

Class Piano

Course Syllabus

La Plata High School
McDonough High School
North Point High School

Instructor
Mr. William Derr
wderr@cchoe.com



Course Description

Class piano is designed to teach the concepts and fundamentals needed to perform on the piano. It will increase musical understanding beyond just reading notes by teaching students a vocabulary of chords and keys, accompaniment patterns, and improvisational techniques. Students will play melodies in several positions and have the opportunity to participate in ensemble playing. Students will develop good practice habits, and learn techniques to increase the muscular agility and flexibility of their hands. We will delve into music at its source, find out how music is constructed, and discover the composers and history behind the music.

Through the use of the MIDI Laptop Lab* students will have the opportunity to explore music technology, and its applications to composition, arrangement, and even recording industry techniques.

At the completion of this course, the student will have learned to play some of the standards of piano repertoire while gaining a thorough understanding of the history and basic concepts of music.

*Not available at all schools.

Course Outcomes – Students will be able to:

1. Follow classroom procedures regarding practice and instruction.
2. Demonstrate basic competencies of piano performance in the areas of tone production, technique, and phrasing.
3. Identify music notation and symbols relative to the level of proficiency
4. Identify basic musical forms within learned pieces.
5. Identify proper performance habits.

Instruments

Students will use digital piano workstations. It is expected that each student will treat the school instruments with respect and do their utmost to prevent damage. Each student and his or her parent / guardian are responsible for the condition of the assigned instrument. If an instrument is damaged due to student negligence, it is the student and parent / guardian's responsibility to pay for the repair or replacement of the instrument.

Course Philosophy

The piano is a performance instrument, and the primary goal of this course is for students to become competent, independent performers on the piano. For this reason, students will be assessed largely based on their performances on the piano. It is equally important that a student develop the skills, discipline, and determination to prepare for a performance, therefore an equal portion of the grade will be derived from how well the student prepares and uses his or her practice time. Because not everyone has a piano at home, home practice is optional; however, students should come to class every day prepared to get the most out of the practice time they are given in class.

Evaluation Criteria

Practice – Preparation	30%
Performance – Recitals	30%
Technique/Theory	25%
Quarterly Project	15%

Grading Scale

90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70% - 79%	C
60% - 69%	D
0% - 59%	E

Daily Required Materials

A portion of the student's daily Practice/Preparation grade will be determined based on bringing the following required materials to class.

Textbook – Alfred's Basic Adult All-In-One Level 1 – for Piano I or Beginning Students
Alfred's Basic Adult All-In-One Level 2 – for Piano II or Intermediate Students
Alfred's Basic Adult All-In-One Level 3 – for Piano III or Advanced Students

Mr. Derr will assist you with selecting the appropriate book for your level of proficiency. **The textbook must be purchased or ordered by the student by September 1st so that the student can bring it to class by September 18th.**

The book can be purchased or ordered at O'Neil's Music Store (near Staples), but they only keep a limited number in stock. Call before you go. The number for the store is (301) 645-5733. Each book can be purchased or ordered with an optional CD. While this is not required, it may be helpful to students who would like to hear how the songs go, and practice along.

Pencil & Paper – provided by the student

Class Piano Folder – provided by the student

Additional Music – additional music will occasionally be specified by the instructor.

Headphones – *required only at North Point.* Otherwise, headphones are provided.

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Explanation of Evaluation Criteria

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Practice - Preparation 30%

Throughout the course of daily instruction, students will be scored based on the extent that they...

- Are seated at their workstation ready to start when class begins (see attendance policy);
- Late arrivals will cause a deduction in the student's practice-preparation grade for that day
- Unlawful absences will result in a zero for that day's practice-preparation grade.
- Have the required materials ready at the start of class;
- Demonstrate discipline, focus, and good time management during their practice time;
- Demonstrate appropriate posture as taught by the instructor;
- Demonstrate appropriate music reading skills;
- Demonstrate appropriate listening skills;
- Execute directions given by the instructor;
- Demonstrate active listening, offer supportive commentary, and work respectfully with peers;
- Demonstrate progressive improvement in musicianship;

Performance - Recitals 30%

All students will be graded on a solo performance every Friday during class (Thursdays and Fridays at North Point). As the repertoire becomes longer and more difficult, graded performances will take place on alternate weeks. The solo performances will be in the form of a recital in which the student performs for the class, and receives constructive remarks from their classmates. Music to be performed for the recitals will be announced at least a week in advance of the recital. Students are encouraged to play the music as a "dry run" for the teacher prior to the recital date. Students who are unprepared for the recitals will receive a zero. Recitals can be made up within three days only if the absence was excused. Since the skills learned in piano are cumulative, students must make every effort to master the recital music.

Technique/Theory 25%

Students will be graded weekly on their mastery of techniques to improve manual dexterity, such as...

- Pentatonic scales;
- Major and minor scales;
- and various repetitive exercises.

Technique proficiencies will take place weekly in conjunction with the recitals. Later in the year, technique proficiencies will alternate with the recitals. Students who are unprepared for their technique proficiency will receive a zero. Students' understanding of music theory will be graded based on their completion of the written assessments included in the textbook. Due dates for the written assessments will be announced at least a week in advance. Technique proficiencies and theory assignments can be made up within three days only if the absence was excused.

Quarterly Project 15%

At the beginning of each quarter, students will be assigned a project which is to be completed by the end of the quarter.

The project will be selected by the instructor, and could include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Composer Presentation – the student will research a composer and make a presentation to the class
- Composition/Arrangement – the student will use Sibelius to write an original composition, or make an arrangement of an existing song.
- Recital Program – the student will select appropriate pieces and design a piano recital program complete with program notes for each piece.
- Recording Project – the student will use Cakewalk to make and record a new arrangement of an existing song.

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Classroom

Expectations

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1. ARRIVE TO CLASS ON TIME. Anyone not at his or her assigned piano and quiet when the tone sounds will be considered tardy. County policy on attendance for credit will be strictly adhered to. (3 tardy arrivals = 1 unexcused absence, 2 unexcused absences = a failing grade for that quarter)
2. WORK ONLY AT THE PIANO TO WHICH YOU ARE ASSIGNED.
3. HALL PASSES WILL NOT BE GIVEN during class except in extreme emergencies.
4. BRING MATERIALS TO CLASS EVERY DAY. This includes your piano music, a pencil, paper, headphones,* and your class piano folder. You will not be allowed to go to your locker for materials after class begins. * *required only at North Point.*
5. ABSOLUTELY NO FOOD, DRINK, GUM, ETC. IN THE PIANO LAB. This will be strictly enforced. Students will demonstrate respect for school property by adhering to this policy.
6. SHOW RESPECT FOR OTHERS. This shows how you respect yourself, as well. Students are expected to demonstrate SUPERIOR CITIZENSHIP. Everyone deserves private practice time: talking should be reserved for helping others only.
7. KEEP IT NEAT. Students are expected to demonstrate responsibility toward the care of the piano lab by keeping the lab neat. NEVER UNPLUG HEADPHONES OR ANY OTHER CABLES in the piano lab system*. Please take out whatever you bring in. Cover the keyboards every day after use. Replace the headphones in their proper place, and make sure the door to the lab is locked at the end of class. * *doesn't apply to North Point.*
8. DO THE RIGHT THING. Students must abide by all school policies at all times.
9. *REALLY* DO THE RIGHT THING. Adherence to all class rules is mandatory even when a substitute teacher is responsible for the class.
10. BE EASY TO TEACH. Note that this is not the same as BE QUICK TO LEARN. Someone who is easy to teach has an open mind and is willing to try.

Failure to follow the Classroom Expectations will be dealt with in accordance with the discipline policy of the school, usually...

1. Verbal warning.
2. Parent phone call.
3. Lunch detention. (La Plata)
4. Office referral.

Acceptance of Student Responsibilities and Obligations

Instructor
Mr. William Derr
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- Course Description
- Course Philosophy
- Use of Instrument
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- Evaluation Criteria
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- Course Outcomes
- Student purchased text

I accept these requirements and pledge to show my dedication to the music department by upholding these responsibilities with pride and commitment.

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Mr. William Derr, Instructor	Date
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Tentative Schedule

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This is a tentative schedule of all assessment dates, and the pages which are to be completed by each assessment. The music, exercises, or written work for each recital, proficiency, and written assessment will be selected from the assigned pages for that date. One can easily see why it is important not to fall behind in your practicing or assignments. From time to time, Mr. Derr may also provide supplemental material which will be included in the weekly assessments. These materials will be passed out at least one week prior to the assessment.

While the pace set forth in this schedule is designed to be challenging, some students may find that they are able to work ahead of schedule. In this case, Mr. Derr will provide additional materials at a more appropriate difficulty level.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Date	Book completed up to page...	Book completed up to page...	Book completed up to page...
Sept. 1	(TBA)	(TBA)	(TBA)
Sept. 22	15	7	8
Sept. 28	19	11	11
Oct. 6	22	14	15
Oct. 13	25	19	19
Oct. 27	28	25	22
Nov. 8	31	30	25
Nov. 17	34	34	31
Dec. 1	37	39	35
Dec. 8	40	43	40
Dec. 15	43	46	45
Dec. 22	46	51	51
Jan. 5	49	55	55
Jan. 12	53	58	60
Jan. 19	57	61	63
Jan. 26	61	65	69
Feb. 2	65	69	73
Feb. 9	69	75	76
Feb. 16	73	79	80
Feb. 23	77	83	83
Mar. 2	82	87	87
Mar. 9	86	91	92
Mar. 16	91	94	97
Mar. 23	95	98	101
Mar. 30	99	101	104
Apr. 5	103	107	110
Apr. 20	107	111	114
Apr. 27	111	115	117
May 4	117	120	121
May 11	124	124	126
May 18	129	127	128
May 25	135	133	136
Jun. 1	139	136	137
Jun. 8	143	143	141
Jun. 14	(143)	(143)	(141)

(Subject to Change)