Beginning Jazz Improvisation  
MUSI – 4172 006  
Special Problems 1 hour Improv

Fall 2020  
School of Music  
Stephen F. Austin State University

Course Syllabus

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Course Objective

This course is designed to give students a thorough understanding of beginning jazz improvisation, with specific emphasis on performing and listening. This course is not intended to replace participation in a jazz combo or jazz ensemble, but rather to supplement and augment that experience by giving players the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a jazz setting. We will be studying and playing different tunes each week, and we will be transcribing solos from various recordings.

Optional Texts

The Real Book (IN YOUR KEY)

Course Description:  
Introductory training in jazz improvisation (1 semester hour credit; 2 hours of preparation per week).

Time Requirement:  
MUSI 4172 “Beginning Jazz Improvisation” (1 credit) typically meets twice each week (Tuesday/Thursday) in 25-minute segment for 15 weeks. Students are expected prepare the assigned tune and transcribe THREE solos per semester. Also, students are expected to practice improvisation outside of class time. These activities will require a minimum of two hours of work each week of outside preparation.
Program Learning Outcome:
There are no specific program learning outcomes addressed in this course.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes:
There are no specific general education core curriculum objectives in this course. This course is not a general education core curriculum course.

Student Outcomes:
Beginning Jazz Improvisation (MUAP 3138) at Stephen F. Austin State University is an essential part of the requirements for music minor in jazz studies.
The goals and objectives of the course are:
1. To gather knowledge, concepts and ideas regarding the formation of improvised solos.
2. To gain a working knowledge and practice regarding the performance of different styles of jazz music. This includes the understanding and performance of swing, Latin, bebop, funk, and rock.
3. To provide all members of the class a firm foundation in the instruction of creating an improvised solo.
4. To provide quality musical experiences to every member of the class on a regular basis.

Presentation Methodology:
This class will be a combination of lectures, class participation, playing, and out-of-class practice, assignments, and required readings. Students are responsible for both in-and out-of-class materials.

Grading/Attendance — Your final grade will be based entirely on your weekly preparation. You are expected to be at every regularly scheduled class meeting. If you need to miss a class for any reason (serious illness, family emergency, audition, etc.) please let me know ahead of time, preferably through voice mail, e-mail, or text. Each unexcused absence from a class will lower your grade by one letter. Each class the students will be graded will be graded based on the following criteria:

A=Student was prepared to the best of their ability
B=Student was well prepared, but preparation could have been better in some areas
C=Student was somewhat prepared, but much room for improvement in many areas
D=Student was lacking preparation in several areas
F=Student was not prepared for the lesson

If at any point in the semester you would like to know your lesson grade(s), please ask and I will give you that information.
The final semester grade will be determined based on the following scale:

- 25% - transcription 1* Due end of Sept.
- 25% - transcription 2 Due end of Oct.
- 25% - transcription 3 Due end of Nov.
- 25% - performance, live or recorded (TBA)

*Transcriptions in this instance means learning to play an approved solo by ear/memorization. It is not required that the student submit a written transcription.

The solos learned should be approved by the professor.

Transcription assignments should be submitted via video.

**SFA Policies**

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)** Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.
Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.