

Jazz Improvisation

MUS 235-001, Fall 2011

TR, 1:10 PM - 2:00 PM, CAB 1086

Syllabus

Instructor: Robert Russell

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Office Location: CAB 1028

Office Hours: M-R, 11 AM - 2 PM, by appointment only

Prerequisites: MUS 112 and MUS 136 or instructor's consent

Course Description:

Purpose: This course provides instruction and practice in the skills and knowledge required for a successful beginning in jazz improvisation.

Approach to the Material: A variety of methods will be employed in MUS 235 including (but not limited to) written exercises, transcription, analysis and rudimentary composition. Whenever possible, theoretical concepts will be introduced through the playing of actual music rather than exercises. Written and playing tests will be given periodically to assess your progress.

Learning Objectives: By the conclusion of the course you should be able to:

1. Employ common elements of "jazz language" in improvising;
2. Better understand and use principles of melody and harmony while soloing;
3. Use critical thinking skills to help you construct better improvisations.

Textbooks:

There is no required textbook for MUS 235; however, students may find books such as the *New Real Book* series to be helpful in the learning of tunes.

Supplies:

- . Your instrument, in good playing condition
- . A binder or folder for music and class handout sheets
- . Notebooks (staff paper and ruled) for taking notes

Grading:

This course is graded on the following scale:

A = 100 - 90 points or 90%

B = 89.9 - 80 points or 80-89%;

C = 79.9 - 70 points or 70-79%;

D = 69.9 - 60 points or 60-69%

F = 59.9 - 0 or 59% or lower

Grades (before adjustment for attendance) will be based on the following percentages:

Written test average = 20%

Playing test average = 30%

Transcription project = 20%

Final exam grade = 30%

Attendance: ATTENDANCE IS HIGHLY IMPORTANT, and you must be present and ON TIME for all class sessions. Two unexcused absences will result in the dropping of your final grade by one letter; each subsequent unexcused absence will reduce your final grade by an additional letter. [*Excused absences:* you are a member of an athletic team that is on the road or a performing ensemble that is touring, you have a doctor's appointment, you are sick or injured. *Unexcused absences:* any time you miss class that does not fall into the above categories.]

Academic dishonesty: Academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Any form of academic dishonesty detected will be dealt with according to the rules of the UNCW Honor Code.

Classroom Conduct: Successful students conduct themselves in a professional manner because college is a professional environment!

Also, please **turn off all beepers, cell phones, and watch alarms** that make noise before coming into class; they are a serious distraction and cannot be tolerated.