



**Department of Music**

**MUA1043 Piano Proficiency Skills**

**1 Unit**

Spring 2026

<b>Meeting days: Tu-Th</b>	<b>Dr. Victor Labenske</b>
<b>Meeting times: 12:15-1:15 PM</b>	<b>Phone (cell): 619-602-1690</b>
<b>Meeting location: CM011</b>	<b>E-mail: vlabensk@pointloma.edu</b>
<b>Final Exam: Th 5/7 1:30-4:00 PM</b>	<b>Office location and hours: CMC 214</b>
	M 2-4 Tu 1:30-2:30 W 10:30-11, 2-2:30 Th 1:15-2:00 F 10:30-11 We might also arrange to meet over lunch (Tu, Th, F)

### **PLNU Mission**

#### **To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Class instruction in piano. Emphasizes harmonization, hymn reading, solo and congregational style hymn playing and rudimentary melodic improvisation. Appropriate for music majors preparing for piano proficiency examination. May be repeated.

### **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of the semester, you should be able to pass at least 3 parts of the proficiency exam:

- improvisation
- folk song
- hymn sight reading
- sonatina or invention
- prepared hymn
- patriotic song

## **PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME**

This course prepares students to meet one of the department PLOs: Students who complete the program will be able to demonstrate essential competencies in musicianship skills in Written Theory, Aural skills and Keyboard Musicianship.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES**

- PianoMarvel ([www.pianomarvel.com](http://www.pianomarvel.com))
- Canvas (your normal login)
- Canvas Music Department Page (Piano Proficiency Module):  
<https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/40730>

## **COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Course schedule information is on Canvas.

Piano Proficiency Exam: Monday of finals week

## **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

Assignment distribution by percentage:

- 15% = improvisation (10% = Proficiency Exam; 5% = all other drills)
- 15% = folk song (10% = Proficiency Exam; 5% = all other drills)
- 15% = hymn sight reading (10% = Proficiency Exam; 5% = all other drills)
- 15% = pre-sonatina and sonatina repertoire pieces (10% = Proficiency Exam; 5% = all other drills)
- 15% = congregational style hymn (10% = Proficiency Exam; 5% = all other drills)
- 15% = patriotic song (10% = Proficiency Exam; 5% = all other drills)
- 10% = class preparation and participation\*. Student grades usually will be posted in the Canvas grade book by the next class period. It is important to read the comments posted in the grade book as these comments are intended to help students improve their work. Final grades will be posted within one week of the end of the class. Students earn up to 5 discussion points for attendance at each class session in Canvas; points will be subtracted for distractions including phone visible during class.
- All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Quizzes will not be made up. Late work, should it be accepted, will lose 10% per calendar day.

### Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentages

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

### Grading rubric for exams

Improvisation	Folk Song	Hymn Sightreading	Prepared Solo Piece	Congregational Hymn	Patriotic Song
Accurately plays exam-level improvisation examples at a moderate tempo with 1 week of preparation.	Accurately sightreads folk song at a moderate tempo adding appropriate I, IV and V chords	Sightreads hymn accurately at a moderate tempo.	Plays sonatina or invention accurately at an appropriate tempo.	Plays congregational-style hymn accurately at a moderate tempo	Plays patriotic song accurately at a moderate tempo
Accurately plays exam-level improvisation examples at a slow tempo with 1 week of preparation.	Accurately sightreads folk song at a slow tempo adding appropriate I, IV and V chords	Accurately sightreads hymn at a slow tempo	Plays sonatina or invention accurately but under tempo.	Plays congregational-style hymn accurately at a slow tempo	Plays patriotic song accurately at a slow tempo
Plays exam-level improvisation examples at a slow tempo and/or with a small number of errors and with 1 week of preparation.	Sightreads folk song at a slow tempo adding appropriate I, IV and V chords. A small number of errors is present in notereading, rhythm and/or chord choices	Sightreads hymn at a slow tempo and/or with a small number of errors	Plays sonatina or invention under tempo and/or with a small number of errors	Plays congregational-style hymn accurately at a slow tempo and/or with a small number of errors	Plays patriotic song accurately and at a slow tempo and/or with a small number of errors
Plays exam-level improvisation examples at a very slow tempo and/or with a significant number of errors and with 1 week of preparation.	Sightreads folk song at a slow tempo adding appropriate I, IV and V chords. A significant number of errors is present in notereading, rhythm and/or chord choices	Sightreads hymn at a slow tempo and/or with a significant number of errors	Plays sonatina or invention under tempo and/or with a significant number of errors	Plays congregational-style hymn accurately at a slow tempo and/or with a significant number of errors	Plays patriotic song accurately and at a slow tempo and/or with a significant number of errors
Inaccurately plays exam-level improvisation examples with 1 week of preparation; tempo is erratic; numerous errors.	Inaccurately sightreads folk song. Numerous errors in notereading, rhythm and/or chord choices are present OR No Finale Folk Song	Inaccurately sightreads hymn	Inaccurately plays sonatina or invention  OR Selects inappropriate repertoire	Inaccurately plays congregational-style hymn  OR Selects inappropriate hymn or style	Inaccurately plays patriotic song  OR Selects inappropriate song

**Class Preparation:** You are expected to practice for a minimum of 40 minutes per day (4 hours per week). I'll collect practice records each week to help you keep accountable. Your recorded practice time recorded should include time spent playing the piano (for class assignments). It shouldn't include class time or time spent at the piano not directly related to this course. It is likely that some of you will require more practice than others in order to be adequately prepared for each class. Cramming for piano is impossible since it requires constant skill development. It is your daily commitment to achieving this goal which will result in success. Class sessions earn 5 points per day for attendance; fewer points may be earned if students are not fully engaged (phones out, trips to the bathroom, work for other classes, etc.).

**Final Examination Policy:** Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

## **CONTENT WARNING**

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In this course, all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of music and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

## **TRIGGER WARNING**

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive several types of information. In this course we will cover a variety of topics. I don't anticipate that any topics in this course will be triggering but I will count on you to let me know. The experience of being triggered versus intellectually challenged are different. The main difference is that an individual must have experienced trauma to experience being triggered, whereas an intellectual challenge has nothing to do with trauma. If you are a trauma survivor and encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center. Should you choose to sit out on discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material; but we can discuss if there are other methods for accessing that material, and for assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in music composition and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

## **INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Late assignments will lose 10% for each calendar day late. They will not be accepted after the class meeting following the due date. This type of regularity allows the students to receive prompt feedback.

## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY**

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) is not permitted for creating any kind of recording which represents that you are playing when you are not, and use of these tools will be treated as plagiarism.

## **SPIRITUAL CARE**

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

## **PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY**

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.]

## **PLNU RECORDING NOTIFICATION**

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

## **PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY**

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should

follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

## **PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center ([EAC@pointloma.edu](mailto:EAC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2533). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. Professors are able to view a student's approved accommodations through Accommodate.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any accommodations.

## **LANGUAGE AND BELONGING**

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination](http://www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination).

## SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND DISCRIMINATION

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at [pointloma.edu/Title-IX](http://pointloma.edu/Title-IX). Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at [counselingservices@pointloma.edu](mailto:counselingservices@pointloma.edu) or find a list of campus pastors at [pointloma.edu/Title-IX](http://pointloma.edu/Title-IX).

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/bias](http://www.pointloma.edu/bias)

## PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

**Note:** The information below must be included under the “PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy” Section if you are teaching an Online or Hybrid course.

## LOMABOOKS INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

**Note:** For courses using materials available through Lomabooks

For both digital and print materials, please add these student instructions to your syllabus and Canvas Course. Prior to the start of class, the PLNU Bookstore will also be sharing student instructions in a standalone email on how to access their content.

*This course is part of our course material delivery program, **LomaBooks**. The bookstore will provide each student with a convenient package containing all required physical materials; all digitally delivered materials will be integrated into Canvas.*

*You should have received an email from the bookstore confirming the list of materials that will be provided for each of your courses and asking you to select how you would like to receive any printed components (in-store pick up or home delivery). If you have not done so already, please confirm your fulfillment preference so the bookstore can prepare your materials.*

*For more information about **LomaBooks**, please go: [HERE](#)*