Fall 2026 Ball State University College of Fine Arts / School of Music / Group Piano
MUSP 140 (Level 1 piano classes)

Dr. Lori Rhoden – Coordinator of Piano Pedagogy and Group Piano, Professor of Music Performance - Piano

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

Course Description
The goal of the group piano courses is for students to develop functional keyboard skills important for comprehensive musicianship. The first semester class focuses on basic keyboard performance skills such as sight-reading, technique, harmonization, transposition, keyboard ensemble playing, and improvisation.

Course Prerequisites
None

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

Course Eligibility
Please note that once a student begins in the group piano sequence (MUSP 140, MUSP 141, MUSP 240, MUSP 241, MUSP 325), students who successfully complete any level of group piano cannot register for any other previous level in the sequence. Students must continue to progress through the sequence from where they start until they have successfully completed the required number of semesters for their degree program.
Vocal/general music education majors will need four semesters of piano; all other music majors will need two semesters of piano. Students become eligible for MUSP 325 individual lessons through the piano placement assessment process, or through successful completion of MUSP 241. MUSP 140 and 240 are offered in the fall semesters, and MUSP 141 and 241 are offered in the spring semesters. No group piano classes are offered in the summer.

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

Feedback Policy
Instructors should respond to email from your official Ball State email address within 48 hours. Emails may be delayed if we are out of the office. Contact your instructor directly if you have questions or concerns about your performance in class. If you have further concerns, please contact the group piano coordinator.

Required Textbook
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 attend class without your textbook, you will receive an unexcused absence for that day, since you will not be able to fulfill the class requirements for that day. Students must have a legal copy of the textbook and should abide by all legal policies regarding intellectual property. Scanning pages of the textbook to avoid purchasing a textbook or using an illegal electronic copy is a copyright violation. As of the date of this syllabus, there are no legal electronic copies of this textbook.

Personal Headphones
Each student registered for any group piano class is required to purchase their own headphones and bring them to each 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**.) Any wired headphone that works on most I-phones or android phones will likely work with the class management system. 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.

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 grades must be approved by the group piano coordinator and the Associate Director of the School of Music prior to the end of the semester. By the end of the semester, all students should be able to complete the following competencies with a minimum grade of 8 out of 10 possible points (80 % mastery):

First Semester Piano Proficiency/Competency Requirements (110 points: 11 competencies at 10 points each)
Level 1 Proficiency – All music majors

1. Pentascales: major and minor pentascales, ascending chromatically with I-V65-I chords in LH and pentascales in RH, from memory.
2. White key major scales: 2 octaves, hands separate, using appropriate fingering, from memory, minimum speed: quarter note = 60.
3. Chord progressions: I-IV64-I-V65-I in all major keys in keyboard style with 3 notes in RH and chord root in LH, from memory. (See page 171)
4. Chord progressions: i-iv64-i-V65-i in all minor keys in keyboard style with 3 notes in RH and chord root in LH, from memory. (See page 210)
5. Harmonization/Transposition: Prepared harmonization of a melody using I, IV, and V7 chords in appropriate inversions. Be prepared to transpose this exercise up and down by both half and whole steps (instructor chooses the transposition). (See page 164.)
6. Sight-reading: sight-read a short selection at the middle-elementary level.
7. Playing by ear: Prepare 5 different 5-finger melodies by ear from a given list, from memory, in keys up to 4 sharps and 4 flats (instructor will choose the key).
8. Repertoire: perform 4 repertoire selections at the middle-elementary level (using the music score) with appropriate interpretation and attention to expressive elements. (10 points each)

Students must 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 class test days will pass the competency. **Students may repeat a maximum of 3 previously unpassed competencies at a point later in the semester.** The only scores possible on the repeat attempts 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 near the end of the semester approximately 2 weeks before you have to perform it.) All other second-attempt competencies will remain the same. All second-attempt competencies must be completed by the end of regular classes before final exams begin.

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 attempted one time.

BSU Grading Scale:				
	A	100-94 %	C	<77-74 %
	A-	<94-90 %	C-	<74-70 %
	B+	<90-87 %	D+	<70-67 %
	B	<87- 84 %	D	<67-64%
	B-	<84-80%	D-	<64-61%
	C+	<80-77 %	F	<61% 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 will probably not achieve the required grade of a "C" in this course to be able to progress to the next course. Your final grade cannot be determined until all competency attempts have been completed after finals week and after any grade adjustments for unexcused absences have been made.

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. Students can make limited appointments with their instructors for extra assistance outside of class. Assignments should be prepared in advance and ready for performance on the days indicated. 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 BSU attendance policies, 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, students may request an excused absence for a BSU-sponsored off-campus activity (travel notice required), illness requiring absence from class, or important music-related professional opportunities. **If you wish to request an excused absence from any class period for any reason, you must communicate with and receive approval from your 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 graduate teaching assistant, you must also inform the graduate teaching assistant. **An excused absence request**

requires written documentation detailing your name, date of the absence, and reason for the absence request; emailing the instructor in advance with this information is preferred. Final grades will be lowered one grade increment for students having more than three unexcused absences, and will continue to be lowered one 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 https://www.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/vice-provost/studentservices/attendance-policies#accordion_othercircumstances

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 consider withdrawing from the course. Please contact your instructor before withdrawing from any piano class to discuss options to be successful in the 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

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.

Title IX / Sex Discrimination
Ball State University is committed to maintaining an educational environment free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. Students who experience or witness conduct that may violate University policy are encouraged to seek support and assistance. The Title IX Office can provide information about reporting options, supportive measures, and available resources. Contact the Title IX Office at 765-285-1545 or titleix@bsu.edu.

Please note: As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter. If you disclose information to me about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, I am required to notify the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Office will reach out to discuss available resources, supportive measures, and reporting options. If you

wish to speak with someone confidentially, you may contact the Counseling Center or the Center for Survivor Support.

Pregnancy and Related Conditions
Ball State University provides reasonable modifications for students affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Students seeking academic, housing, or other modifications are encouraged to contact the Title IX Office as early as possible to discuss available options and support. For assistance, contact the Title IX Office at 765-285-1545 or titleix@bsu.edu.

University Grade Appeal Policy
If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the University Grade Appeal Policy and Process.]

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 instructor (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books).
- Using a generative AI system or a person to complete academic assignments such as response papers, discussion posts, essays, or any other assignment when such use is not explicitly permitted by the assignment instructions or the instructor.
- Utilizing another person or a generative AI system to take a quiz, examination, or similar evaluation in place of oneself.
- Using a generative AI system for research, creative work, theses/dissertations, grant proposals, IRB-regulated work, or publication-bound work in violation of university AI policies, funder/publisher rules, IRB requirements, or discipline-specific standards.
- Presenting as one's own work the ideas, representations or words of another person or of a GenAI system without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources or of the AI tool(s) used.
- Using generative AI systems to analyze data, conduct research, or generate content that is included in an assignment (images, graphs, charts, tables, etc.) without proper documentation, citation, and attribution of this AI use.
- 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.

No Generative AI Use
Since this class is a performance-based piano class, there is no need for Generative AI use.

Canvas Accessibility
Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010. **Find more information by visiting the Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT).**

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.**

Video Conferencing Recording
Software may be used to record live class activity. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions may be recorded. These recordings typically will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented.

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 and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit myballstate.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to bsu.navigate.eab.com.

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. Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit bsu.edu/learningcenter or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: 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 to get additional feedback on your writing. The Writing Center can help you at any stage of the writing process, whether you're just getting started and need help brainstorming or when you're wrapping up a project and just want a second set of eyes. We work with writers from all disciplines and with all kinds of writing, including essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts.

You can choose from three appointment types: getting started on a new project (Planning appointment), discussing an existing draft (Feedback appointment), or scheduling time to work, with a tutor on hand to keep you motivated (Accountability appointment). To schedule a free appointment, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. We offer online appointments any time we're open, or you can meet a tutor face-to-face in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays and Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings. Make sure you 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 at BSU Counseling Center.

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 or use this direct link to sign up for a time**.** Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

Weekly Course Schedule

The course schedule is a general outline and may not be inclusive of all assignments. Specific selections for each week may be added or deleted and supplementary materials may be included. This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Week 1: 8/24
Introduction, Syllabus, Unit 1

Week 2: 8/31
Unit 2
Practice playing by ear

Week 3: 9/7 **Note: Labor Day is 9/7 – no classes**
Unit 3
Practice playing by ear
Practice pentascales

Week 4: 9/14
Unit 4
Practice playing by ear
Practice pentascales

Week 5: 9/21
Test #1

1. Repertoire Selection #1: p. 64 Little Scherzo
2. Playing by ear: 5-finger melodies from a given list, from memory.

After the test, begin working on Units 5-6

Week 6: 9/28
Units 5-6
Eliminate pages 88-89 Toccatina
Practice playing by ear
Practice pentascales

Week 7: 10/5
Unit 7
Practice pentascales
Practice tonic fingering major scales (C, G, D, A, E)

Week 8: 10/12 **Note: Fall break is 10/12-10/13 – no classes**
Unit 8
Practice pentascales

Practice tonic fingering major scales (C, G, D, A, E)

Week 9: 10/19
Unit 9, plus F major and B major scales from Unit 10
Practice pentascales
Practice all white key major scales

Week 10: 10/26 **Please note that the BSU course withdrawal date for this semester is October 28.**
Test #2:

1. Repertoire Selection #2: Morning Salute p. 128 (no repeats)
2. White key major scales: 2 octaves, hands separate, using appropriate fingering, from memory, minimum speed: quarter note = 60.

After the test, begin working on Unit 10.

Week 11: 11/2
Unit 10
Practice pentascales

Week 12: 11/9
Unit 11
Practice pentascales

Week 13: 11/16
Test #3

1. Pentascales: major and minor pentascales, ascending chromatically with I-V65-I chords in LH and pentascales in RH, from memory.
2. Repertoire Selection #3: p. 329 Bagatelle

After the test, begin working on Unit 12.

Week 14: 11/23 **Note: Thanksgiving break is 11/25-11/29 Wednesday-Sunday (no classes)**
Unit 12
Competency make-up exams
Faculty Evaluation: *Please bring an internet-capable device to complete the faculty evaluation during class.

Week 15: 11/30
Unit 13
Competency make-up exams

Week 16: 12/7
Monday classes only: Competency make-up exams, practice for final exam

Final Competency Exam: Scheduled by individual appointment during finals week
1. Chord progressions: I-IV64-I-V65-I in all major keys in keyboard style with 3 notes in RH and root in LH, from memory. (See pg. 171)
2. Chord progressions: i-iv64-i-V65-i in all minor keys in keyboard style with 3 notes in RH and root in LH, from memory. (See pg. 210)
3. Harmonization/Transposition: p. 164 #1, playing the melody with chordal accompaniment using I, IV, and V7 chords in appropriate inversions. Transpose up or down a whole or half step (instructor will choose the transposition.)
4. Repertoire Selection # 4: Moonlit Shores, p. 172-173.

5. Sight-reading.