Ball State University – College of Fine Arts – School of Music **Syllabus**
Course: MUSP 200. Sections 52a/b/c: Piano – Major Study (for majors in piano performance)
Instructor: Dr. James Helton **Office:** MI 124
Phone: (765-28)5-5517 (office) **E-mail:** jhelton@bsu.edu
Lesson times: to be arranged **Office Hours:** Fridays 11:00 – 1:00 or by appointment
Studio class/Area recital: Fridays, 9:00 – 10:50 am. Please consult the Google Piano Area Calendar for exact start times and locations (Sursa Hall, Hahn Hall, MI 152)

Course description

- one weekly lesson
- the opportunity to practice performing skills, observe teaching, and listen to peers at weekly studio classes
- the opportunity to perform on Area and Studio recitals
- the opportunity to listen to and watch guest artists, faculty and students perform

Course objectives

- Students will increase their knowledge of the piano repertoire, focusing on at least one piece from each major style period each semester.
- Students will develop an approach to the keyboard that is defined by natural, relaxed technique that is at total service to sound production and stylistic playing. *[The physical gesture produces the musical gesture.]*
- Students will develop personal, artistic interpretations that are informed by understanding of historical practice and theoretical research.
- Students will develop musicianship skills suitable for any professional setting: music reading in closed or open score; ear development; and principals of harmonic progression though harmonization, transposition, lead sheet realization, modulation, improvisation, etc.
- Students will develop independence. All good teachers strive to make themselves obsolete.

Course rationale
This course will underscore the requisite skills necessary in applied piano for students majoring in piano performance. Approach to course objectives will be emphasized.

Course expectations The following criteria determines your grade:

- 75% Weekly lesson. Discernable progress at each lesson, and fulfillment of short assignments related to your repertoire in the form of listening, brief readings, the following written assignments
    - Piano Rep Blotter (see handout)
    - Glossary of terms taken from your repertoire, which you will compile on a doc that you will keep on your computer
    - Personal repertoire list, ongoing, which you will keep on your computer
    - General repertoire list. It is impossible to know all the piano repertoire, but we must do our best, bit by bit. As you hear/study works in studio class, and as you hear works in other live performances, study it, study the composer. Commit it to your general knowledge of piano music.
- 25% 15-minute jury/hearing at the end of the semester (Final Exam). Requirements:

Please note: The above repertoire duration is minimums for your juries. At least two contrasting styles must be presented at each jury, and all selections must be memorized.

Additional requirements

- technique/musicianship proficiency exam, usually completed in the final semester of study before the jury. See attached list on p. 3.
- Students are required to perform in Area or General Recital Hour at least once per semester.
- Over the entire period of enrollment in private lessons students are required to give six performances in either general/area recitals, studio classes or guest artist master classes. Fulfillment of this requirement is reflected on the student's transcript.

A general guide for practice time Performance majors should average a minimum of four hours per day. (5-6 hours per day is more realistic.)

Required materials scores (see note on purchasing music, below), metronome, pencil, 3-ring binder for photocopies of scores, practice journal, notes, and handouts. Though Ball State faculty normally use Canvas, all documents from this studio will be through email or Microsoft OneDrive. Calendar information will be accessed through Google Calander. Your teacher has already distributed these links to your Ball State email.

Attendance policy Attendance at weekly lessons and Area/studio classes is mandatory. If you must miss a lesson, class, or recommended concert for any reason it is appropriate to contact me as soon as possible **before** that appointment/event. If you are sick (esp. if you are running a fever) please DO NOT come to your lesson. University-sponsored travel should be confirmed with me well before your absence. (These lessons will be rescheduled.) At my discretion, I will reschedule a maximum of two other excused absences.

Occasionally I must miss lessons due to out of town performances or committee meetings scheduled beyond my control. These lessons will always be made up, and I will alert you to these calendar changes as soon as I am aware of them.

Concert attendance Please note the Piano Area Google and (more generally) School of Music Calendars. There are numerous events; plan ahead. Naturally, your eager attendance is a given. Your absence at any event, especially those of your teacher or a guest artist will be seen as a general lack of interest in your chosen profession. Thus your citizenship in this studio and the School of Music may be reevaluated. For this reason, please note the attendance policy, above.

Communication Preferred method of general communication is by e-mail. E-mail assumes a response within 24 hours. That said, if you do not receive a timely response from me, please feel free to call or text my mobile phone. If your question needs an immediate answer, or you must reschedule a lesson on short notice, call or text my mobile phone. After 10 pm, texting would be appropriate. I am not frivolous with e-mail. If I send you e-mail, consider it important. If a response is required, I'll say so in the subject line.

Practice rooms are located on the first, third, and fourth floors of the Hargreaves Music Building (MU) and on both floors of the Music Instruction Building (MI). Instructions for reserving practice rooms are forthcoming. Keys are checked out from in the instrument/key room, MU 101 (with deposit). MU and MI building hours: 7:00 am – 11:00 pm daily.

Pianos for practice and performance We are blessed with an abundance of Steinway pianos. Fourteen of them are new as of Fall 2015, and we want them to sound and look wonderful for you and for students many years in the future. Please help us enforce these guidelines

with your fellow piano students and with collaborating musicians. This policy is for ALL piano rooms, not just those with the new instruments.

- Practice rooms – absolutely nothing should be placed on the piano except your music. No pencils, no keys, no bags, no phones. When you erase, remove the score and erase over the floor! We understand that you spend a lot of time in these practice rooms, however, we must insist that no food or drink be consumed in them.
- My office – Both of my Steinways are magnificent. However, we will reserve the Shiny B for finished repertoire. Most of the weekly work (and your practice) will be on the Satin B.
- Observe the same rules as those for the practice rooms.
- Sursa Hall Pianos are only moved by Sursa staff.
- If you see ANYTHING amiss with the pianos, please inform your teacher, the piano technician, or Dr. Larey at once.
- If there are maintenance issues to report (sticking keys, broken string, etc.), please e-mail our piano technician, Brian Turano, bpturano@bsu.edu

Purchasing scores If a music store does not have your music in stock, DON'T have them order it; it will take forever. Try another one.
Mail-order places are listed below, ranked most helpful. Purchase with a credit card.

sheetmusic.com www.amazon.com

Free score downloads BEWARE EDITIONS!

http://imslp.org www.sheetmusicarchive.net

Observation of copyright laws is the student's responsibility.

Course Calendar Due to the individualized nature of private piano lessons it is impossible to provide a weekly calendar, however, the following bullet points, along with p. 10 of this syllabus will aid us in planning the semester.

- Students receive a lesson for each week of the semester (15 weeks). Section 52: 30-minute lesson; section 52A : 50-minute lesson (usually running to 60).
- In addition to attendance at studio classes, students will perform in the majority of these classes, regularly by midterm.
- Repertoire for the semester usually will be confirmed within the first three weeks. In subsequent semesters it will be confirmed before you leave campus for break.
- Students should be clear on minimum expectations for the following week when they leave the lesson.
- The weekly calendar on p. 10 is intended to help the student pace goals through the semester for each piece in the repertoire and each technical goal (ex., scales or arpeggios). Goals include, but are not limited to:
    1. playing solidly at slow-moderate tempo
    2. memorization
    3. playing at tempo
    4. performing in studio class
    5. performing in recital hour
- To insure success on the jury, 75% of the repertoire should be memorized by midterm.

Piano Major/Principal Skills Proficiency Requirements

Successful completion of this proficiency is required for achievement of junior standing by all piano majors and principals. The proficiency may be completed at any time.

1. **All major and minor scales** (all 3 forms), hands together one octave apart, through a 4-octave range. Minimum tempo: quarter note = 100 (in sixteenths).*
2. **All major and minor arpeggios,** hands together one octave apart, through a 4-octave range. Minimum tempo: quarter note = 100 (in triplets) or 76 (in sixteenths).*
3. **All dominant-seventh and diminished-seventh arpeggios,** hands together one octave apart, through a 4-octave range. Minimum tempo: quarter note = 76 (in sixteenths).*
4. **Open-score sight-reading** (any number of parts up to 4 voices). Representative examples will be given for:
    a. Music education, technology, and composition
    b. Piano performance
5. **Piano score sight-reading** at the appropriate level. Representative examples (attached):
    a. Music education, technology, and composition: CM von Weber: Allemande in G Major-allegretto.
    b. Piano performance: R Schumann: *Album for the Young,* No. 21.
6. **Prepared accompaniment** with an instrumental or vocal soloist. *This requirement may be waived if the student shows activity as an accompanist in the School of Music. Evidence may be provided by a satisfactory report from the coordinator of accompanying or from the studio instructor for whom you accompanied (in the form of a simple e-mail to your teacher).*

*Your instructor will determine an exact tempo recommendation based on your degree area and your technical background. In most cases, this will be faster. Rules for standard fingering apply.

Academics and Honor Policy Students of the university must conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty will be treated in accordance with the "Student Academic Ethics Policy". Please see the Student Code in the BSU Student Handbook.

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. 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**.** Also, I would appreciate knowing if you have any history of ADD/ADHD. I have ways of helping you deal with this. Needless to say, any information you share will be treated with utmost care and privacy.

Physical space and personal boundaries Applied lessons courses often require the instructor to touch or be in close physical proximity to students in order to adjust/align the body. Any physical contact used will be demonstrated in a functional and professional manner in order to help the student better understand corrections concerning proper piano technique. The instructor will always verbally request student consent before touching them. If, for whatever reason, being touched or physically adjusted is not part of a student's learning process or makes them uncomfortable, please let the course instructor know as soon as possible so that accommodations can be made. If a student is uncomfortable speaking with the instructor, they should contact the Undergraduate Coordinator, Dr. Jon Truitt.

PIANO MAJOR/PRINCIPAL MUSICIANSHIP – PROFICIENCY CHECK LIST

Preparatory / Supplemental

5-finger scales – major
5-finger scales – minor
triads – major
all positions
triads – minor
all positions
triads – I IV V (root position)
triads – i iv V (root position)
progressions
I IV I64 V7 I
i iv i64 V7 I
I IV V7/V V7 I
I vi IV ii I64 V7 I
i VI iv iio i64 V7 I

PROFICIENCY MATERIAL

SCALES

MAJOR I

II

III

IV

NATURAL MINOR

HARMONIC MINOR

MELODIC MINOR

ARPEGGIOS

TRIAD (major and minor combined)

I

II

III

IV

DOMINANT 7^{TH}

DIMINISHED 7^{TH}

WEEKLY PLANNER Consider goals for technique/musicianship study, memorization in lesson, performance in studio class

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

Dr. Helton's trusty practice thoughts

Efficient practice leads to greater security in performance and, more importantly, to your deeper enjoyment of making music.

~~Acknowledge the following (some obvious)

1. Our different brains are different in how many ways? As a start, we have…
   - Different learning styles
   - Different attention spans
   - Different tastes
   - Different coordination
   - Different thresholds for stress

   Therefore, we process and receive music in individual ways. It only stands to reason that the best practice tools will differ from person to person.

2. How do we process music—that is, how to we execute it, and how do we receive it? Through the senses, of course. Obviously we can't taste it or smell it, but…
   - We hear it – both in reaction, and we imagine the sound we want
   - We see it – the score and our actions on the keyboard
   - We feel it – in our fingers in our bodies, and we feel for it

How AWARE are we of these things? What do we really pull off the page?

3. Conclusion: your best practice style is personal to YOU.

~~Thoughts I live by (maybe a little flowery, but they really are practical)

- Franz Liszt said, "Think ten times, play once." (I used to think this was metaphorical, but a literal application isn't a bad idea.)
- Henry Ford: "Thinking is the hardest thing there is; that's why so few people do it."
- For a little more about thoughtfulness, check out http://www.teoria.com/articulos/andreas/andreas30.htm
- Cultivate curiosity. The minute you start drilling (which definitely has its value), it's easy to stop being curious. (Equate curiosity with the way you might be with someone you are in love with. You constantly desire to know that person better, to find what makes him/her tick.) How can you hear more deeply? Feel more deeply? Know more deeply? How much beauty/greatness do you receive?
- Challenge yourself to listen more and more deeply. Your ear is your only real teacher.

~~less flowery stuff. Things that get you into a piece (understanding it, connecting to it):

- A firm, (mostly) round hand is never a bad thing.
- Theory, scales/arpeggios, and other technical work are not penitential acts. **Remember that they are tools that serve you,** and not the other way around. They get other parts of our brains involved in the process.
- Analyze what? Use the theory knowledge you have <u>as it's relevant</u>.
- Musical elements

  melody—intervals (SING!)
  rhythm
  harmony
  texture

- Technical patterns
- Weirdness …basically, when you don't know the theory (I.e., this is the weird part.)
- Compare. Contrast. It's those similar places that can really send that memory around the bend.

~~Problem solving

- A missed leap/note, a tangled fingering, etc.: **Target practice.** Notice not only visual/physical/musical landmarks, but what gets you there. Example: major scales – knowing that 3s match does not help you play C, G, D, A, and E scales correctly. Knowing when and where to pass your thumb will *cause* 3s to match.
- How deeply do you listen?
- Record yourself. Pretend you're the teacher.
- Visualize. This is amazing for working out intricate passages. *(Think ten times, play once.)*
- Remember that "learn from your mistakes" does not mean "beat yourself up."

~~*4 stages of learning a piece-memorized …from Dr. Maurice Hinson

1. at the piano, with the score
2. away from the piano, with the score
3. away from the piano, away from the score (Think ten times, play once.)
4. at the piano, away from the score

*If you're performing with the score (collaborating, etc.) the first two steps are still helpful!

Be mindful of the types of memory: visual, aural, tactile, analytical. Analyze what? Whatever you want—no wrong answer!

~~other things that get you into the music. These help you isolate elements for improvement: dexterity, balance, *shaping, articulation, pedaling, and other issues of clarity. They also help you practice focus. This is the time you discover how to maintain your cool and keep from overthinking.

- various speeds with a metronome
- altering rhythms – This is also great for helping you hear/feel things you didn't realize were there
- slow practice. How slow? The speed you can play with absolute poise and intentionality.

*sometimes you might be unsure of how to shape a phrase. Two safe assumptions: (1) shorter notes lead to longer notes; (2) all beats in a measure lead to the following downbeat, then each phrase has a strongest down beat (or long note, which might not be at the same place) which informs the arch. Also, the last notes of shorter slurs are usually tapered. (Lots of exceptions to this last point.)

Conclusion: At a minimum, always leave a practice session feeling more connected to your music. Ideally, leave the session with a feeling of accomplishment.

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