

**POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY**  
**Music Department**  
**MUA 143 - Piano Proficiency Skills**  
**Fall 2015**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

1. TITLE: Piano Proficiency Skills
2. CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Class instruction in piano. Emphasizes harmonization, hymn reading, improvisation, solo and congregational style hymn playing. Appropriate for music majors preparing for piano proficiency examination. May be repeated.
3. PREREQUISITE: Class Piano II or consent of instructor.
4. INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Victor Labenske  
Office: CMC 214  
Cell phone (texting is great): 619-602-1690 (up to 10:00 PM)  
Office phone number: 619-849-2303  
E-mail address: vlabensk@pointloma.edu  
Office hours: M 2:30-4, 5-6  
T 10-11, 12-12:30  
W 10:30-11, 12:30-1:30  
R 10-11, 12-12:30  
F 10:30-11  
I am also free to meet during lunch in the cafeteria on TRF.
5. UNITS: 1
6. MEETING TIME AND PLACE: TR – 11:00-11:55 PM, CMC 011
7. TEXTS:
  - *Sing to the Lord*. Kansas City, MO: Lillenas Publishing Company, 1993.
  - eNovative Piano ([www.enovativepiano.com](http://www.enovativepiano.com))
  - Canvas (your normal login)
  - Canvas Piano Proficiency Resource Page (log in as pstudent/password is pstudent)
8. POSITION OF COURSE IN COLLEGE CURRICULUM: This course is highly recommended for MUSIC MAJORS who are preparing for the piano proficiency exam.

9. COURSE OBJECTIVES: You will gain proficiency in the following areas -
1. Sightreading hymns
  2. Sightreading folksongs
  3. Playing the I-IV6/4-I-V6/5-I chord progression in all major keys
  4. Harmonizing folksongs
  5. Playing congregational style hymns
  6. Playing pre-sonatina and sonatina literature
  7. Playing improvisation examples
  8. Playing a patriotic song (“My Country ‘Tis of Thee” or “The Star-spangled Banner”)

10. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: As we work together, here are the goals I have set for you. I know they may look overwhelming at times, but I will help you with the tools you will need to attain these goals.

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

- improvisation
- folk song
- hymn sightreading
- sonatina or invention
- congregational style hymn
- patriotic song

11. METHODS USED IN THE COURSE: We’ll divide class time among lecture, student group interaction, student performances for me (through the headphones, student performance for the class and frequent quizzes (announced and unannounced). Two midterm exams and a final examination will be given (mock piano proficiency exams).

12. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

- **Class Preparation:** You are expected to practice for a minimum of 40 minutes per day (4 hours per week) so that you will be ready for the piano proficiency exam. I’ll collect practice record sheets 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 the piano proficiency exam is impossible. It is your daily commitment to achieving this goal which will result in success.
- **Evaluation**  
15% = improvisation (10% = Proficiency Exam; 5% = all other drills)  
15% = folk song (10% = Proficiency Exam; 5% = all other drills)

15% = hymn sightreading (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% = practice time

- **Attendance:** It is impossible to makeup a missed day of class since the information and interactive learning which is a part of the classroom experience cannot be replaced. Therefore, regular attendance is mandatory to enable each student to achieve a meaningful learning experience. According to the Catalog, whenever the number of accumulated absences in a class, for any cause, exceeds ten percent of the total number of class meetings, the faculty member has the option of filing a written report to the Vice Provost for Academic Administration which may result in de-enrollment, pending any resolution of the excessive absences between the faculty member and the student. If more than 20 percent of the total number of class meetings is reported as missed (three weeks or longer in a semester-long course), the faculty member or Vice Provost for Academic Administration may initiate the student's de-enrollment from the course without advance notice to the student. For full details, see:

[http://catalog.pointloma.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=864#Class\\_Attendance](http://catalog.pointloma.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=864#Class_Attendance)  
 Expect that no quizzes or exams will be made up. Quizzes will occur at the beginning of class. Missed quizzes due to tardiness will not be made up either. The examinations will not be made up unless arrangements are made before the tests.

- **Grading Scale:** All grades will be determined by the following percentage scale:
 

93-100% = A	73-76% = C
90-92% = A-	70-72% = C-
87-89% = B+	67-69% = D+
83-86% = B	63-66% = D
80-82% = B-	60-62% = D-
77-79% = C+	0-59% = F

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS.** All students are expected to meet the standards for this course as set by the instructor. However, students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should discuss options with the instructor during the first two weeks of class and provide approved documentation and verification of need. The Academic Support Center is available to students for a variety of tutorial needs.

**Academic dishonesty may result in course failure.**

- **Grading Rubric:** All grades will be determined by the following rubric. In addition, attitude may affect the final grade.

	<b>Improvisation</b>	<b>Folk Song</b>	<b>Hymn Sightreading</b>	<b>Sonatina</b>	<b>Prepared Hymn</b>	<b>Patriotic Song</b>
<b>A</b>	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
<b>B</b>	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
<b>C</b>	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
<b>D</b>	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
<b>F</b>	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

13. **CLASSROOM ATTIRE:** Do you best to meet the spirit of the PLNU student handbook which states: "Clothing should be appropriate to the occasion and in good taste, reflecting the atmosphere of vital Christianity, which is one of the basic objectives of Point Loma Nazarene University. Personal appearance should not disrupt the mood or atmosphere of the activity being attended. Some examples will be helpful: Tank tops, halter-tops, tube tops, muscle shirts and any clothing revealing undergarments, togas and any clothing with unwholesome advertising."
14. **INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY:** I'll be available for you during the office hours listed above. Making an appointment when possible will help ensure that I'll be available for you. Other times (such as lunch in the caf) may also be arranged if the listed times are impossible.

15. **CLASS SCHEDULE**

<u>9/3</u>	
<u>9/8</u>	
<u>9/10</u>	
<u>9/15</u>	Evaluatory Exam
<u>9/17</u>	
<u>9/22</u>	
<u>9/24</u>	
<u>9/29</u>	Folksong due
<u>10/1</u>	
<u>10/6</u>	
<u>10/8</u>	
<u>10/13</u>	
<u>10/15</u>	
<u>10/20</u>	EXAM I – Primary objective: Perform “My Country ‘Tis of Thee”
<u>10/22</u>	
<u>10/27</u>	Individual Appointments
<u>10/29</u>	
<u>11/3</u>	
<u>11/5</u>	
<u>11/10</u>	EXAM II – Primary objective: Perform Congregational Hymn
<u>11/12</u>	
<u>11/17</u>	
<u>11/19</u>	
<u>11/24</u>	Primary objective: Perform Sonatina
<u>11/26</u>	THANKSGIVING
<u>12/1</u>	<b>Proficiency Exam is Wed. 12/9 – Print improvisation examples from the Canvas Piano Proficiency Page on Wed. 12/3; we will provide you blank copies of the lead sheets.</b>
<u>12/3</u>	
<u>12/8</u>	

12/8 Wed PIANO PROFICIENCY EXAM – in afternoon/evening  
12/10 Burrito Celebration

**PIANO PROFICIENCY DATE: Wednesday, December 9 (afternoon-evening)**

**FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 17, 10:30 PM**

The final exam will consist of only the components of the piano proficiency exam not passed in the piano proficiency exam. The final exam will not be rescheduled.

## 16. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cook, Charles. *Playing the Piano for Pleasure*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960. (786.3/C772p2)

Mach, Elyse. *Contemporary Class Piano*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1976. (786.3m148c)

Robilliard, Eileen D. *The Persistent Pianist. A Book for the Late Beginner and Adult Re-Starter*. London: Oxford University Press, 1978. (786.3/R654p)

Tobin, Joseph Raymond. *How to Improvise Piano Accompaniments*. London: Oxford, University Press, 1970. (786.3/T673h)

Vernazza, Marcelle and Leonore Jeanne Young. *Basic Materials for the Piano Student*. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Co. Publishers, 1972. (786.3/V529b)

## The Piano Proficiency Exam

1. A prepared composition from the Baroque or Classic Periods on the level of a Bach Two-Part Invention or a movement from a Sonatina by Clementi, Kuhlau, or other comparable composers such as Diabelli, Atwood, Lynnes, Beethoven, Mozart, etc. More difficult literature is acceptable. The work does not have to be memorized.
2. A prepared hymn (not gospel song) arranged in chorale style, suitable for congregational singing.
3. The "Star-Spangled Banner" or "America" (My Country 'Tis of Thee) with conventional harmonies.
4. One folk song, played at sight; the student will provide the harmonies of a single-line melody.
5. One four-part hymn at sight.
6. Improvisation – The student will first play a given melody of approximately 16 measures with chordal accompaniment from a lead sheet using pop chord notation. The student will then improvise an original melody over the same harmonic progression. The lead sheets will be distributed one week prior to the exam. Student must use a clean copy at the exam provided