

MUJZ 141a - Keyboard for Improvisers

Spring 2023 - Course Syllabus

Instructor: David Arnay

arnay@usc.edu office: 213-740-3119

Overview:

MUJZ 141 will familiarize you with the piano keyboard as a tool for understanding harmony, learning tunes, sitting in as pianist, and developing your writing. The course covers fundamental piano technique including scales and arpeggios, an understanding of basic chording and progressions at the keyboard, common jazz and blues progressions and styles, performance of melodies with simple accompaniment, and the creation of bass lines. After the midterm we explore more complex chord voicings and accompaniment techniques, additional jazz styles, and further your skills for sightreading lead sheets.

Materials:

1. For all courses in the Keyboard Lab (MUS 213), students are required to use their own headset, comprising headphones with an attached boom microphone. **Headsets must have a 1/8" (3.5 mm) wired TRRS connector to work with the lab controller system.**

Compatible headsets can be found in the USC bookstore. Students can also purchase these online etc. Examples include the following models:

1. [Logitech H111](#)
2. [Logitech H151](#)
3. [Logitech G332](#)
4. [Yamaha HPH-250m](#)

2. Each week's assignment and associated files will be posted on Blackboard weekly, usually on Wednesday. **You may view the materials in class on a laptop or iPad (not on your phone) but printing the assignments is strongly encouraged.** Printed materials should be collected in a 3-ring binder, which will count for +/- 5 points on the midterm and the final exams. Binders are available at the USC book store.

Communication:

Monitor and maintain your USC email account! All class-related communication will be via USC email. Make sure there's room in your inbox, and please respond promptly when a reply is requested.

Format:

Each class session will begin with the introduction of new concepts and associated assignments. In the remaining class time, you may begin to explore the new material while I work with students individually to review the assignment due that day. Your progress will be recorded on a checklist. **Weekly attendance and the associated performances/evaluations account for 50% of your grade.** There will be written assignments; you must be prepared to play what you write.

Practice:

This is a two-unit performance-related class; you are expected to **practice at least thirty minutes a day, on average**. Access to a keyboard in your living space is ideal.

Access to Gateway practice rooms is managed by the Music Operations office (x6444), and on the web through the Virtual EMS system.

Classroom conduct:

Cell phone use is prohibited; phones must be silenced and stowed. Viewing the assignments on an iPad or laptop is allowed, though the printed library is preferred. No gum chewing, please!

Grading:

“A” students will master all assignments in the week assigned. “B” students may progress more slowly but demonstrate consistent effort. **Lower grades result from missing assignments and/or lack of effort.** Even if you lack exceptional “chops,” evidence of real effort will contribute to a higher grade: *“progress, not perfection.”* The midterms and finals will cover all material introduced to that point.

Class participation:	10%
Weekly assignments:	40%
Midterm:	25%
Final:	25%

Remote options:

Each week's presentation will be archived on video and uploaded to Blackboard. If you must miss a class you should view the video to stay current. You will get the most out of the class through personal interaction with the instructor and other students in MUS213, but you may submit weekly assignments as a video recording of your performance.

Office hour:

Once the dust has settled on my schedule I will establish a time on Tuesday or Thursday for Zoom consultations. You may use this time to address any difficulties you may be having with the material, or to catch up on missing assignments.

IMPORTANT: Participation is a major component of success in MUJZ 141. If you miss a class and do not submit a performance video, you are expected to demonstrate your understanding of that week's material on the midterm or final exam. Missing assignments will affect your grade.

Spring 2023 schedule – subject to revision

<u>Week # / Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments/Tunes</u> (due the following week)
1) Jan. 13	Introduction, evals. Triads/transposition	Inversions, “Amazing Grace” “London Bridge,” “Over the Rainbow”
2) Jan. 20	Diatonic improv	“Pachelbel Canon” using simple melodic motives
3) Jan. 27	Shell voicings 1	Arpeggios: M7, 7, -7, half dim.7, dim.7 ii-V-I drills, “Autumn Leaves”
4) Feb. 3	Shell voicings 2	“Rhythm,” “It Could Happen to You”
5) Feb. 10	Guide Tones MIDTERM PREP	Diatonic, chromatic motion ii-V-I drills, “Blues x 2”
Feb. 17	> MIDTERM EXAM <	Covers all topics through week 5
6) Feb. 24	Walking bass	Blues progressions, turnaround loops,
7) Mar. 3	Groove bass	“Watermelon Man,” “Blue Bossa”
8) Mar. 10	4-voice technique “shell extensions”	Melodic patterns, diatonic motion “You Are Too Beautiful,” student pick
Mar. 17	SPRING BREAK	
9) Mar. 24	3-voice comping	Chromatic and diatonic movement blues: “Now’s the Time”
10) Mar. 31	Tune study incl. improv	“Song For My Father”
11) Apr. 7	Modal style	Quartal triads, “So What”
12) Apr. 14	Modal 2	“Saga of Harrison Crabfeathers”
13) Apr. 21	TBA	
Apr. 28	FINAL PREP	
May 5	> FINAL EXAM <	Covers all material to date.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710
campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.