

**TWO-SEMESTER UNDERGRADUATE
PIANO PEDAGOGY COURSE**

**CURRICULUM FOR
TEACHING FROM BEGINNING TO LATE INTERMEDIATE LEVELS**

Designed by
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Description:

This two-semester course is a comprehensive and intensive presentation of various ingredients of piano teaching profession with focusing on the techniques and methods from beginning to late intermediate levels. The first semester will be focused on beginning and elementary level and the second semester will be focused on intermediate level. Various materials of teaching strategies will be evaluated with critical analyses of integral elements necessary to achieve music literacy, keyboard theory, technique, musicianship, and comprehensive training. As a part of assignments, students will be observing and assisting some designated private and group lessons, through arrangement both inside and outside of the school.

Materials selected from:

- Uzler, Gordon, Smith. *The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher*. Schirmer Books, second edition.
- Bastien, James. *How to Teach Piano Successfully*. Kjos Music Company, third edition.
- Baker-Jordan, Martha. *Practical Piano Pedagogy*. Warner Bros. Publications, 2003.
- Haroutounian, Joanne. *Kindling the Spark: Recognizing and Developing Musical Talent*. Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Magrath, Jane. *The Pianist's Guide To Standard Teaching and Performing Literature*. Alfred Publishing Company, 1995.
- Albergo, Cathy and Alexander, Reid. *Intermediate Piano Repertoire: A Guide for Teaching*. Fourth edition, Frederick Harris Music Company, 1993.

Objectives:

To acquaint piano teachers with both historical and modern views of methods and materials involved in teaching piano students of all ages from very beginning and intermediate stages. Special emphasis will be placed on an extensive survey of the leading method books and foundations of areas like note reading, rhythm, theory, technique and general musicianship, corresponding to the proper supplementary materials and standard repertoires. This course also provides opportunities of observation of professional private and class teaching as well as hand-on-hand teaching experience. And final goal is that piano teachers will be able to design own teaching strategies, both short-term-wisely and long-term-wisely.

Grading Policies:

- Class participation, preparation, discussion 30%
- Private and group teaching, observation report and self evaluation 20%
- Presentations (method evaluation and technique specialization) 20%

- Final projects (presentation and a 12-page paper) 30%

Semester One (Teaching Beginning and Elementary Levels):

Schedule:

Week 1: Purpose and objectives of good teaching of all levels; introduction to the course; discussion of teachers' pedagogical and piano learning backgrounds (everybody talks about their up-and-down sides of their learning and perhaps teaching experiences); discussion of learning and teaching philosophies.

Week 2: Discussion on the early child development and preschool piano student by five steps:

1. Children's reaction to the sound/music before and right after they are born.
2. Piaget's theory of intellectual development
3. Observation and expectation of very young children's reaction to the sound/music.
4. About parent A – what can be done to reveal and promote child's interests in sound/music
5. About parents B - The decision time of bring the child to the first interview/audition lesson

Week 3: Interview/Audition strategies (both new and transfer students); aspects of designing such event (such as self-introduction and questioning between both teacher and student, and simple musical activities to test the student and perhaps try to reveal the musical potentials in the student); Characteristics of preschool piano students (mental and physical aspects).

Week 4: Discussion of methods and approaches of early elementary stage; evaluations of various method books in the aspects of note reading (note and rhythm), theory, technique and general musicianship, and the overall visual presentation of the method books (printing and graphic design of the book).

Week 5: Continue evaluation of method books of beginning primary levels; comparison between historical and modern leading methods; free discussion of good-and-bad aspects on the methods; Assign specific method books to small panels (two or three people as one group) for deep/critical evaluation, analysis and comparison for next class presentation.

Week 6: Observation of a professional beginning group class teaching (half an hour); discussion of the observation afterward; an observation report is due in next

class.

Week 7: Class presentations on the primary method books evaluation; move on to elementary level of method books; discussion on group teaching techniques after the observation in last class.

Week 8: Continue evaluation of method books of elementary levels; comparison between historical and modern leading methods; free discussion of good-and-bad aspects in the methods;

Week 9: Rhythm development of elementary level; acquired vs. instinctive; discussion on the strategies of teaching and learning rhythms of current level (counting [words/phrases, numbers and syllables], clapping, tapping, dancing and so on); new inventions are welcome!

Wk 10: Technique development of elementary level; vital aspects of building a solid foundation and good habits; mental vs. physical; visual vs. auditory; from setting the good position (body and hand) to using weight properly; looseness/relaxation in playing; Assignment of observing private lessons of elementary level offered by professional teachers from either university or private studio; an observation report is due in next class.

Wk 11: Discussion of private lesson observation; Strategies of lesson planning; important aspects of lesson sequencing and ordering/pacing issues; a detailed lesson plan for a lesson of elementary level is due in next class; assign master class/mock teaching group (there will be invited young piano students to be your teaching models! And the content of the master class will be given for you to prepare in advance such as specific techniques or repertoires).

Wk 12: Ear training, theory and creative activities; emphasis on the importance and strategies of ear training at early level of piano study; in class ear training activities/games; music theory vs. math; importance of balancing musicianship skills/concepts at all times (applied theory, sight reading, aural skills, easy harmonization/transposition and improvisation/composition, and other reinforcement and creative activities);

Wk 13: Supplementary repertoires; a comprehensive survey of current level's supplementary repertoires in method books, master composer original compositions and anthology books; what to look for when evaluating such resources.

Wk 14: Piano teaching as a profession; the whole process of operating a private studio; career choices and diversity; Organization involvement and activities; enjoyment orientated studio vs. competition oriented studio.

Wk 15: Movie time (segments from video production of *The Art of Piano - Great Pianists of 20th Century [1999]*); free discussion of great teachers and performers of yesterday and today throughout the world – schools of teaching and playing.

Semester Two (Teaching Intermediate Level)

Schedule:

Week 1: Discussion of the general characteristics of intermediate piano students (mostly early teenagers); physiological, psychological and sociological developments; expected musical background (reading, theory, techniques, musicianship skills/concepts and other facts such as knowledge of different styles of music and so on); interviewing transfer students who are at the current level.

Week 2: Early intermediate technique and musicianship skills/concepts; white key scale, root position triads, parallel note passages, and some easy technique studies, in various tempi, articulations and dynamics will be discussed; ear training is a vital part; sight reading and improvisation will also be emphasized; basic tone color technique will be addressed.

Week 3: Early intermediate repertoire; a survey of four periods of music (Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Contemporary) of early intermediate level; discussion on the characteristics of form, technique, rhythm, harmony and performing styles of all four periods of music; discussion on selected repertoires in all four periods and in various nationalities in both technical and musical aspects.

Week 4: Middle intermediate technique and musicianship skills/concepts; increasing learning of minor scales, chords with inversions, arpeggios, trills, intervals (mainly emphasizing on thirds and sixths), and small leaping in various tempi, articulations and dynamics will be discussed; ear training will be continually addressed (especially through dictation and identifying qualities of intervals and major/minor triads); tone color technique will be addressed in all four periods of music; theory will start to cover diatonic triads (major, minor and diminished).

Week 5: Middle intermediate repertoire; a survey of four periods of music (Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Contemporary) of middle intermediate level; discussion on the characteristics of technique, rhythm, harmony and

performing styles of all four periods of music in this level; discussion on selected repertoires in all four periods and in various nationalities in both technical and musical aspects; assignment of a presentation on both early and middle intermediate repertoire is given (a comprehensive survey of various techniques and musicianship skills/concepts responding in the specific compositions).

Week 6: Class presentation on early and middle intermediate technique, musicianship skills/concepts responding in four contrasting periods; discussion on teaching strategies regarding the technical and musical issues at these two levels; assignment of student mock teaching (in pairs) on all four periods of music (proper repertoires will be picked and assigned).

Week 7: Student mock teaching on all four periods of music on early and intermediate level; free discussion (evaluations and comments) on the mock teaching;

Week 8: Late intermediate technique and musicianship skills/concepts; increasing learning of all major and minor scales (four octaves) and chromatic scales, chords with inversions, arpeggios, trills, octaves, and 7th chords (all five kinds of 7th chords) in various tempi, articulations and dynamics will be discussed; ear training will be continually addressed (especially through dictation and identifying qualities of all intervals and 7th chords); addition to the mid intermediate content, the three types of cadences (authentic, half and plagal) will be covered; more advanced tone color technique will be addressed in all four periods of music.

Week 9: Late intermediate repertoire; a survey of four periods of music (Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Contemporary) of late intermediate level; discussion on the characteristics of technique, rhythm, harmony and performing styles of all four periods of music at this level; discussion on selected repertoires in all four periods and in various nationalities in both technical and musical aspects; assignment of presentation on late intermediate repertoire (a comprehensive survey of various contents such as techniques and musicianship skills/concepts responding in the specific compositions).

Wk 10: Class presentation on late intermediate technique, musicianship skills/concepts responding in four contrasting periods; discussion on the teaching strategies regarding the technical and musical issues of this level; assignment of students mock teaching (in pairs) on all four periods of music (proper repertoires will be picked and assigned).

Wk 11: Students mock teaching on all four periods of music on late intermediate level; free discussion (evaluations and comments) on the mock teaching;

- Wk 12: Historical and modern schools of teaching and playing; different schools of teaching and playing will be discussed (typically comparison between European and Russian schools).
- Wk 13: Adjudicating skills development; watch video segment from several international competitions and live recitals; listen to several recordings of ONE specific late intermediate level repertoire; free discussion on adjudicating skills (aspects of overall technical and musical presentation, and personality of playing); assignment of writing three adjudicating comments after attend faculty, students and guest artists concerts.
- Wk 14: Guest presentation (tone color techniques on four periods of music at intermediate level).
- Wk 15: Final presentation on the individual projects.