minimum one page, single and ½ spaced, font no larger than 12 point, about the event (**due no later than one week after the performance date**). **One is required by the mid-term exam; the other the last day of class.** Reports turned in after the week period will not receive full credit. You can always turn in your reports before the due dates. You will receive up to 10 points for each paper depending upon meeting the qualifications above. If one of your

papers is not turned in by mid-term, you will receive a 5 point deduction from your mid-semester grade. For the overall semester, missing reports will result in a 10 point deduction from your overall class average—consequently, without both reports, you cannot make an "A" in this course.

- At the discretion of the Instructor, a point(s) can be given for either exceptional work or a minus(es) for behavior that is disruptive or refusal to participate in class requirements or assignments. This will be part of your class participation grade given at the end of the semester.

For the theory exams, you will be given a point total to indicate a letter grade of A, B, C, or D. Grades are determined as a percentage according to: 100-90=A; 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69 or below=D. Your final grade is determined based on the overall point total.

Exams are based on 100 points. The mid-term exam is 100 points; the final exam will be doubled (or worth 200 points). Homework will vary in the number of points depending upon the assignment.

Grade breakdown: Exams 80%; Homework 5%; Class participation 5%; Concert Reviews 10% (class participations and concert reviews figure into both theory and piano sections where applicable).

PIANO EXAMINATIONS AND GRADING

Specifics about grading procedures will be discussed in class by the Instructor. In general:

FOR BEGINNING PIANO STUDENTS

- There will be class playing assignment where the student will be given up to 8 points depending upon how they play the assignment. There might also be written class assignments at the discretion of the Instructor in place of a class playing assignment. You will be given only one opportunity for each class playing assignment. Be prepared! Low scores may create a deficit that even perfect scores on your playing exams will not overcome. The total of these assignments will be multiplied by 80% to give a final point total for the semester [or in this case, every assignment comes with 2 bonus points].
- There will be playing exams on assigned sheet music. A score will be given up to 40 points depending upon how they play the assignment. The student will have the opportunity to re-test on these pieces in subsequent class times as many times as they wish to improve their score [one time each class] for a period of **3** weeks to play their piece if they wish to improve their score. As the semester progresses, this time may be extended to **4** weeks; however, this will be discussed by the Instructor at the proper time.
- There will be a Mid-term Exam covering class assignments and exams. The test will consist of a written section and may have a performance section. This will be discussed in more detail as the Mid-term Exam approaches.
- There will be a Final Exam covering class assignments and exams. The test will consist of a written section and a performance section. This will be discussed in more detail as the Final Exam approaches.
- At the discretion of the Instructor, pluses can be given for either exceptional work or minuses for behavior that is disruptive or refusal to participate in class requirements or assignments. These points will only increase or decrease the student's overall point total.

Since playing exams and class assignments will be given as needed, the overall point total can only be determined at the end of the semester. The number of playing exams, class assignments, and reports determines point totals. At the appropriate time, point totals for the Mid-term and Final Exams will be determined. These will typically run somewhere between 10% to 20% of the total grade. You will be notified of the total points before the exams.

Grades are determined as a percentage according to: 100-90=A; 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69 or below=D. Your grade is determined based on the overall point total.

You will be given separate grades for the theory portion and the piano portion. The above explains the breakdown for each portion. It will then be combined for a final grade. The Mid-term and the Final Exam will be a comprehensive one on both sections. Thus the final breakdown: Theory tests 50% (includes final); piano assignments 30%; concert review papers 10%; homework 5%; class participation 5%.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PIANO STUDENTS

- There will be a progress score given every 2 weeks based on assigned sheet music. A score will be given up to 10 points depending upon how you play the assignment or individual piece. Depending upon whether it is an assignment or a piece, newer assignments and/or pieces might be given. There will be a Mid-term Exam covering a particular piece. This will be discussed in more detail as the Mid-term Exam approaches.

- There will be a Final Exam on your assigned pieces. This will be discussed in more detail as the Final Exam approaches.

Grades are determined as a percentage according to: 100-90=A; 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69 or below=D. Your grade is determined based on the overall point total.

You will be given separate grades for the theory portion and the piano portion. The above explains the breakdown for each portion. It will then be combined for a final grade. The Mid-term and the Final Exam will be a comprehensive one on both sections. Thus the final breakdown: Theory tests 64% (includes final); piano assignments 16%; concert review papers 10%; homework 5%; class participation 5%.

FOR ADVANCED PIANO STUDENTS

Since the classification for Advanced Piano student is a student taking lessons with Dr. Jones, when the class breaks down to Beginning and Intermediate Groups to learn piano, you will use that time to practice for Dr. Jones' class. Since you are already being graded by Dr. Jones on your piano abilities, you will not receive a piano grade in this course.

Your grade will be based on Theory only. There will be no piano score. The following explains the breakdown: Theory tests 80%; concert review papers 10%; homework 5%; class participation 5%.

THEORY READING ASSIGNMENTS

Although this may vary, we will basically cover the first three chapters of the Ottman. This reading will be spaced out throughout the semester. There will also be a supplemental reading material covering the musicology section. You will be told what pages to read of this supplement when appropriate.

EXAMS SCHEDULE

Generally by mid-term we will have 2 theory exams and then the mid-term exam. Piano playing assignments will be as pieces are learned. After mid-term, there are generally 2 theory exams and then the final exam. Piano playing assignments will be throughout as needed. **IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO ME THAT YOU LEARN THE MATERIAL THAN GIVING A SPECIFIC GRADE.**

The following is a guideline and may be altered depending upon the progress of the class. Exams will be during the prescribed weeks covering the Arts Faculty. These will be discussed at least a week in advance of when they are given. The mid-term exam will be either Oct. 4 or 6. Final exam is as posted. These exams will be spaced throughout the semester to correspond to when material should be learned in a timely manner. Major conflicts will over LSMSA will be discussed and if possible, worked around. This will be discussed in class if appropriate.

PRACTICE

Practice outside class is required to become a better pianist (and to make the progress that will be a portion of your grade). Treat practice sessions as you do studying for any other course here at LSMSA. The time to prepare for playing exams and class assignments is before you come to class, not during class time.

ATTENDANCE

Students must adhere to the LSMSA attendance policy. Failure to attend a class will be reported on the attendance report. The administration and/or the school nurse, not the Instructor, will determine whether or not an absence is excused. If you do miss a class for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate to know what took place during your absence and to prepare for any class assignment or exam that will take place upon you return. Unexcused absences will result in a minus for any class assignment you missed. Attendance is taken at the beginning of class. If you enter after attendance is taken, you will be marked tardy. Three unexcused tardies are considered as one absence. You are tardy once class begins. If you are tardy, it is your responsibility to get the material you missed from a classmate.

HONOR CODE

Students will abide by the Honor Code regulations as stated in the student handbook.

LIFE PHILOSOPHY

Do what is right even if it is unpopular.

Don't let others think for you.

Be true to yourself.

Take responsibility for your actions.

There is always a choice.

I can think of no good reason to use "curse" words in the context of this class. You will not hear such language from me either in or out of the classroom. I don't expect to hear it from you.