

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for MUS 21A

BEGINNING PIANO

Effective: Fall 2017

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

MUS 21A — BEGINNING PIANO — 1.00 units

Group instruction in piano for the absolute beginner with emphasis on developing technique, reading music, and performing.

1.00 Units Lab

Strongly Recommended

MUS 6 - Basic Music Skills

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

Family: Music Piano

	MIN
Lab Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:

A. MUS6

1. interpret notation of both pitch and rhythm;
2. identify and construct simple intervals;
3. interpret expressive markings such as dynamic indications, accents, repeats;
4. recognize and construct scales: major, minor (3 forms), chromatic, whole-tone;
5. perform simple exercises in ear training and sight singing.

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Sight-read and transpose melodies in major and minor five-finger patterns
- B. Exhibit technical skills adequate for beginner pieces
- C. Perform simple passages in all twelve major keys
- D. Improvise melodies in major and minor five-finger patterns as the teacher plays an accompaniment
- E. Perform in ensemble with one or more other students
- F. Harmonize melodies with root position chords
- G. Perform simple pieces in correct rhythm and at a reasonable tempo

V. CONTENT:

A. Keyboard Basics

1. Physical principles involved in playing the piano
 - a. Height of bench
 - b. Distance from keyboard
 - c. Proper finger position
 - d. Posture

B. The instrument

1. Pitch
2. Duration
3. Volume
4. Timbre

C. Elements of technique

1. Free fall
2. Use of the thumb
3. Crossings
4. Rotation
5. Fingering

- 6. Two-hand coordination
- 7. Projection
- 8. Register balance
- D. Theoretical elements
 - 1. Pulse and meter, odd time signatures
 - 2. Intervals
 - 3. Scale groups
 - 4. Chord groups
 - 5. Keyboard patterns
 - 6. Rhythms
 - 7. Form
- E. Expressive elements
 - 1. Elementary phrasing
 - 2. Pedal
 - 3. Legato
 - 4. Climax
 - 5. Contrast
 - 6. Mood
 - 7. Voicing
 - 8. Musical content
 - 9. Style
- F. Sight-reading
 - 1. Principles of good sight-reading
 - 2. Skill building
 - 3. Practice techniques
- G. Improvisation
 - 1. Adding chords to a given melody when no chord symbols are given
 - 2. Improvise a melody over a given chord structure
- H. Ensemble playing
 - 1. Duets
 - 2. Larger ensembles
- I. Beginning piano literature
 - 1. Baroque
 - 2. Classic
 - 3. Romantic
 - 4. 20th Century
 - 5. Popular styles

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. **Demonstration** -
- C. Film and recordings
- D. Audio sources for playback and recording
- E. Guest presentations when available/feasible
- F. Individual and ensemble performance

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. In reading (example)
 - 1. Read the handout on practice suggestions and evaluate your own routine.
- B. In writing, listening, problem solving/critical thinking
 - 1. Provide chord symbols for a given melody.
 - 2. Analyze a given melody and suggest suitable accompaniment figures.
 - 3. Listen to the performance of another student and give constructive suggestions.
 - 4. Prepare and perform a beginning-level piece for a recital.

VIII. EVALUATION:

- A. **Methods**
- B. **Frequency**
 - 1. Weekly practical performance activities
 - 2. One mid-term piano recital
 - 3. One final piano recital
 - 4. One final examination

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Lancaster, E. L. and Kenon D. Renfrow *Group Piano for Adults*. 2nd ed., Alfred Publishing, 2008.
- 2. Goodine, Elizabeth. *Simplifying Chords: A Textbook For the Classroom and a Reference For the Road*. 1st ed., Tate Publishing , 2016.
- 3. Terzibaschitsch, Anne . *Piano Dreams Solo Book 1* . 1st ed., Trinity College London Press , 2016.
- 4. eNovative Piano - Online Curriculum for group piano classes. 2009. Designed by Firefly Digital, a Lafayette Web Design Firm. info@enovativepiano.com

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: