

Syllabus: Piano I

Instructor: Jocelyn Kagoro

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Class Meeting Times: Blocks 3B (B/D), 4A (B/D), 4B (A/C)

Room: 104

Course Description

This year-long beginner piano course focuses on foundational skills in piano playing, music theory, and literacy. The class is primarily **student-led**, with students working through individual packets at their own pace. The teacher will provide **brief demonstrations or guidance as needed**, but class time is mainly for independent learning.

Students will develop proficiency in reading sheet music, playing piano pieces, and understanding basic theory. Performing in front of others is **optional**, though participating in class activities is strongly encouraged.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

- Understand and apply basic music theory related to piano playing.
 - Develop proficiency in playing fundamental piano techniques and pieces.
 - Read and interpret sheet music and chord charts fluently.
 - Participate actively in class activities and complete assessments, even if performing is optional.
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Units of Study

Introduction to Piano Basics

- Learn piano keys, proper hand position, and basic finger exercises.
- Begin reading sheet music: notes, rhythms, and dynamics.

Music Theory for Pianists

- Introduction to notes, scales, intervals, and chords.
- Understand how scales and chords are constructed and their role in music.

Basic Piano Techniques

- Learn finger placement, hand coordination, and playing simple melodies.
- Practice fundamental exercises to build strength and agility.

Reading Sheet Music and Chord Charts

- Practice reading and interpreting sheet music and chord charts.

Playing Chord Progressions and Song Structure

- Learn common chord progressions and how they fit into songs.

Performance Preparation and Repertoire Building

- Work on pieces for practice and optional performances.
 - Students may perform individually or in small groups, but this is **optional**.
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Assessments & Checkpoints

Packet Checkpoints

- Each quarter, students will complete **4 checkpoints** in their packets.
- Checkpoints consist of:
 1. **Playing scales** with correct technique
 2. **Written assignments** from the packet
 3. **Songs** completed and passed within the packet
- **Packets stay in the classroom**, and checkpoint work is completed and reviewed during class.
- Checkpoints are designed to track progress **throughout the quarter**.

Quarterly Assessments

- In addition to checkpoints, there will be **one formal assessment per quarter**.
 - Assessments are **low-stress** if you've been using class time wisely.
 - Students will choose **a song from teacher-provided options** for their assessment.
 - Procedure:
 1. You tell the teacher what you are playing.
 2. The teacher observes your **technique and confidence**.
 3. After playing, you write **3–5 bullet points** reflecting on what you did well and what you will improve for the next assessment.
 - **Quarter 4 Assessment:** Instead of improvement bullet points, you will write how you plan to **use this knowledge in the future**.
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Grading

- **Class Participation & Packet Work:** 80%
 - Includes engagement with packet exercises, brief demonstrations, in-class activities, and **completion of all 4 quarterly checkpoints**.
- **Assessments:** 20%
 - Includes theory quizzes and the **quarterly assessment** (student-chosen song from teacher-provided options).

Note: Performing in front of others is optional, but actively participating in class activities and completing checkpoints is crucial for success.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is essential. Students must use class time to work through packets and participate in activities. Excused absences require documentation.

Classroom Expectations

- **Respect the instruments** – Pianos and equipment are shared resources.
- **Maximize class time** – Work through your packets efficiently during class.
- **Participate actively** – Even if you choose not to perform, engage with exercises and demonstrations.