

Spring 2026 Ball State University College of Fine Arts / School of Music / Group Piano MUSP 141 Group Piano (second semester sections)

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Office Hours

Faculty will post office hours as soon as schedules are set. Office hours may be scheduled by appointment with teaching assistants.

Course Description

The goal of the group piano courses is to provide music majors with functional keyboard skills necessary for the development of comprehensive musicianship. The second semester continues to focus on basic keyboard performance skills developed in the first semester, and includes sight reading, technique development, harmonization, transposition, keyboard ensemble playing, improvisation, and open score reading.

Course Prerequisite

Successful completion of MUSP 140 with a grade of C or better or placement into MUSP 141 through the piano placement assessment.

Course Rationale

Basic keyboard competency is an essential foundation for all other music courses and subsequent careers in music.

Class Meetings

All sections of group piano meet two days a week, Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday in room MU 211. For sections taught by faculty members, the first class period is taught by the faculty member and the second class period is taught by the teaching assistant assigned to each section. Sections that have a graduate teaching assistant as the instructor will have that instructor for both days.

Required Textbooks

1. Lancaster, E. L., and Kenon D. Renfrow. *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book One*. 2nd ed. Van Nuys, California: Alfred, 2004.

Please note that if you come to class without your textbook, you will receive an unexcused absence on that day.

Course Objectives / Student Learning Objectives / Expectations and Final Grades

Final grades will consist of the points earned on the piano proficiency competencies. Students must earn a grade of C or better in order to fulfill the requirements of the course and/or progress to the next course. Incomplete grades will not be given except in extreme circumstances. Any incomplete grade requests must be approved by Dr. Rhoden and the School of Music administration prior to the end of the semester. By the end of the semester, all students should be able to complete each of the following competencies with a minimum grade of 8 out of 10 possible points (80 %):

Piano Proficiency Competency Requirements: 130 points

Level 1 Proficiency - Majors: Music Performance, Music Theory/Composition, Instrumental/General Music Education, Music Media Production and Industry

Second Semester Competencies (10 points each)

1. Black key major scales: 2 octaves, hands separate, using appropriate fingering, from memory, minimum speed: quarter note = 60.
2. Chord progression: I-vi-IV-ii6-I64-V7-I in all major keys in keyboard style with 3 notes in RH and root in LH, from memory. (See example on page 253.)
3. Chord progression: i-VI-iv-ii06- i64-V7-i in all minor keys in keyboard style with 3 notes in RH and root in LH, from memory. (See example on page 253.)
4. Harmonization/Transposition: Prepare an assigned harmonization of a diatonic melody with Roman numerals using I, vi, ii, IV and V7 chords in appropriate inversions (p. 258, no. 3). Transpose up or down a whole step (instructor will choose the transposition.)
5. Improvisation: Create an improvised 2-hand accompaniment at sight from given diatonic and secondary chord symbols.
6. Sight-reading (2 competencies): sight-read a short selection at the upper elementary level.
7. Playing by ear: prepare to perform 5 melodies by ear from a given list, from memory, in a simple key chosen by the instructor (C, G, D, A, F, Bb, Eb, Ab), with blocked primary triad accompaniment. Play a brief introduction and then sing the melody while you play the melody and the accompaniment.
8. Score reading (30 minute preparation allowed): play any two adjacent parts from a 3- or 4-part choral score (the instructor will choose the two parts).
9. Repertoire: perform 4 repertoire selections at the late elementary level (from the music score, not from memory) with appropriate interpretation and attention to expressive elements.

Students will have two opportunities to achieve a minimum passing score of 8 points out of 10 on each competency. The only possible scores for competency tests are 10, 9, 8 or 0. Students who achieve a score of 10, 9, or 8 on any individual competency on test days will pass the competency and will not be required to perform it again. Students who achieve less than the minimum 8 points on any competency will receive 0 for that competency and will be required to repeat the competency at the end of the semester. The only scores possible on the repeat attempt will be a passing score of 8 points or failing score of 0 points. If a **repertoire selection** is not passed during the semester, the instructor will replace it with a new repertoire selection for the second attempt. (The repertoire piece will be assigned approximately 2-3 weeks before you have to perform it.) Sight-reading second-attempt competencies will also be completely new. All other second-attempt competencies will remain the same. All second-attempt competencies must be completed before final exams begin. **Note: students may only re-attempt a maximum of 4 competencies for the semester.**

Final exam competencies will be scheduled by individual appointment during the final exam period. Possible scores for the final exam competencies will be the same as during the semester: 10, 9, 8, or 0. Students must earn a passing score of at least an 8 on any competency scheduled for the final exam in order to receive any points for that competency. Please note: final exam competencies cannot be repeated – they may only be taken one time.

Grading Scale:	A	100-94 %	C	76-74 %
	A-	93-90 %	C-	73-70 %
	B+	89-87 %	D+	69-67 %
	B	86-84 %	D	66-64%
	B-	83-80%	D-	63-60%
	C+	79-77 %	F	59 % and lower

NOTE: If you fail 2 or more competencies for the semester, or if you fail 1 competency and have low grades on others, you may not achieve the required grade of a “C” in this course. Your final grade cannot be determined until all competency attempts have been completed after finals week and after any absence adjustments have been made.

Personal Headphones

Each student registered for any MUSP 141 class will be required to purchase their own headphones and bring them to class. You must have a headphone that is compatible with the piano lab system. The headphone needs to have a microphone, must have a TRRS mini jack (CTIA compliant) and **must be hard-wired. (Wireless ear buds will not work.)** It is likely that any headphone that works to make calls on most I-phone or Android phones will work but this is not completely certain. Please note that if you attend class without your headphone or with a headphone that does not meet requirements, you will receive an unexcused absence for that day, since you will not be able to fulfill the class requirements for that day.

Cleaning Classroom Keyboards and Benches

Sanitizer wipes will be available in the classroom. All students should use hand sanitizer or wash their hands immediately prior to class. Students will be responsible for sanitizing their own keyboard and bench before class starts. Before sitting down at the piano, students should get a sanitizer wipe and completely wipe down the bench, music rack, anything that gets touched such as power button and any other buttons on the keyboard, and the keys. Students should do this BEFORE turning the keyboard on for safety reasons. It is very important that students do not let the sanitizer wipes drip into the keys or other areas, since liquid can damage the electronics. This is optional, but included here for your safety, since many people play these pianos every day.

Canvas

Your instructor will be using the Canvas course management system to record grades on the piano proficiency competencies. At the end of the semester, if you have more than three unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered as indicated in the attendance policy listed below. Students are encouraged to review Canvas regularly to check your grades. See your instructor if you have any questions.

Practicing and Class Preparation

Consistent, quality practice time is critical to success in this class. PROPER PREPARATION PREVENTS POOR PERFORMANCE. Research confirms that consistent, daily practice is more productive than practicing in large blocks of time on a few days. Please do not hesitate to seek extra assistance from the faculty or teaching assistants. Assignments should be practiced in advance and ready for class on the days indicated so that you are prepared to ask questions or get specific assistance. If you are absent at any time, confirm the assignments with your instructor prior to the next class.

Attendance Policy

Students are required to attend all class periods regularly and should arrive on time. Consistent with [University policies regarding student absences](#), absences will be excused for the following: funeral and bereavement leave, jury duty, late course addition, military absences, observance of religious holidays, pregnancy leave, student-athletes participating in University- or department-approved activities, and university advisories.

In addition, excused absences include a BSU-sponsored activity (travel notice required) or illness requiring absence from class. **If you wish to request an excused absence from any class period for any reason, you must communicate with and receive approval from your faculty instructor in advance. Students who miss class on a competency test day will receive a 0 on the competencies unless there is a medical documentation of the absence as being necessary, documentation of death in the family, or BSU travel notice.** Absences are not automatically excused just because you request them – your instructor will determine if your absence will be excused. If you do not communicate with your instructor in advance, the absence will not be excused unless it is an emergency situation (as determined by your instructor). If you have the faculty member as your instructor, and if the absence occurs on the day taught by the teaching assistant, you must also inform the teaching assistant. **An excused absence request requires written documentation detailing your name, date of the absence, and reason for the absence. Final grades will be lowered one grade increment for students having more than three unexcused absences, and will continue to be lowered another grade increment after every 3 additional unexcused absences. Excessive absences may result in failure of the course. Tardiness of 15 minutes or more will be considered an absence and will be treated accordingly. It is your responsibility to discuss any absences with your instructor. More information about university absences can be found at [University policies regarding student absences](#)**

Course Withdrawals

Successful completion of the piano proficiency competencies is a requirement for all music majors. Students are encouraged to persevere in the group piano classes since group piano levels are only offered once per year. A student who withdraws from the course will not be able to repeat the course again until the following year. Students who have not passed numerous competencies before the end of the course withdrawal period may wish to withdraw from the course. Please contact your instructor before withdrawing from any group piano class. You should also check with the Ball State Financial Aid office to see if a withdrawal affects your financial aid in any way.

University Syllabus Statements

Title IX

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit www.bsu.edu/titleix or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at titleix@bsu.edu.

As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment. This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

What happens after I report? The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant **chooses** to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

Student Academic Ethics Policy

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's [academic integrity website](#) (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).

- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

FERPA and Privacy

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading [Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection](#).

University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

Disability Statement

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's [Statement on Freedom of Expression](#), the resources on Ball State's [Freedom of Expression webpage](#), and [Ball State's Beneficence Pledge](#).

Engagement Expectations

To support a respectful and engaging academic community that encourages the free exchange of ideas and civil discourse, we will follow these ground rules:

- **Respect different perspectives.** Share your ideas and let others share theirs.
- **Challenge ideas, not people.** Disagree respectfully. No personal attacks or put-downs. Focus on exploring ideas critically and constructively.
- **Listen to understand.** Stay curious, ask questions to understand, and give others space to speak.
- **Assume good intentions.** Approach discussions with curiosity and compassion.
- **Keep it private.** What is shared in class stays in class. Do not share others' words or work without permission.
- **Be respectful.** Avoid hurtful language, stereotypes, or content that may demean others. Keep feedback constructive.

University Student Services

The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free tutoring for many courses. We also provide writing and study skills tutoring. Students can make appointments for virtual (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments.

To make an appointment, visit my.bsu.edu and click on “Navigate” in the Additional Tools section, or just go directly to <https://bsu.navigate.eab.com>Links to an external site.. You can also download the Navigate Student app.

The Learning Center also has drop-in tutoring (no appointment necessary) for math, chemistry, and biology. Check our website for more information.

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center.

For more information about all of our programming visit www.bsu.edu/learningcenterLinks to an external site. or call 765-285-1006. Email us at learncenter@bsu.edu.

Follow us on Instagram and X: BallStateLC

The Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing.

The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!

The Basic Needs Hub

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the [Basic Needs Hub](#). The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a [Basic Needs Assistance Form](#).

The Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found

The Speaking Center

The [Speaking Center](#) is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message.

The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

Subject to Change Statement

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Course Schedule

The course schedule is a general weekly course outline and may not be inclusive of all assignments.

Week 1: January 5
Unit 14

Week 2: January 12
Unit 15

Week 3: January 19
Note: Monday, January 19 is Martin Luther King Jr. Day – no classes
Unit 16

Week 4: January 26

Competency Test #1

1. Sightreading #1: sightread a short selection at the upper elementary level.
2. Repertoire #1: page 330
(After the test begin Unit 17)

Week 5: February 2
Unit 17

Week 6: February 9
Unit 18
Score reading #1: 2 parts

Week 7: February 16

Competency Test #2

1. Black key major scales, 2 octaves, hands separate, using appropriate fingering, from memory, minimum speed: quarter note = 60.
2. Repertoire #2: page 334
(After the test begin Unit 19)

Week 8: February 23
Unit 19
Score reading #2: 3 parts (any 2 adjacent parts)

Week 9: March 1-8
Spring break – no classes

Week 10: March 9
Unit 20
Score reading # 3: 3 parts (any 2 adjacent parts)

Week 11: March 16
Unit 21
Score reading #4: 3 parts (any 2 adjacent parts)

Week 12: March 23

Competency Test #3

1. Harmonization/Transposition p. 258 #3 (Simple Gifts): Prepared harmonization of a diatonic melody with Roman numerals using I, vi, ii, IV and V7 blocked chords in appropriate inversions. Transpose up or down a whole step (instructor will choose the transposition.)

2. Repertoire #3: page 238
(After the test begin Units 22-23)

Week 13: March 30
Units 22 and 23 (eliminate black key minor scales)
Score reading #5: 4 parts (any 2 adjacent parts)

Week 14: April 6

Competency Test #4

1. Chord progression: I-vi-IV-ii6-I64-V7-I in all major keys in keyboard style with 3 notes in RH and root in LH, from memory. (See page 253)

2. Chord progressions: i-VI-iv-ii06- i64-V7-i in all minor keys in keyboard style with 3 notes in RH and root in LH, from memory. (See page 253)
(After the test begin Units 24 and 25)

Week 15: April 13

2nd attempt competency tests

Units 24 and 25

Score reading #6: 4 parts (any 2 adjacent parts)

Select Repertoire #4 from the following: 298, 317, 328, 331, 335, 337, 340, 343, 344, 346.

Note: that if you have to repeat/make-up a repertoire selection because you did not pass it the first time, you will choose a make-up piece from this list. This should be a different piece from the one you have selected for your Repertoire 4.

Practice final exam requirements

Week 16: April 20

2nd attempt competency tests

Score reading #7: 4 parts (any 2 adjacent parts)

Repertoire #4

Practice final exam requirements

***Bring mobile devices to class to complete faculty evaluation**

Week 17: April 27 (Monday classes only)

2nd attempt competency tests

Practice for final exam

Final Competency Exam: Scheduled by individual appointment during finals week.

1. Sight-reading #2: sight-read a short selection at the upper elementary level.
2. Vocal score reading: (30 minute preparation allowed) play any two adjacent parts from a 3 or 4 part choral score (the instructor will choose the two parts).
3. Repertoire #4: choose one of the following: 298, 317, 328, 331, 335, 337, 340, 343, 344, 346.
4. Playing by ear: prepare to perform 5 melodies by ear from a given list, from memory, in a simple key chosen by the instructor (C, G, D, A, F, Bb, Eb, Ab), with primary triad blocked chord accompaniment. Play a brief introduction and then sing the melody while you play the melody and the accompaniment.
5. Improvisation: Create a 2-hand accompaniment at sight from given diatonic and secondary chord symbols.