



CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

PIANO DEPARTMENT

Piano Senior Thesis Syllabus and Course Description

Course Description: This year-long course taken in the senior year, is designed to follow the sequence of study in Honors Piano 11th grade or the equivalent of skills mastered. This course includes a study of music theory, the development of technical facility, the development of piano repertoire and the use of these skills in performing in various genres such as solo piano, piano ensembles, mixed ensembles, and accompanying. In addition, Seniors in the Piano Program at the School of the Arts are expected to complete a Senior Thesis project. The requirements for successful completion are listed below.

Performance Thesis Requirements Quarter one and two

- **Senior Thesis Class:** Students must be a Senior, and enroll in the Senior Thesis Class with Dr. Byrd. Students must Maintain at least a B average for the year in the Senior Thesis Class. During the first and second quarter, students will receive regular performance assignments and will be graded on their performance and preparation along the way toward their final performance/exam which will be their jury. Late assignments may be downgraded for each day late. (The third and fourth quarters will be spent on Piano Pedagogy).
- **February Senior Thesis Recital. Students are required to prepare and perform a memorized solo from the standard piano literature and also one ensemble work.** Perform one solo from memory and one ensemble piece (with music) in the February Senior Thesis Recital. This recital is NOT graded, but it is required for earning a Senior Thesis. All solo pieces must be approved by Dr. Byrd within the first 10 days of the class. Ensemble Pieces must be approved by September 15. Repertoire can include pieces learned in the sophomore or junior years but must also include new repertoire from the present year, including jazz, contemporary or original compositions. Students are also required to perform one ensemble work. This can be a chamber ensemble, piano ensemble, or a jazz/contemporary combo. It is encouraged for students to collaborate with other majors.

Senior Thesis Jury: Three weeks before the recital. Students must perform a jury for the teacher, an outside juror, and with their parents/guardian attending, as part of the final exam for the Senior Thesis class. To be eligible to perform in the recital and earn a Senior Thesis, students must perform their solo from memory, and their ensemble piece with music, and earn a score of 90 or above. Students who do not have their solo memorized or who score lower than 90 on their jury, will not perform in the recital and will not receive a Senior Thesis.

Students will also create their own program notes THREE weeks before the recital as part of the Jury. Submit a final draft of program notes, which include information on compositions, information on the composers, background on the compositions and discussion of performance techniques and practices for the pieces. Also submit a bio with a head shot. This is part of the student's final grade for Senior Thesis, and students who do not submit their program notes, bio and photo in time for printing in the Senior Thesis Program will not perform on the recital and will not receive a Senior Thesis.

Education Thesis Requirements Quarter Three and Four

- Students will read assignments from the textbook "Professional Piano Teaching", by Jeanine Jacobson. They will learn key practices of teaching piano and piano literature, research and compare various piano methods.
- Students will teach a beginning piano student, and/or assist with teaching students in a piano class under the supervision of the teacher for at least 8 lessons, 30 minutes each.
- The student teacher will design an instructional plan for the student, including interim goals and objectives.
- The student teacher will keep a journal that includes weekly assignments, a record of lessons, and comments on their student's progress. The journal is part of the final grade.
- Students will video one their student's lessons they are teaching and critique themselves.
- Students will observe and critique a piano class or lesson.
- Students will write a reflection paper of their teaching experience and create a presentation for the class for the final grade.

Instructional Philosophy: Students will be engaged through teacher and student led instruction, individual work, cooperative learning, and project-based instruction. Students will be heavily engaged in hands-on activities at their individual keyboards. Each student will work on their own

repertoire, technique requirements such as scales, cadence chords, and arpeggios. Students will study harmonization, sight reading, score reading, accompanying and ensemble playing, and improvisation. Students will receive individual instruction as well as group instruction and will be assessed on theory, repertoire, and technique. Students are encouraged to perform for community groups as well as school related functions. Technology will be used in exploring resources for music history, performance, and some components of theory.

Power Standards/Goals:

1. Students will perform repertoire from various genres and time periods with expression and musical accuracy.
2. Students will demonstrate proficiency in technique playing all major and minor scales, cadences, arpeggios and various technical exercises such as Hanon or Czerny.
3. Students will demonstrate proficiency in the functional keyboard skills of sight reading, harmonization, accompanying, score reading and improvisation.
3. Students will interpret music notation at an advanced level. They will demonstrate the knowledge of written and aural music theory, and its use in composition.
4. Students will evaluate musical performances of others as well as themselves by applying specific criteria appropriate for the style of the music and offer constructive suggestions for improvement. They will also evaluate it in terms of its aesthetic qualities.
5. Students will explain the use of elements of music in a given work that make it unique, interesting and expressive as it relates to the time period in which it was written.
6. Students will use technology in researching composers, performers, music history and in the notation of music that they arrange or compose.

Assessment and Grading

Assessment methods will include seminars and performances, weekly goals, theory tests, classwork, and projects, playing tests on technique.

Grading Plan

Major Grades-60%

1. **Practice Goals-**Students will turn in weekly practice and progress goals. Students are required to practice 45 minutes a day, 6 days per week. One assessment per week.
2. **Repertoire/Performance Seminars/Projects: Semester 1:** Preparation; progress in learning the notes, rhythm, articulation, dynamics, pedaling and memorization; performance of lesson materials, seminars, recitals, or adjudications. **Semester 2:** Preparation and progress in Thesis Education Presentation - a minimum of 3 assessments per nine weeks.

Minor Grades-40%

1. **Classwork-** Weekly classwork includes informal assessment in theory or other exercises, having materials for class, and being on task.

2. **Theory/History**-Theory tests, composition or music history projects - a minimum of 2-3 assessments per nine weeks; Written theory concepts and developing musicianship through aural skills will be taught.
3. **Technique**- Playing tests on scales, cadences, arpeggios, selected exercises- a minimum of 2 assessments per nine weeks. Technique is informally assessed through observation and formally assessed using grading rubrics.

Major Course Assignments and Projects:

1. Senior Thesis Performance Jury, Recital, Education Projects, Education Reflection Presentation.
2. Seminars - Students will perform repertoire for the class and participate in active critiquing of their own and other performances. This will occur 2-3 times in the first and second quarter.
3. Practice Goals - Students will keep an organized list of goals that will be assessed weekly.
4. Fall Recital - Students will learn, memorize, and polish repertoire and perform it in a public recital.
5. Composer Research- Students will use selected sites on the internet to research composers and music that they are studying and write a brief synopsis of their findings.
6. Adjudication- Students are requested to participate in an adjudication. There are at least two opportunities each year. They may participate in Achievement Day, Solo & Ensemble Festival, District Auditions or if available, a master class.

Course Materials:

- One solo piano work
- One Piano ensemble selection (duet, multi-piano work, chamber ensemble, concerto, jazz combo)
- Copies of "Professional Piano Teaching" by Jeanine Jacobson
- Sets of method books for piano teaching
- Sight Reading Factory Subscription
- Alfred's Group Piano Book 2, E.L. Lancaster
- Basics of Keyboard Theory, Level 8, Julie McIntosh; musictheory.net
- Select Hanon exercises from the "Virtuoso Pianist"

Required Reading

Students are required to read articles on composers and music that they are playing, music history, articles related to piano.

Extra Help

Students may request extra help with theory or repertoire during office hours or other pre-arranged times. Parents are encouraged to email or call with concerns.

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