

Course Syllabus

Jazz Ensemble & Jazz Combo

MUS 34/MUS 45

Instructor: Jordan D. Mitchell
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 4 PM – 5:30 PM & zoom by appointment

Class Hours: 5:20 – 9:20 PM

Class hourly break down: History/Theory/Performance/Sectionals

Course Objective:

This course aims to provide students with a holistic understanding of jazz by integrating ensemble performance and historical context. Students will delve into key jazz eras, exploring the evolution of the art form and its cultural significance. The course objectives emphasize the development of theoretical knowledge through the study of jazz theory, scales, and improvisation techniques, ensuring students can apply these concepts effectively within the ensemble setting. Furthermore, students will cultivate critical listening skills, analyzing recordings from different periods to appreciate the stylistic nuances of various jazz genres. The course also fosters collaborative learning, encouraging students to work cohesively in ensemble settings, and promotes a reflective approach to personal growth in both historical awareness and musical proficiency.

Course Description:

This course offers a unique integration of Jazz Ensemble performance and the historical context that shaped jazz music. Students will actively engage in ensemble playing while simultaneously exploring the evolution of jazz styles throughout history. This dynamic approach aims to deepen students' understanding of jazz by connecting theoretical knowledge with practical experience in a jazz ensemble setting.

Prerequisites:

Instrumental proficiency at an intermediate level. 1st Day Auditions are Required.
Basic Understanding of Scales & Chords.

Recommended Textbooks:

"The Jazz Theory Book" by Mark Levine (printouts will be handed out in class)

"Jazz: A History of America's Music" by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns

"How to Listen to Jazz" by Ted Gioia

Various jazz charts and ensemble arrangements (will be provided in class)

Course Overview

Weeks 1-2: Introduction to Jazz History and Ensemble Dynamics

Overview of jazz origins
Early jazz styles: Dixieland, Ragtime, and New Orleans Jazz
Formation of jazz ensembles and basic ensemble dynamics

Weeks 3-4: Swing Era and Big Band Ensemble

The Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance
Swing era: Big Bands and influential figures like Duke Ellington and Count Basie
Introduction to swing ensemble performance

Weeks 5-6: Bebop, Cool Jazz and Small Group Ensemble

Bebop revolution and key figures: Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis
Evolution into Post-Bop and Cool Jazz
Small group ensemble playing focusing on bebop and post-bop repertoire

Weeks 7-8: Jazz Fusion and Contemporary Ensemble Styles

Fusion era: Miles Davis and Weather Report
Contemporary jazz trends and global influences
Exploring fusion and contemporary styles in ensemble settings

Weeks 9-10: Synthesis of Jazz History and Ensemble Performance

Analyzing and performing representative pieces from various jazz eras
Group projects: Ensemble performances based on historical styles

Final reflections and presentations assessment:

Weekly reading reflections and discussion participation (15%)
Midterm exam: Jazz history knowledge assessment or Performance (20%)
Ensemble performance assessments (25%)
Individual or group projects (20%)
Final exam: Jazz ensemble performance and theoretical knowledge synthesis (20%)

CONCERT MARCH 11th @ 7 PM

Grading:
A: 90-100%
B: 80-89%
C: 70-79%
D: 60-69%
F: Below 60%

Attendance & Classwork Policy:

Regular attendance and active participation in ensemble rehearsals are crucial for success in this course. All students are expected to have access to their respective instruments throughout the quarter for ensemble practice. Additional listening assignments, transcriptions, and hands-on activities will be assigned regularly to enhance understanding and skills