

Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College, CUNY

MUS 74: Piano Skills I

Summer 2025

Schedule: Mondays to Thursdays, 1:00–2:40pm

Location: Room 314

Instructor: Vlad Praskurnin (he/him)

Email: vlad.praskurnin@qc.cuny.edu

Office Hours: before and/or after class, or by appointment (email me with your available times)

This syllabus is provisional and subject to revision.

Course Description

Welcome to Piano Skills I! In this course, we'll learn the basics of piano playing through scales, chord progressions, and short pieces. The aim is to develop technical and mental facility at the keyboard. Satisfactory completion of this course is a prerequisite for Theory 1 (MUS 173: Harmony, Counterpoint, and Keyboard I) and MUS 171 (Sight singing and Dictation 1).

Learning Goals

- Become comfortable with reading the grand staff and gain technical/haptic familiarity with the keyboard
- Internalize key relationships through scales and chord progressions in up to four sharps or flats
- Develop the ability to sight-read and perform short, simple pieces
- Establish effective practice habits

Materials & Resources Required

- Headphones/earphones. Please bring these to every class meeting.
- A folder/binder or tablet. Please be able to access any of the handouts that will be distributed (not just the last handout) at every class meeting.
- Access to a piano and metronome
- Access to our class [Dropbox](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/4ebq6advq6go92su4gnpk/ABFQTmnzUaIpJstn58GKAZ4?rlkey=2t5wt92prrbuaq6gjyuphslyk&st=7i3k4qfh&dl=0):
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/4ebq6advq6go92su4gnpk/ABFQTmnzUaIpJstn58GKAZ4?rlkey=2t5wt92prrbuaq6gjyuphslyk&st=7i3k4qfh&dl=0>

Assessment Overview

- Assessments will take place during normal class time.
- Grading breakdown:

Technical Assignments:	55%
Repertoire:	35%
Participation:	10%
- Technical assignments will consist of scales, harmonic progressions, and triad inversions. These will be assessed largely for fluency of recall, fluency of performance, and proper technique.
- You will be expected to learn two pieces. These will be assessed primarily on steadiness of tempo, accuracy of rhythm and pitch, musicality (attention to expressive markings, articulations, etc., as appropriate) and technique.

- Participation will be graded holistically, considering effective use of class time, showing initiative, and not missing classes. Absences and lates of more than five minutes will negatively affect your participation grade.

Provisional Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Week 1: June 7–10	Intro	Major Scales Set 1 (C, G, D, A, E)	Minor Scales Set 1 (C, G, D, A, E)	Triad Inversions
Week 2: June 14–17	Assessment: Scales Set 1, Triad inversions	I-V-Is, set 1	Piece 1	Major and Minor Scales Set 2
Week 3: June 21–24	Assessment (Midterm): I-V-Is Set 1, Piece 1, Scales Set 1	Piece 2	I-V-Is Set 2	Assessment: I-V-Is Set 2.1
Week 4: June 28–30	Melody and Harmony exercise	Chord Charts	Assessment (Final Exam): Scales Set 2, I-V-Is Set 2.2, Piece 2	

Grading Policies

- Completion of MUS 74 with a minimum grade of B- will constitute the keyboard prerequisite for MUS 173: Harmony, Counterpoint, and Keyboard I and MUS 75: Keyboard Skills II. Although they earn credit for the course, students receiving grades lower than B- must still repeat the course if they wish to continue in the Music Program. The grade of INC may not be given. The course may not be taken more than twice without the permission of the chairman.
- Since this is a highly compressed and fast-paced version of the class, your attendance is crucial to your success. You are allowed one absence, no questions asked. Every additional absence will strongly affect your participation mark: second absence = -10% for participation mark, third and each subsequent absence = -20% for participation mark.
- If you will be late or absent, please email me as soon as possible to let me know. If you are absent on an assessment day, please arrange with me over email to make up the assignment before or after the next class you attend. If the assignment is not made up then, you will receive a zero for the assignment.
- If you are sick or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or another contagious illness, do not come to class.

Disability Accommodations

Students with disabilities or other conditions requiring academic accommodation should register with and provide documentation to the Office of Special Services for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.qc.cuny.edu/sp/>) and bring a letter to the instructor during the first week of classes

indicating the need for accommodation, and of what type. Regardless of your needs, please let me know any way that I can facilitate your learning. I will make every effort to ensure an inclusive class space.

Classroom Policies

Student responsibilities center around taking responsibility for one's learning:

- Attend all class meetings, be on time, and actively participate during class (see discussion of participation under "Grading Policies," below); be focused and proactive during in-class individual practice time
- Only use devices (tablets, phones, etc.) for learning purposes
- Foster a supportive and non-judgmental class environment
- Communicate to the instructor any challenges you are experiencing with the material/skills covered and how the instructor can best support you
- Prepare assignments; do the best you can in the time you have

Instructor responsibilities center around facilitating students' learning:

- Foster a supportive and non-judgmental class environment
- Give useful exercises and assignments, and provide useful feedback on these
- Communicate clearly and in advance how students will be evaluated, and evaluate accordingly
- Be available to help students

Advice on Practicing

You should be practicing outside of class every day, as we will progress very quickly to more demanding material. Make sure you set clear goals for each practice session. Think about how you can break down difficulties into smaller, achievable steps. Reviewing previous goals and challenges helps you decide on next steps.

Student Wellness and Counseling Services

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. QC services are available free of charge. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus at the Counseling Services Department: <https://www.qc.cuny.edu/cs/>.

Food Insecurity

The [Knights Table Food Pantry](#) provides matriculated QC students experiencing food insecurity with access to non-perishable food items for themselves and immediate family members by appointment.

CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity

Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion as provided at [Academic Integrity Policy](#).