

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for MUS 21A

BEGINNING PIANO

Effective: Fall 2010

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

MUS 21A — BEGINNING PIANO — 1.00 units

Group instruction in piano 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

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. Listen to the four-measure introduction to establish the tempo, mood, and style before beginning the melody on page 64.

VIII. EVALUATION:

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

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Heerema, Elmer *Progressive Class Piano*. 2nd ed., Alfred Publishing, 1984.
- 2. Hilley, Martha and Lynn Freeman Olson *Piano for the Developing Musician*. 5th ed., Schirmer, 2002.
- 3. Lancaster, E. L. and Kenon D. Renfrow *Group Piano for Adults*. 2nd ed., Alfred Publishing, 2008.
- 4. Small, Allan *Basic Timing for Pianists*, Alfred Publishing, 2006.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: