

MUSC 3311 – Jazz Improvisation
Dr. Sarah Dunbar

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Office Hours TBD and by Appointment

Prerequisites.

MUSC 1603 and MUSC 2623, Theory I & II.
MUSC 1601 & MUSC 2621, Ear Training & Sight Singing I & II.

Course Description. This course is designed to assist with the development of music improvisation skills as related to the jazz style of music. The purpose of the course is to further student ability to improvise freely by studying and performing basic elements of jazz improvisation. Students will develop knowledge and performance ability of jazz articulation and phrasing, idiomatic melodic patterns and phrases, and notable compositions from standard jazz repertoire. Students may repeat for credit.

Course Objectives.

1. To improve the ability to improvise in a jazz style
2. To improve the ability to play or sing jazz lines and rhythms
3. To improve the ability to transcribe music (write music from a recording or performance)

Required Materials.

1. Instrument in working condition (must bring to class every day)
2. "iReal Pro" Music Practice App (download on iPhone, Android, or Mac)
3. Jazz Improv Basics, Volume 150. Published by Hal Leonard.
<https://www.halleonard.com/product/843195/jazz-improv-basics> (Also available on Amazon)
4. Optional: Blues Improvisation Complete, by Jeff Harrington. Published by Berklee Press.
<https://www.halleonard.com/search/search.action?keywords=blues%20improvisation%20complete&dt=item&page=1#products>
(Also available on Amazon and other sheet music websites. Make sure to purchase in the correct key for your instrument)

Grading.

Homework = 40%
Quizzes = 20%
Midterm Exam/Performance = 15%
Final Exam/Performance = 25%

A - 90-100%
B - 80-89%
C - 70-79%

D - 60-69%
F - 0-59%

Homework. All homework will be due at the beginning of class on the date specified. Some homework will consist of written assignments or worksheets, other homework assignments will consist of music to practice and perform in class. Late work will not be accepted. The schedule of assignments and due dates is on the last page.

Quizzes. Quizzes will consist of written responses and/or playing. There will be four quizzes. Quizzes will be completed during class time.

Midterm Exam. Your midterm exam will consist of a performance of a transcribed solo. You must transcribe the solo yourself, learn it, and perform it with the original recording, matching pitches, rhythms, articulation, tone, and style. You may choose your own solo to transcribe, however, it must be approved in advance by the instructor.

Final Exam. Your final exam will consist of a written exam and an improvised performance with a backing track. For the performance portion, you will be given three new tunes to prepare in advance, and one will be randomly selected during the final exam. You will be expected to perform the melody followed by two choruses of an improvised solo.

Schedule. See last page.

Attendance Policy. Students are expected to attend every class prepared and ready to play. Students will not be permitted to make up homework, quizzes, or exams from days they missed due to an unexcused absence, or from days in which they came unprepared. Students must notify the instructor as far in advance as possible to make up work for an excused absence.

Academic Dishonesty. The student is responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, or submitting for credit work done by another person. The instructor will apply the appropriate disciplinary action at his discretion, which may include receiving a zero on the assignment, being dropped from the course with an F, and/or recommending further sanctions. Familiarize yourself with the Student Honor Creed adopted by the MSU Student Government, which opens with the following statement: "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so."

Conduct. The instructor expects students to behave professionally and to devote class time to class work. Instances of disruption and inattention may result in a reduction of the in-class work component of the student's grade or being asked to leave. Removal from the classroom will count as an unexcused absence.

Students with Disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil protections for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment which provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. In accordance with state and federal law, MSU provides academic accommodations to students with documented disabilities.

If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center (940.397.4140). The instructor is under no obligation to offer accommodations for students with disabilities who are not registered with DSS.

Managing Stress. Students may experience challenging situations that could interfere with learning and interpersonal functioning including stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol and/or other drug use, concern for a friend or family member, loss, sleep difficulties, feeling hopeless, or relationship problems. MSU provides the following resources to students, and you do not have to wait until your situation is a crisis before accessing them:

- MSU Counseling Center (940.397.4618)
- Vinson Health Center (940.397.4231)
- Redwine Student Wellness Center (940.397.4206)

Further, additional resources may be available through MSU to address concerns of difficulty affording adequate food or housing and similar issues. I may be able to connect you to such resources, and anything along those lines that you choose to share with me will remain fully confidential.

In case of an emergency, contact the MSU Police Department (940.397.4239) or dial 911. If you or someone you know faces a sexual assault or domestic violence situation, call the 24-Hour Crisis Hotline (1.800.621.8504) for guidance or information.

Privacy. Federal privacy law prohibits the instructor from releasing information about students to certain parties outside of the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases, I will not discuss your academic progress or other matters with your parents. Please do not have them call me. Regardless of these important legal considerations, it is my general policy to communicate with the students, not their parents, even when a student has signed a consent form. College students are adults and are expected to behave accordingly.

Social Justice. Social justice is one of MSU's stated core values, and our classroom is a place where 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. The instructor expects that all students be able to consider the classroom a safe environment.

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 <https://msutexas.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies>.

The instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus for any reason. The student will receive sufficient notice of any changes. By remaining enrolled in this course, the student indicates acceptance and understanding of the syllabus.

Homework/Quiz/Exam Schedule*

Date	Due	Description
Tuesday, Aug. 24 th		Introduction/Syllabus
Thursday, Aug. 26 th	HW #1	1. Learn and perform the melody of Tune #1: Now's The Time 2. Learn and perform a concert 'F' blues scale (memorized)
Tuesday, Aug. 31 st	HW #2	Perform "Blues Solos on the Root" out of the packet. Choose 2 out of the 8 provided.
Thursday, Sep. 2 nd	HW #3	Perform "Blues Solos on the Sixth" out of the packet. Choose 2 out of the 8 provided.
Tuesday, Sep. 7 th	HW #4	Worksheet #1 – Write and perform a two-chorus blues solo
Thursday, Sep. 9th		Quiz 1 – Improvised Solo (Blues) Perform either melody + improvised solo with backing track
Tuesday, Sep. 14 th	HW #5	Learn and perform the melody of Tune #3: Satin Doll
Thursday, Sep. 16 th	HW #6	Worksheet #2 – Write and perform major seventh chords
Tuesday, Sep. 21 st	HW #7	Worksheet #3 – Write and perform dominant seventh chords
Thursday, Sep. 23 rd	HW #8	Worksheet #4 – Write and perform minor seventh chords
Tuesday, Sep. 28 th	HW #9	Worksheet #5 – Write and perform a mixture of seventh chords
Thursday, Sep. 30th		Quiz 2 – Seventh Chords (written and performance)
Tuesday, Oct. 5 th	HW #10	Learn and perform the melody and arpeggios for Tune #4: All of Me
Thursday, Oct. 7 th	HW #11	Perform melody + improvised solo with backing track
Tuesday, Oct. 12 th		Practice for Midterm
Thursday, Oct. 14th		MIDTERM – Transcription (perform and submit)
Tuesday, Oct. 19 th	HW #12	Learn and perform the melody for Tune #5: There Will Never Be Another You
Thursday, Oct. 21 st	HW #13	Worksheet #6 – Common ii-V-I "licks"
Tuesday, Oct. 26 th	HW #14	Worksheet #7 – Continuation of ii-V-I patterns
Thursday, Oct. 28 th	HW #15	Perform melody + improvised solo with backing track (Tune #5)
Tuesday, Nov. 2nd		Quiz 3 – The ii-V-I Progression (written and performance)
Thursday, Nov. 4 th	HW #16	Learn and perform the melody and arpeggios for Tune #6: Autumn Leaves
Tuesday, Nov. 9 th	HW #17	Worksheet #8 – Bebop Scales
Thursday, Nov. 11 th	HW #18	Worksheet #9 – Incorporating Bebop Scales

Tuesday, Nov. 16 th	HW #19	Worksheet #10 – Write and perform a one-chorus solo for Autumn Leaves
Thursday, Nov. 18th		Quiz 4 – Chromaticism (written and performance)
Tuesday, Nov. 23 rd	HW #20	Perform melody + improvised solo with backing track (Tune #6)
Thursday, Nov. 25th		University Closed – Happy Thanksgiving!
Tuesday, Nov. 30 th		Review for Final Exam
Thursday, Dec. 2 nd		Review for Final Exam
Final Exam (Dec. 9 @ 8-10 AM)		

*Schedule subject to change.