

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. Optional: The Real Book, sixth edition (make sure to purchase in the correct key for your instrument)
3. 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.

Daily Participation = 15%

Homework = 40%

Quizzes = 20%

Final Exam/Performance = 25%

A - 90-100%

B - 80-89%

C - 70-79%

D - 60-69%

F - 0-59%

Daily Participation. You will receive five points for each class session. Points may be deducted due to tardiness or lack of participation. Unexcused absences will receive a zero. All points earned and lost are up to the discretion of the instructor.

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 five quizzes. Quizzes will be completed during class time.

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.

Quiz and Exam Dates

Monday, February 6 – Quiz 1
Wednesday, March 1 – Quiz 2
Wednesday, March 22 – Quiz 3
Wednesday, April 12 – Quiz 4
Wednesday, April 26 – Quiz 5

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 10, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Tunes to be Selected From:

Take the 'A' Train
St. Thomas
Have You Met Miss Jones
It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)
Yarbird Suite
Softly As a Morning Sunrise
Don't Get Around Much Anymore
There Will Never Be Another You
I Let a Song Go Out Of My Heart

Homework/Quiz/Exam Schedule*

Date	Due		Description
Wednesday, Jan. 18			Introduction/Syllabus
Week Two	M	HW #1	1. Learn and perform the melody of Tune #1: Now's The Time
	W	HW #2	Perform a concert 'F' blues scale (memorized)
Week Three	M	HW #3	Perform five memorized "blues licks" in concert 'F' with backing track
	W		Practice for quiz
Week Four (Feb 6)	M		Quiz 1 – Improvised Solo (Blues) Perform melody + improvised solo with backing track
	W		NO CLASS - TMEA
Week Five	M	HW #4	Learn and perform the melody of "St. Thomas"
	W	HW #5	
Week Six	M	HW #6	
	W	HW #7	
Week Seven (Mar 1)	M		
	W		Quiz 2 – Seventh Chords (written and performance)
Week Eight	M		Learn and perform the melody of "Take the A Train"
	W	HW #8	Perform melody + arpeggios + improvised solo with backing track on the tune: "Take the A Train"
Week Nine			SPRING BREAK -----
Week Ten	M		Practice in Class
Quiz!	W	HW #9	Perform one memorized ii-V-I lick in all 12 keys
Week Eleven	M	HW #13	Learn and perform the melody for "Have You Met Miss Jones"
	W		NO CLASS - NASA
Week Twelve	M		
	W		Quiz 3 – The ii-V-I Progression (written and performance)
Week Thirteen	M	HW #16	Worksheet #8 – Bebop Scales
	W	HW #17	Worksheet #9 – Write and perform a one-chorus solo on "Have You Met Miss Jones"
Week Fourteen	M	HW #18	
	W		
Week Fifteen	M		Quiz 4 –
	W		

Week Sixteen	M		Review for Final Exam
	W		Review for Final Exam
Final Exam (???????)			

*Schedule subject to change.