

**Piano Pedagogy (MUSC 3833)**  
**TR 2:00p – 3:20p**  
**C117C**

**Dr. Ruth Morrow**  
**940/ 397-4789 (office)**  
**940/ 867-2760 (cell)**  
**Office hours: posted outside office**  
[ruth.morrow@mwsu.edu](mailto:ruth.morrow@mwsu.edu)  
[klaviercat@aol.com](mailto:klaviercat@aol.com)

**Piano Pedagogy** is a survey of the methods and materials available to private piano teachers and students. Additionally, students of this course will be required to observe and comment upon lessons given by area teachers, and are encouraged as possible to teach students (children and adults) from the community to gain experience of and insight into the art of private music teaching.

**Required Text: Klingenstein, Beth Gigante: *The Independent Piano Teacher's Studio Handbook*. Hal Leonard, 2008. Paperback and e-book equally okay.**

**Expectations:**

1. Appear interested.
2. You won't appear interested if you are not in class.
3. As possible, you will teach students for experience (without pay). You may occasionally be asked to video lessons for class feedback or as possible to teach live in class. Lesson plans and self-critiques will be evaluated.
4. You will have oral presentations to be given in class on an ongoing and regular basis.
5. You will have one major written assignment, due April 6, 2021, and will present to the class on your topic in the weeks following its due date.

**Grading:** This is a participation course. Each student **is highly encouraged** to teach students from the community (#3 above). This teaching and its evaluation will be factored into the semester grade. There is one major written project (#5 above) plus numerous smaller ones (#4 above).

Class participation and Oral Presentations	50%
Written Assignments	30%
Teaching	<u>20%</u>
	100%

**Attendance:** Please see Expectations, #s 1 and 2. In other words, this is like life: please show up on time ready to engage yourself with the spirit and material of the course.

**Schedule:**

Week 1: Introduction; Why We Teach; Necessities of a Studio  
Weeks 2-6: How We Teach – the Basics  
Weeks 7-11: How We Teach – Intermediate; Business Practices  
Weeks: 12-15: How We Teach – Advanced, with Presentations  
Final: December 14, 2017, 1:00p – 3:00p

**Weekly topics (order of presentation may vary):**

- Week 1: Orientation to teaching; student teaching assignments & model teaching  
The first lesson: objectives and materials  
Criteria for the evaluation of piano methods
- Week 2: Read text Chapters 1 & 2; Design your own studio documents  
Update on student lesson times and parent questions
- Week 3: Elementary methods  
Read text Part VI Ch. 18: Teaching Materials and Learning Styles  
Read text Part VIII: Teaching Skills – not Pieces  
Music Theory as skill, game, application to aid in music learning  
Design your own games: rhythm, pitch, etc.
- Week 4: Continuation of games presentations; include technique  
Further examination of method books  
Teach or show videos of teaching + discussion
- Week 5: Presentation of first project: Comparison of 1<sup>st</sup> yr. method books  
More music theory
- Week 6: Very young beginners  
Taxes: read text Part II: Ch 8: Taxes, Insurance, & Retirement Funds
- Week 7: Begin to devise an understanding of elementary-intermediate-advanced  
Analyzing music from a pedagogical perspective  
Read text Part VII: From Preparation to Performance  
Adult students
- Week 8: Continuation of discussion of elementary-intermediate-advanced leveling  
Evaluating a score  
When to use piano method books and when to transition out  
Composition project introduction
- Week 9: Composition project  
analysis of 1 each: elementary, intermediate, and advanced work of choice
- Week 10: Present composition and analyses from previous week
- Week 11: Q & A on Business Practices and setting up a studio
- Week 12: Using technology in and for your studio
- Week 13: Written project due (leveled anthology with commentary)
- Week 14: Presentations of written projects  
Teach/videos of teaching + discussion
- Week 15: Wrap up; student recital prep and performance

### **Overarching Assignments:**

1. You have permission to sit in Sam Gibbs Music, 4117 Old Jacksboro Hwy, in order to look through various piano method books not available on campus. This will be especially helpful for **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT 1 (methods comparison)**
2. You will be given a list of private teachers in the Wichita Falls area who have given their permission for you to come observe lessons with prior notice and approval. You must complete 3 observations of a complete lesson with at least two different teachers (not necessarily the same students). You will have a form on which to express your comments, and will also need to write a summary comparing and contrasting pedagogical approaches from your perspective.
3. You will be assigned at least one student to teach in Piano Model Class for experience (without pay). You are expected to contact the parent (or student, should you be assigned an adult) and set up the lesson times and choose materials and methods. You will meet with the students weekly, with the exception of Thanksgiving week, for 30-45 minutes (time determined by age and maturity of student and schedules).
4. You will **COMPOSE** and perform a short (at least 8-16 measures) piece illustrating your understanding of the skills needed at an elementary or intermediate level.
5. You will create a leveled anthology of teaching pieces from early elementary through advanced with commentary. We will start this in class; however, you must include at least one piece from each level (elementary, intermediate, advanced) and subcategory (early, middle, late). This is your major **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT 2** for the semester, and is due November 21, 2017, at the normal class meeting time.

All written work is to be printed after being written in Word, Times New Roman, 12-point font. Forms (for method analysis, book commentary, and private teacher observations) may be handwritten *so long as the handwriting is legible to the instructor*.

Assignments received by the instructor after the due date and time will merit at most half credit.

**The instructor reserves the right to cancel or adjust assignments as the course progresses. Students will be informed how this may effect grading.**

## WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT 1 – due for presentation February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021

This assignment needs to be typed, double-spaced. While there is no particular length requirement, it is assumed that it will take at least six pages to complete all aspects of the assignment.

- 1 Critique the first level book of at least three **complete** methods (everything, not just the basic piano books). Mention what you like and dislike, what you think works and what doesn't, speed with which the method moves, etc. These critiques may be in outline form (lists and comparison charts instead of complete sentences) as you wish.
- 2 Write a short essay (1-2 pages) describing your position concerning the use of a single method in the teaching of a beginning student. In other words, **does a single method work?**
- 3 Create your own combination of teaching materials for the beginning student. Even if you believe that a single method works well for the average student, there must be some materials not associated with that particular method which you would like to include at some point during the student's first year.

Defend your choice of books and materials in two ways:

- 1 On their own merits, and
- 2 In comparison with similar materials from the same other methods which you did not choose.

This gives me a chance to understand your reasons for the choices you have made.

Types of materials to be included in your combination of materials for first year study:

- Flashcards
- Primers and graded piano books
- Scale books
- Theory books
- Technique books
- Repertoire books
- Duet books
- Supplemental materials:
  - Sight-reading
  - Composition
  - Ear-training
  - Other
- Extra materials for the gifted student

## COMPOSITION PROJECT - due March 9, 2021

Write a piece of no less than 8 measures in which you use one or more musical skills from the elementary or intermediate level. Include dynamics, marks of articulation, phrasing, etc. Additionally, write a paragraph outlining your thought process and compositional methods. These pieces will be presented 10/31 and 11/2.

## WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT 2 - due for presentation April 6, 2021

### Graded/Annotated Anthology of Piano Music

You are asked to select a minimum of eight pieces for solo piano. These may come from any source, but you are expected to assign a level yourself (don't assume that the grading used in the method or collection is accurate for our purposes), with at least one piece in each of the following categories. Rather than use a numeric system, you are asked to grade the pieces according to the following ranking:

Early Elementary  
Elementary  
Late Elementary

Early Intermediate  
Intermediate  
Late Intermediate

Early Advanced  
Advanced

Do not worry about being “absolutely correct” in these assessments - they are all subjective, in any case.

You are asked to write a paragraph (or so) justifying your ranking – what specific criteria in the piece brought you to this conclusion? You might think about hand position (or lack thereof), dynamic range, hand span, marks of articulation, phrasing, length, technical requirements, and subtleties of musicianship and interpretation (for starters) in determining and justifying your level.

You are further asked to write a paragraph on the composer, and one on the genre of the piece. You shall then write a “plan of attack” for teaching the piece - where are the hard spots, how would you break up the piece into useful sections for practice, etc. Finally, are there any specific musical and/or technical problems that this piece addresses that might be useful in a more global realm? There is no minimum or maximum page length for the commentary, but do follow the guidelines below for organizing the anthology as a whole.

Please photocopy each piece (use front and back, but this is on your nickel [i.e. not in the music office...]) and put the typewritten commentary for each piece right before or after the score for that piece, and be consistent (either all before or all after). You may use staple, paper clip, or binder to hold your anthology together.

### **Changes in Course Expectations:**

The instructor reserves the right to cancel or adjust assignments as the course progresses. Students will be informed how this may effect grading.

## COVID-19 Information

**Course Delivery:** Class will be student split; that is, half of the class will come in-person Tuesdays and the other half Thursdays. The day not attending in-person will be attended during regular class meeting time through D2L zoom.

**Attendance:** There will be a seating chart for the class period in which you are in-person to facilitate attendance. Zoom allows for the professor to see who attended each remote lecture and for what period(s) of time. PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CAMPUS IF YOU ARE SICK. Should you have need to remain at home on a day you are scheduled for in-person instruction, please inform the professor as soon as possible (preferably before class) and attend through D2L. Please refer to the “Attendance” policy for this class on p. 2 of this syllabus; see also “Emergency Situations” below and pp. 56 and 59-61 of the [MSU Texas Return to Campus Task Force Report](#). In-person and online attendance are weighted equally.

**Cleaning Protocols:** Before class, the professor will have cleaned the door handles, light switches, and have sprayed all desks and chairs with disinfectant. It is each student’s responsibility to take a paper towel and wipe their desk and chair. At the end of class, the professor will once again spray the desks and chairs with disinfectant and students will wipe their seats and desks with the provided paper towel.

**Face Coverings:** As stated in the [MSU Texas Facial Covering Requirement](#), students are required to wear protective face coverings in classrooms as well as on their way to and from. Please wear a clean mask you have procured yourself and keep it on through the entire class when attending in person. Please see Disability Support Services should you believe you have an exemption to this policy and p. 62 of the [MSU Texas Return to Campus Task Force Report](#).

**Grading:** The professor is mindful that this is not a normal semester. Please contact the professor at your earliest convenience should circumstances arise which prevent your timely attendance in the class and/or completion of its requirements so that your grade does not suffer.

**Emergency Situations:** Should you need an accommodation to limit or eliminate your physical class attendance, please work through Disability Support Services for approval. If you experience a situation during the semester that affects your ability to attend class, including illness of a family member, a vulnerable family member, or issues with child care due to school closures, the professor will work with you towards understanding and completion of material missed in class. Please refer to pp. 57-58 of the [MSU Texas Return to Campus Task Force Report](#).

**Resources:** [MSU Texas Return to Campus Task Force Report](#)  
[MSU Texas Facial Covering Requirement](#)

**Safe Zones/Social Justice Statement:** Social justice is stated as one of Midwestern State University’s core values, and the professor considers the classroom to be a place where the students will be treated with respect as human beings, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Moreover, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided the students can agree to disagree. It is the professor’s expectation that ALL students be able to consider the classroom a safe environment.

**Student Conduct:** Behavior that interferes with either the professor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor's removing the disruptive student(s) from the class, either temporarily or permanently (instructor drop), and receive a final lower grade, up to an F. In addition, and depending on the nature of the behavior or conduct, the student(s) may be subject to further disciplinary actions as per MSU policies.

**Academic (Dis)Honesty:** The university policy and procedures for academic dishonesty are outlined in the current Student Handbook in Appendix E. No cheating, collusion, or plagiarism will be tolerated in this class. Any student engaging in an academic dishonesty act will be sanctioned appropriately..

**Special Needs:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information that needs sharing, or if you need special accommodations in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with the professor to discuss these needs as soon as possible. Please note that in order to qualify for consideration of special accommodations, the student must be registered with the MSU Office of Disability Services, and the professor must receive a memo on file from that office, along with the Special Accommodations Request Form.

**Student Privacy:** Federal privacy law prohibits the professor from releasing information about students to certain parties outside of the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases the professor will not discuss students' academic progress or other matters with their parents. Please do not have them call. Regardless of these important legal considerations, the professor's general policy is to communicate with the student(s), not their parents, even when a student has signed a consent form.

**Campus Carry:** Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at [Campus Carry Rules/Policies](#).