



MUSI 1181-160CL  
CLASS PIANO I  
SYLLABUS  
**Spring 2023**

Catherine Schaefer, Professor

**DAY/TIME/LOCATION**

Piano I  
Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:50 AM  
Technical Vocation, Bldg. #5, Room 1436

**INSTRUCTOR:** Catherine Schaefer; [cschaefer@com.edu](mailto:cschaefer@com.edu); 409-933-8348

Dr. Paul Boyd [pboyd@com.edu](mailto:pboyd@com.edu); 409-933-8342

Please leave a callback number if no answer in person.

Cindy Medford Fine Arts Administrative Assistant, is usually available during business hours at extension 8348.

**Fax:** 409-933-0034

**Communicating with your instructor:** ALL electronic communication with the instructor must be through your COM email. Due to FERPA restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about performance in the class through other electronic means.

**OFFICE:** TBD

**STUDENT (OFFICE) HOURS:** Appointments during scheduled hours or at other times are encouraged so that time can be devoted to each student individually.

Please use the COM email addresses above to communicate. Generally I answer all inquiries within 48 hours or sooner, but if you email or call on Friday-Sunday, I may be occasionally out of town performing or teaching a workshop in the real world (and away from the virtual one) until Monday.

Schaefer Tues. 11am

Boyd online/in studio by appointment

**TEXTBOOK/MATERIALS:** Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book I

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/BENEFITS:** This course provides the beginning piano student with an introduction to basic keyboard skills. Class piano is required prior to private instruction. For music majors, the ultimate benefit of class piano is that it helps one build the abilities required by

most four-year programs to pass a barrier exam. For non-majors, the primary benefit is personal enrichment.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Majors:** To transfer successfully to a four-year university, you **MUST** complete one unit each week. If you fall behind at any time, make an appointment with me and catch up immediately! The music faculty will go out of our way to ensure your success!

**Non majors:** Since this course is primarily for your enjoyment, you may proceed at a more leisurely pace. If you are practicing in class, you should easily complete a minimum of one chapter per month. At the discretion of the instructor, extra credit may be given for attending student recitals at COM.

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS/ASSIGNMENTS**

Opportunities to attend performances will be offered during the semester. Non-majors may earn extra credit for these, and all enrolled may consult the instructor for information on requirements for Honors credit for this and other courses in the music area. In addition, the software programs in our Music Technology Center are available to further enhance your piano and musicianship skills.

**METHODS OF EVALUATION:** A variety of means to evaluate student performance is employed, such as classroom participation, daily playing assignments, playing exams, and written assignments.

## **GRADING**

50% in-class playing grade. On Thursdays, we will play what we have been working on for each other in class, and will offer comments and suggestions to colleagues. You must perform at least 10 times during the semester. Your grade is based on number of times participating (10 is 100, 9 is 90, etc.), your overall preparation, and your participation when it comes to giving feedback to others.

**Majors:** Your grade is also based upon your level of completion. Each unit contains a wide variety of repertoire, written exercises, keyboarding skills, etc. that must be mastered according to the instructor's evaluation before gaining approval to progress to the next.

Complete 13 Units = A (100)  
Complete 12 Units = A (92)  
Complete 11 Units = B (84)  
Complete 10 Units = C (76)  
Complete 9 Units = 68  
Complete 8 Units = 60

Complete 7 Units = 52  
Complete 6 Units = 44, etc.

**Non-majors:** You should complete at least level 6. This should not be difficult if you attend class and practice outside of class regularly.

50% Tests (20% midterm, 30% final)

For the midterm and final, you will perform 3 pieces you have been working on during the semester, as well as perform certain exercises (five finger patterns, arpeggios, scales, transpositions) as assigned. The repertoire pieces may be recorded ahead of time.

#### GRADING SCALE

- A Superior achievement of course objectives.
- B Outstanding achievement of course objectives.
- C Achievement of minimum course objectives. (Not recommended for music majors!)
- D Marginal achievement of course objectives.
- I DUE TO THE INTENSIVE ONE-ON-ONE TIME REQUIREMENT PLACED ON THE INSTRUCTOR, INCOMPLETES WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR CLASS PIANO. SEE "W" GRADE BELOW.
- F Failure to achieve course objectives.
- W Withdrawal on or before the "W" date as specified in the College Calendar.

**MAKE-UP/LATE WORK:** The final class date is exactly that: final. Incompletes are not given in this course. Work completed after the final day will not count. Do not wait until late in the semester to "catch up" since you may encounter difficulties that we will not have enough time to work through together. If you must miss class, you are still responsible for practicing the assigned material. Music majors must keep pace with one unit per week regardless. If you have questions or problems, ask the instructor.

**ATTENDANCE "POLICY":** Absences are not classified as "excused" or "unexcused." Students are expected to be prepared and on time for each lesson. ANY absence or late arrival potentially lowers your grade since it lessens your preparation time. While the college does not grant a set number of misses, the instructor reserves the right to drop or fail any student who has three absences. Do not depend on the instructor to drop you; **each student is responsible for turning in paperwork by W day if wanting to drop the course.**

**TARDINESS:** If you are more than five minutes late to a tutoring/office appointment, the instructor may leave to conduct other college business. This time does not have to be made up.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVES:** Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Produce five finger patterns in major and minor keys.
2. Play major and minor scales in selected keys.
3. Construct and play chords of different qualities.
4. Harmonize a melody.
5. Perform selected compositions.

This course is not part of the core curriculum. However, the following state-wide “core competencies” are listed below with information on their inclusion and means of assessment in this course as mandated by the college:

- 1) Critical Thinking (CT): (SLO #1—see box below)  
Assessment of your creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information is done through our final playing exam in which you employ all of these elements in your performance.
- 2) Communication Skills: (SLO #2)  
Your ability to develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication is assessed through writing assignments in every unit.
- 3) Teamwork: (SLO #3)  
Assessment of your ability to consider different points of view and to work with others effectively to support a shared purpose or goal will be made through participating in an ensemble piece during the semester.
- 4) Social Responsibility: (SLO #4)  
Intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities is assessed through your participation in class including positive comments and quiet respect for others in the lab and during performance exams.

Student Learner Outcome	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
1. Demonstrate elements of critical thinking by interpreting a musical score.	Critical Thinking Skills (CT)	Final playing exam
2. Identify and express in writing the musical elements of pitch/tonality, rhythm, and harmony.	Communication Skills (CS1)	Written Assignments
3. Show effective teamwork through participatory group activity.	Teamwork (TW)	Ensemble Project
4. Show respect and demonstrate demeanor culturally appropriate to the setting.	Social Responsibility (SR)	Class participation

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Any incident of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with college policy and the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty – such as cheating on exams is an extremely serious offense and will result in a **grade of zero** on that exam and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the appropriate disciplinary action.

**CONCERNS/QUESTIONS STATEMENT:** If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me using the contact information previously provided. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact Paul Boyd at [Pboyd@com.edu](mailto:Pboyd@com.edu) or 409-933-8342.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

Week 1	Class instruction, first repertoire and technical skills assignments
Week 2	Placement test on note names and staff (Piano I), second repertoire/skills assignments (all levels)
Week 3-15	Class introduction of new concepts weekly Tests on keys, positions, rhythms, etc. announced in class. Playing auditions for teacher to pass to next level at least once weekly.
Week 16	Music majors auditioned for level of completion (which unit level achieved) Final test on last class day; all at Unit 12 exempt!

As noted above, music majors should complete one assigned unit per week. Non-majors may proceed at their own pace, as long as I see evidence of diligent practice daily.

## **PROFICIENCY: IMPORTANT TRANSFER INFORMATION**

All music majors will be required to play and pass a “barrier” examination or jury for a faculty panel before graduating from a four-year university. Piano skills can make or break your academic career in music; many students have even been required to re-take class piano before receiving their degrees. If you have trouble with the pace, schedule extra time outside of class or hire a piano major to coach you.

**ADDITIONAL** \*\*For obvious reasons, food and beverages are not allowed in the classroom.\*\* You may bring your own headphones. Bring a sweater or jacket if you want to stay warm - the air conditioning is ice-cold throughout the year. Best wishes for a successful semester!

## **TIP FOR SUCCESS: PRACTICE!**

Music majors are required to practice a minimum of piano thirty (30) minutes EACH day **in addition** to the full class period (eighty minutes). This will be absolutely necessary for your success in gaining proficiency. Your preparation is evaluated on a daily basis; practice enough on your own so that you aren't practicing in front of the instructor! Non majors are encouraged to do the same, but may proceed at their own desired pace, but not less than an average of 15 minutes per day.

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## 10 Tips for efficient practicing – If you follow these steps religiously, you will save time!

1. Start your practice section with a hard spot that you've been struggling with, then reward yourself by playing through a section you already know well.
2. Work from the end of the piece: play the last measure first, then the last two measures, then the last four, etc.
3. Listen to the recordings that come with the textbook.
4. Break things down by isolating one skill and focusing on that: for example, play the right hand by itself, then the left hand. Once you're comfortable with each hand separately, try hands together.
5. Practice the fingering by tapping your fingers on your lap or the table, without the keyboard.
6. Take frequent breaks! If you get to a point where you start to feel frustrated and are not making progress, change things up. Work on another piece, practice exercises, do written work, or simply do something else altogether for 3-4 minutes, like stretching or drinking some water. Usually when you return to your previous task, it will be easier than it was before.
7. Help yourself read music. If you keep playing a wrong note or fingering, write it in! Color-code right hand vs. left hand, mark places where you will need to move hand positions, do whatever is helpful. Eventually, you will want to get to the point where you are not relying on these crutches, but it's ok to do this at the beginning.
8. Tap and count the rhythm before you start working on a new piece. See if you can sing the notes out loud. Make up words to the piece to help solidify the rhythm. This will help a lot (another reason why you should definitely listen to the recordings).
9. Practice SLOWLY – at half or even a quarter tempo. If you have trouble with this, use a metronome.
10. Do absolutely EVERYTHING in your power to avoid making the same mistake twice. A mistake repeated two or more times is much harder to fix than a mistake made only once. Try to be very analytical about what you can do better, and ask for feedback as much as possible.

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## Institutional Policies and Guidelines

**Grade Appeal Process:** Concerns about the accuracy of grades should first be discussed with the instructor. A request for a change of grade is a formal request and must be made within six months of the grade assignment. Directions for filing an appeal can be found in the student handbook [Student Handbook 2022-2023 v4.pdf \(com.edu\)](#). *An appeal will not be considered because of general dissatisfaction with a grade, penalty, or outcome of a course. Disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment of the quality of the student's work and performance is also not an admissible basis for a grade appeal.*

**Academic Success & Support Services:** College of the Mainland is committed to providing students the necessary support and tools for success in their college careers. Support is offered

through our Tutoring Services, Library, Counseling, and through Student Services. Please discuss any concerns with your faculty or an advisor.

**ADA Statement:** Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to contact Kimberly Lachney at 409-933-8919 or [klachney@com.edu](mailto:klachney@com.edu). The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in the Student Success Center.

**Textbook Purchasing Statement:** A student attending College of the Mainland is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

**Withdrawal Policy:** Students may withdraw from this course for any reason prior to the last eligible day for a “W” grade. Before withdrawing students should speak with the instructor and consult an advisor. Students are permitted to withdraw only six times during their college career by state law. The last date to withdraw from the 1<sup>st</sup> 8-week session is March 1. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is April 24. The last date to withdraw for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-week session is May 3.

**FN Grading:** The FN grade is issued in cases of *failure due to a lack of attendance*, as determined by the instructor. The FN grade may be issued for cases in which the student ceases or fails to attend class, submit assignments, or participate in required capacities, and for which the student has failed to withdraw. The issuing of the FN grade is at the discretion of the instructor. The last date of attendance should be documented for submission of an FN grade.

**Early Alert Program:** The Student Success Center at College of the Mainland has implemented an Early Alert Program because student success and retention are very important to us. I have been asked to refer students to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If you are referred to the Early Alert Program you will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center who will schedule a meeting with you to see what assistance they can offer in order for you to meet your academic goals.

**Resources to Help with Stress:**

If you are experiencing stress or anxiety about your daily living needs including food, housing or just feel you could benefit from free resources to help you through a difficult time, please click here <https://www.com.edu/community-resource-center/>. College of the Mainland has partnered with free community resources to help you stay on track with your schoolwork, by addressing life issues that get in the way of doing your best in school. All services are private and confidential. You may also contact the Dean of Students office at [deanofstudents@com.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@com.edu) or [communityresources@com.edu](mailto:communityresources@com.edu).