

### Information

Instructor: Dr. Debora DeWitt, x-4192, ddewitt@grcc.edu  
Office Hours: Office Hours: To be announced following confirmation of applied lesson schedule  
Text: Two textbooks are required:  
Keyboard Musician for the Adult Beginner by Francis Clark;  
Fundamentals of Piano Theory by Snell and Ashleigh  
Additional Materials: pencil, manuscript notebook

### Course Description

This class is for the student with no prior music-reading experience. It is taught with the assumption that the student has never played the piano and has no prior formal piano study. The emphasis is on introducing basic concepts of notation, musicianship, keyboard geography, and technique. This class meets for two hours per week. Two hours of practice outside of class are expected for every hour in class – four hours per week.

### Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- Read music in bass and treble clefs.
- Understand rhythms in basic time signatures, including simple and compound meters.
- Sightread in simple and compound meters.
- Play all white and black key major and minor five-finger patterns.
- Play all major and minor triads.
- Harmonize simple melodies using I and V.
- Play white key major scales using tetrachords.
- Play Major and Perfect intervals on all white keys.
- Sight-read simple melodies

### Strategies for the Successful Completion of Beginning Piano

1. **Attend class regularly – don't cut.**
2. **Practice to perform!** Practice outside of class – you'll need to! 4 hours of outside practice are required. Practice *all* parts of the weekly assignment, as you will need to perform in class every day.
3. **Keep up with the course work!** This is the kind of class you need to stick with. Do your best to ask questions right away if you're having trouble. If you don't understand the assignments, come see me! Don't wait until *after* I've graded your performance to tell me you really didn't understand the assignment. You will help yourself by reviewing the assignments in time to ask questions if you don't understand. Learn by doing! Lots of doing! Lots of practice!
4. **Utilize scheduled office hours** to ask questions outside of class; if my office hours are inconvenient, take advantage of the campus e-mail system to contact me. I appreciate your questions! They help me assess how well (or not well) students are grasping the material.
5. **Attend Friday Keyboard Labs** to get extra help from our piano majors. Play your pieces for me during office hours before they're due in class for extra help. Remember that tutors are available for all Piano Techniques Courses.

### Important Dates:

Monday, September 2: Labor Day – Campus is closed

**Monday and Wednesday, October 14 and 16 – Midterm Exam (both days)**

Monday, November 25 – Yes, we do have class this day! And it's my birthday! I may bring treats!

Tuesday through Sunday, November 26 – December 1 – Thanksgiving Recess

Wednesday, December 4 – last class day. ALL MAKEUP WORK MUST BE COMPLETED BY THIS DATE

**Wednesday, December 11 – Final Exam 10:30 to 12:30**

## Course Policies

Grades: Your semester grade will be calculated from a total of 1000 points, assigned as follows:

200 points	Theory and Musicianship Quizzes
240 points	Technique assignments (Five-finger scales and arpeggios, Other scales and technique)
210 points	In-class performances
150 points	Midterm Exam
200 points	Final Exam

A	940 points or above
A-	900 – 939 points
B+	870 – 899 points
B	840 – 879 points
B-	800 – 839 points
C+	770 – 799 points
C	740 – 769 points
C-	700 – 739 points
D+	670 – 699 points
D	640 – 669 points
D-	600 – 639 points
E	000 – 599 points

NOTE: Students must earn a “C” or better to continue on to MUS121 Piano Techniques All grades and instructor feedback will be posted on Blackboard. You will also find a calculated grade column that updates automatically with your grade to date. In addition I post announcements, course documents, changes to the schedule, and other useful information. **Be sure to check Blackboard frequently.**

### Explanation of grading categories

#### Theory, Musicianship, and Sight-reading Quizzes

Theory assignments as found in the course calendar are not graded. However, quizzes are given on each chapter in the theory text. Some of these quizzes are written quizzes; others are ear training (aural) quizzes or demonstration quizzes.

#### Technique

Technique includes five finger scales, arpeggios, eight note scales, and may also include keyboard harmony assignments.

#### Repertoire

Students will learn pieces from the repertoire section of Frances Clark book and perform literature from the Frances Clark book as listed in the course calendar. Students are also required to perform repertoire as part of their midterm and final exam. A performance grading rubric follows:

**Excellent:** In addition to correct notes and rhythms, an excellent performance is one where tempo, dynamics, phrasing, articulation, and balance between the hands are appropriate for the piece performed. The student has worked out technical problems and his or her performance displays musicianship. An excellent performance stands out as an example for the class.

**Good:** In addition to correct notes and rhythms, a good performance is one where most elements of tempo, dynamics, phrasing, articulation, and balance between the hands are in place. There may be one or two

errors in notes or rhythms, but none so great as to destroy the flow of the performance. In addition, the performance displays some musicianship.

**Adequate:** An adequate performance is one in which notes and rhythms are accurate. A few elements of tempo, dynamics, phrasing, articulation, and balance between the hands are in place.

**Failing:** A failing performance is one in which the number of errors outweighs the accuracy of the performance.

#### In-class Attendance Policy and Attendance expectations:

1. *Absenteeism policy.* Any more than FOUR absences will be difficult for you to recover from. Students are expected to remain in class the entire class period and to arrive on time. Arriving late or leaving early twice constitutes one absence. The college makes no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Please review the official college absence policy on page 28 of the GRCC catalog: [www.grcc.edu/catalog](http://www.grcc.edu/catalog).
2. *Consequences of being late.* All quizzes are given at the beginning of class. The door will be locked during quizzes. Students who are late will not be able to perform that day's quiz but will be allowed to enter following the quiz.
3. *Makeup work.* My general policy regarding makeup work is no make-ups for missed work. However, you should state your case. Illness verified by a physician is a valid reason. Campus field trips and other required performances are also valid reasons in my opinion for makeups. Verification for these items is always required. Life happens. If you encounter life's challenges, let me know.

In addition, I allow *three free redos* of assignments per student throughout the semester. You may use your redos to make up for an illness not verified by a physician, to make up for an ill-prepared assignment, or to make up for an unverified absence.

4. *Students are responsible for class material whether or not they are present in class.* If you miss class for any reason, my expectation is that you WILL be prepared for the next class period in which you are present. Any assignments due when you return will be assessed according to the course schedule. And, your absence will be counted toward the maximum of four allowed.
5. **Dropping this class: Student-initiated drop deadlines are listed below:**

**Student-initiated drop: 11/9/13**  
**Change to Audit: 9/21/13**

Note: While I appreciate you letting me know if you're planning on changing your enrollment to W (Withdraw) or Au (Audit), I don't have the power to change student enrollments. *If you want to drop the course, YOU must do so all by yourself!* Visit <http://www.grcc.edu/studentcenterDrop> for more information on how to drop a class.

Appropriate Classroom Behavior: Students in my class are expected to . . .

- **Respect your neighbors and BE QUIET when they are performing!** Respect me too and be quiet when I'm provided instruction.
- **Know your neighbors!** Do you know who is sitting next to you? If not, introduce yourself. Maybe he or she is the one person in this world who will pull you out traffic on Times Square, saving your life . . . be your karaoke duet partner that helps you win that big contest . . . teach your children . . . or become a partner in the music business you've been thinking of. Get to know the people around you!

- **Participate!** Responding, playing, asking, discussing, thinking . . . all of these things are good. Do them, but please be respectful! Let others respond, play, ask, discuss, and think too. This will be a noisy class – use your headphones!
- **Be a team player!** Work to maintain effective working relationships with your classmates and with me. You don't have to be best friends – or even friends at all, but YOU may need a bass player someday – there's probably one somewhere in this room . . . or in one of your other classes. So, be considerate of each other – support your classmates, and find ways to work together. Working with all personality types is one of the most important things you'll learn in College and one of the most important things you'll need to be able to do in life. We don't always get to choose who we work with. But, in reality we're all stronger with each other than we are by ourselves. And sometimes the quirkiest people are fun to be around, so work with everyone. And be stronger learners as a result.
- **And . . . be cheerful!** I am a better teacher when you have a good time and at the very least **APPEAR** interested and motivated. Help me out by showing interest! One of my favorite phrases is *Make a Good Day*. Attitude is everything! It's up to you whether or not you have a good day – so be in charge of yourself and *make* good days happen this semester . . . and come to class with a smile ☺!
- **Effective working relationships have the following characteristics:**
  - *Positive feedback* – congratulate your classmates when they do something well. Support them in their activities. *Show* your support by attending their recitals and concerts. Celebrate each other's academic successes.
  - *Honest feedback* – be honest with your classmates and hold them accountable for their actions, speech, and work. When you need to be critical, use appropriate language!
  - And . . . *Criticize ideas – not people!*

### Communication policy

*Email:* College policy states that Students are responsible for all communications sent via Blackboard and to their GRCC email account. GRCC student email can be accessed through [Student Email](http://email.grcc.edu) (<http://email.grcc.edu>) and Blackboard at [Blackboard](http://bb.grcc.edu) (<http://bb.grcc.edu>). If you use an off-campus email account such as Gmail or hotmail your message may be diverted to my spam folder, so it's best to use your GRCC email address. GRCC student email can be accessed through [Student Email](http://email.grcc.edu) (<http://email.grcc.edu>) and Blackboard at [Blackboard](http://bb.grcc.edu) (<http://bb.grcc.edu>).

- Please fill in the "subject" field for all messages so I know what you're e-mailing about, otherwise during a busy week I may ignore it. Include earlier messages in your reply.
- Sign your emails so I know who you are, especially if you have a funky email address doesn't include your name.
- Expect a response from me to your e-mail within 24 hours.

*Office telephone (616) 234-4192.* I check my campus voice mail Monday through Thursday once per day, but check email throughout each day. I may not check as often on Saturdays or Sundays.

*Blackboard IM.* Sign up for Blackboard IM! I often have BBIM open when I'm working in my office and when I'm working at home throughout the week. To download Blackboard IM, login to Blackboard and click "Blackboard IM – Instant Messaging" in the Tools Window once you login.

### Early Alert

GRCC uses an Early Alert monitoring system. Students may be flagged for academic performance issues. Students not logging into Blackboard for seven consecutive days are automatically flagged. If I feel your performance and/or absences jeopardize your ability to succeed in this course, and you have not responded to my emails, phone calls, or

pestering please, I will flag you for early alert and you will be contacted by a Retention Specialist from the counseling office. You may be referred to support services such as tutoring, advising and counseling.

### College Policies Statement

The academic policies and procedures of GRCC are outlined in the College Catalog. College-wide policies and procedures, to include (but not limited to) grading, Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Student Right to Know, Privacy, Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, Americans with Disability Act (ADA), concealed weapons, smoking, campus crime, copyright, academic grievances and discipline grievances, are at <http://www.grcc.edu/catalog>. Additional policies, to include (but not limited to) academic integrity, disability support services, posting/distributing literature, selling merchandise, fundraising, classroom disruption, conduct and substance abuse, can be found in the GRCC Student Handbook at <http://www.grcc.edu/handbook>. If you come to campus for this or other classes or meetings, remember that GRCC is a tobacco-free campus. Go to <http://www.grcc.edu/tobaccofree> for complete details on the GRCC policy or for resources about quitting. Finally, the most recent policies (that may not have been published in the catalog and handbook yet) are at <http://www.grcc.edu/policies>. These policies and procedures are subject to change and incorporated by reference.

**Disability statement:** Students with disabilities who require accommodations must register with the Disability Support Services Office in Room 368 of the Student Center. Verification of disability is required to receive reasonable academic accommodation. Call (616) 234-4140 for more information.

**Technical Support:** The IT Customer Support Team can assist with Blackboard, password resets, Novell and student email accounts. Hours and other helpful information can be found at <http://www.grcc.edu/itsupport/students>.

**Tutoring:** The Academic Support Center is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Library - Room 232 (GRCC Learning Resources Center). The application for tutorial assistance can be downloaded from the ASC website. See <http://cms.grcc.edu/tutoring>.

**Cheating, Fabrication, and Plagiarism.** The following definitions are taken from pages 151-152 of the Student Handbook. Students should visit the college website for the most complete and up-to-date explanation of the GRCC Academic Dishonesty Policy: <http://www.grcc.edu/departments/service/studentconduct/codeofconduct/conductacademichonesty.html>. Please look over this policy carefully as GRCC and I take academic dishonesty very seriously. Penalties for academic dishonesty in my courses can be found at the end of this section.

*Cheating* is defined as intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study in any academic exercise

- External aids such as books, notes, calculators, conversation with others are prohibited when taking an examination unless specifically allowed by the instructor
- Students may not have others conduct research or prepare work for them.
- Major portions of the same academic work may not be submitted more than once for credit without authorization.

*Fabrication* is defined as intentionally falsifying or inventing any information of citation on any academic exercise)

*Plagiarism* is defined as intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another person as one's own in an academic exercise.

Cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism are ALL are prohibited by college policy. *In my classes the penalty for cheating, fabrication, or plagiarism is a failing grade on the work in question. If students cheat on an exam, the penalty is a failing grade in the course.* In addition the College policy on Academic Dishonesty prohibits intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty.

For our Piano Technics courses the most applicable part of this policy is under *Cheating* and presenting work from previous courses as new work. If you are repeated MUS221 or have studied applied piano here for credit, you may not perform the same repertoire pieces for credit in this class. You will also be asked to perform alternate Keyboard Harmony assignments when applicable.

The GRCC Student Code of Conduct can be found at:

<http://www.grcc.edu/departments/service/studentconduct/codeofconduct/conducthome.html>.

The College expects all students to conduct themselves as responsible citizens and members of the academic community. It is the responsibility of each student to know, observe, abide by and adhere to GRCC's Student Code of Conduct, rules and regulations. Additionally, students are to abide by all rules applicable to conduct in a classroom environment and at College-sponsored activities. Students by enrolling in the College, are automatically placed under the rules and regulations established by the College. Therefore it is the student responsibility to familiarize themselves the rules and regulations affecting them. Students are expected to follow the GRCC Student Code of Conduct. You can review the code of conduct online at the link above. The GRCC Student Code of Conduct includes the above policy on academic dishonest, as well as classroom conduct, general conduct, discipline procedures, and rules for athletes.

*The instructor reserves the right to change the contents of this syllabus due to unforeseen circumstances. Students will be given notice of relevant changes through GRCC student email and/or Blackboard.*