

A close-up, black and white photograph of piano keys, showing the repeating pattern of black and white keys. The image is cropped to show the top half of the keys, with a light blue curved line separating it from the black background below.

Muap 2001.001

Piano Proficiency

Day/Time: 10:00-10:55 MWF

FAC 1018

Vicki Conway, Instructor
Spring 2026

vconway@uttyler.edu6

Meet the Instructor: Ms. Vicki Conway



Hello! I'm Mrs. Conway, aka 'the dragon' as nicknamed by a recent graduate Bethany Woolman, who is now a medical student at UT Rio Grand Valley. Piano can be an intimidating instrument, but with guided practice it is very user friendly and a valuable support instrument for all your music classes and eventually your career. It does require a time commitment outside of class but my goal is to help you learn to *practice smarter, not longer - for lasting results with the least amount of effort!*

On a personal note, I live in Longview with my husband Bret, 2 dogs and 2 cats. I'm also a mom of 3 grown daughters and a grandma to 5 girls and 3 boys. My hobby is learning! I did almost half the coursework for a doctorate degree at The University of Oklahoma, but family priorities ultimately prevented me from completing it. So *I fully understand the challenges of balancing school, work, family and life. If/when you get overwhelmed and need extra time, extra space or extra help, just ask!* I love teaching piano and music to all ages and levels and if I'm ever coming across as a 'dragon', it's ok to let me know. Let's have some fun along the way!

WHY PIANO??

“There probably isn’t a single thing that my musical journey has benefited from more than playing piano.”

Dr. Sarah Roberts

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS!!

- Provide accompaniment for elementary music classroom instruction and programs
- Use piano as supportive tool in middle school band programs to play pitches, melodies, and transposition
- Assist/teach pianists in high school jazz ensembles
- Rehearse individual or sectional voice parts in middle through high school choral programs
- Play keyboard for &/or lead a praise band
- Train and enhance hand independence for conducting skills
- Enhance score reading skills

“Everything I learned in Piano Proficiency was used at some point during my student teaching”

Gavin Hollingsworth, BM
Instrumental Music Education Fall 2022

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Assess functional piano skills necessary for a successful career in any field of music and equivalent to the final exam of Muap 2112 Harmony & Keyboard IV.
- Areas of assessment
 - Sightread classical and chorale styles
 - Lead Sheets and Transposition
 - Incorporate Melody into Accompaniment
 - Harmonic Progressions
 - Jazz Standards

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Sightread classical styles at a minimum early intermediate level 3*
- Sightread a basic hymn or chorale
- Realize lead sheets, accompanying styles, and harmonic progressions appropriate for 4 semesters of music theory study
- Learn basic comping skills for Jazz Standards

*Levels based on *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Magrath)

Course Overview

5 Skill Modules + Classical SR

Each skill module spans a
2 - 3 week time period

No required textbook

All materials provided

Module
Introduction/
Class Drills

Progress based
assignments in
class or video
submissions

Corresponding
test area of
Proficiency Exam

Course Calendar (Subject to Change)

IMPORTANT DATES

Census Date: January 26

Withdrawal Deadline: March 30

As soon as all assignments within a module are passed, you may take the corresponding portion of the proficiency exam. If finished prior to the due date, you are excused from class until the start of the next module or you may work ahead!

If a module isn't completed by the due date, you must go on to the next module with the class and stay current. You may return to any unfinished modules later.

Weeks 1-3: Lead Sheet & Reading Skills

– January 12 – January 30

Weeks 4-6: Theory Module

– February 2 – February 20

Weeks 7-9: Jazz Basics Module

– February 23 – March 20

Week 10-12 Chorale Module

– March 23 – April 10

Week 13-14 Incorporate Melody into Accompaniment Module & Classical SR

– April 13 – April 24

Week 15: Makeup Tests (must be eligible)

– Tuesday, April 28 8:00 – 10:00

Video Submissions via Canvas

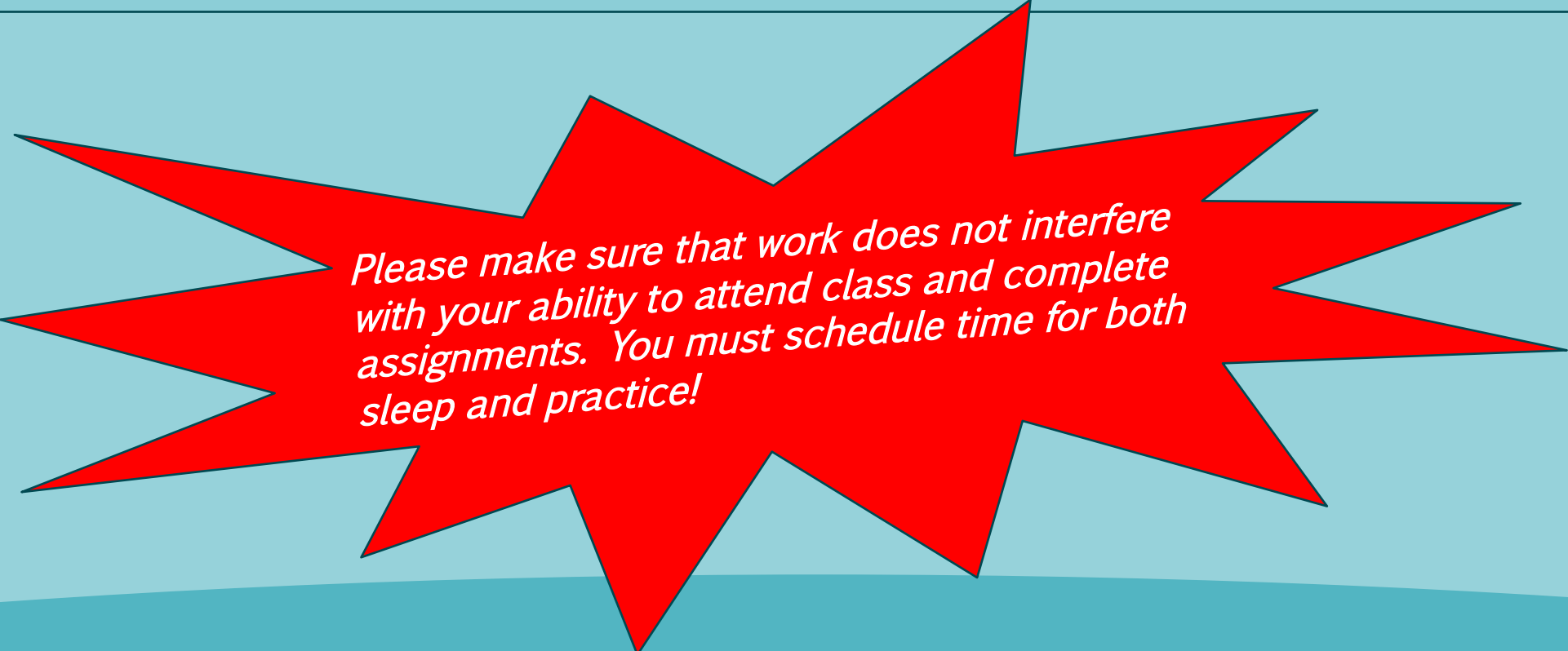
Certain module assignments will be video submissions due by class time (9:00 am) on the date of the module test

Recordings must meet the following criteria

- Camera angle should be an overhead view of hands as if viewing from behind you
 - The back camera generally works better than the front selfie camera and it should be positioned either over your head or beside/behind the piano bench. Do not put camera so that it faces you!
 - In practice rooms, raise the music stand as high as possible so camera is looking down
 - Watch the video to make sure keyboard isn't backward or mirrored (RH on left side/LH on right side)
 - If mirrored, flip it before sending (this frequently happens using the front selfie camera)
 - If keyboard orientation is backward (black keys in front/white keys in back), reposition camera and re-record
- Save the video and title it with an abbreviated assignment name (ex. Harm Prog 2)
- Upload the video to either a YouTube channel or Google Drive and make it shareable
- Copy the link and paste it on the Canvas assignment page

Attendance

ATTENDANCE is required at all classes in order to fully understand assignments/grading criteria and to benefit from in-class drills, learning strategies, and feedback. If you are ill, send an email to vconway@uttyler.edu PRIOR to class. Notify all instructors anytime you will be absent, just as you would an employer! Appropriate documentation is required for an excused absence, especially on test days.



Please make sure that work does not interfere with your ability to attend class and complete assignments. You must schedule time for both sleep and practice!

Special Course Notes

Set aside a 30 minute block of time 4 - 5 days per week for practice.

- On campus and between classes is ideal! Once you leave campus it will be harder to fit practicing in your schedule!
- Short focused practices throughout the week are far more productive than fewer longer ones.

Come to every class even if you haven't practiced or feel completely unprepared.

- Assignments will be practiced and played IN CLASS or you may submit videos. The only time you should miss class is in case of illness.
- As this is a lab with shared keyboards and headphones, please do not come to class if you have a contagious illness.
- Do your best with realistic expectations and grace – some modules will be harder than others and life happens! Please let me know if there are extenuating circumstances causing you to struggle.

Late Work

- Module dates are firm and should be completed within the dates given. Students who consistently attend class are generally very successful in the course.
- You must pass all required assignments within a module in order to be given the corresponding portion of the test. If the module test is not passed, some assignments may need to be repeated before another opportunity is given.
- Additional attempts to pass and complete a module is allowed throughout the semester. You must however, move on to the next module and stay current with the class.

Course Grading Criteria

Credit (CR)

- All proficiency requirements passed with a minimum score of 70%

Students passing all 6 portions of the exam with a grade of 70 or better will receive credit (CR) for the course.

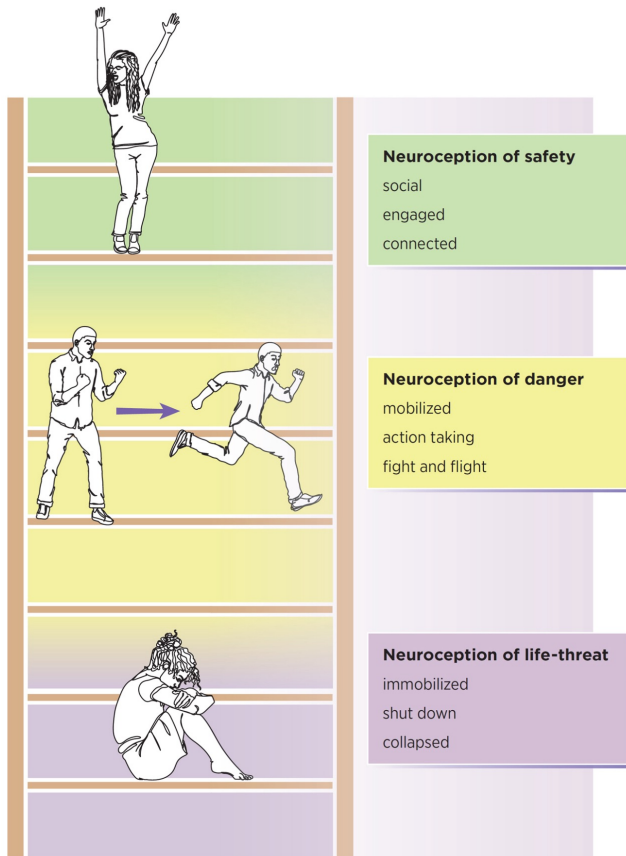
No Credit (NC)

- One or more proficiency requirement not passed with a minimum score of 70%

Students not passing all 6 skill areas of the exam will receive a grade of No Credit (NC) and will need to re-enroll in the course. However, any skill areas passed carry over and do not need to be repeated in subsequent semesters!

Understanding your Autonomic Nervous System (ANS)

The Autonomic Ladder



Learn to recognize and honor what your 'body' is telling you

- Vagus nerve is the longest nerve in the body and 80% of messages go from body to brain

Lower states can hijack or interfere with learning/performing

- Hard to focus or access what has been practiced
- Why motor memory fails under pressure

Strategies

- Smart practice for secure learning
 - Drill short segments and **plan what to think**
 - Repeat the **process** allowing it to naturally get faster
- Take full deep breaths/stretch/have realistic expectations and do your best!



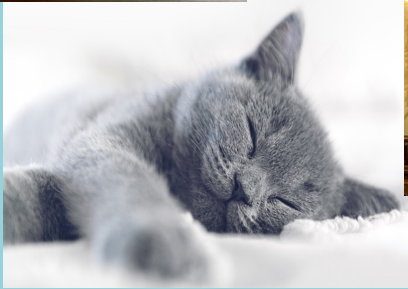
Utilize free counseling services at UT Tyler!

Wellness – Don't forget to take care of YOU

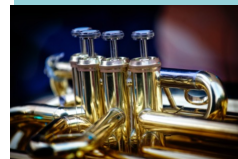
Adulting requires balance and resilience!



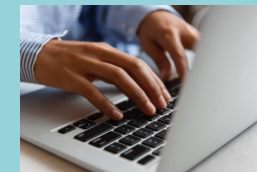
Nutrition
and Sleep



Faith
Family
Friends
Fun



Practice and
Classwork



Office Hours / Contact Information

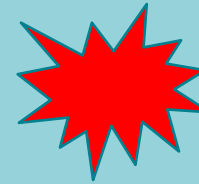
Instructor Contact information

- vconway@uttyler.edu (preferred - anytime)
- 903-566-7293 (office)
- 903-238-6121 (text) – please avoid nights/weekends

Office Location: FAC 1221

Office Hours (check office door for any updates)

- Monday: 3:00 – 3:30
- Tuesday: 10:00 – 10:30 & 3:00-4:30
- Wednesday: 9:00 – 10:00
- Thursday: 10:00 – 10:30
- By Appointment - send an email request with your available times



FREE TUTORING!!!

- Daniel Holmes
 - 214-949-7126
 - dholmes@patriots.uttyler.edu

Special Course Notes: Artificial Intelligence (AI)

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, AI is permitted, but any use for written work must be acknowledged and properly documented.