

Syllabus: Jazz Improvisation
3645 Section 1 (Ref # 39710)
MW 11:00-11:50 – Loeb 112
Winter/Spring 2006

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Objectives – Students will:

- ▶ memorize and perform chord-scales and arpeggios commonly used in jazz improvisation, including the common modes of major, melodic minor, harmonic minor, and harmonic major; diminished; auxiliary diminished; augmented; whole-tone; major and minor pentatonic; pentatonic flat-6; and major and minor blues.
- ▶ be able to improvise on various common chord progressions, including blues, “Rhythm” changes, and various “standards,” incorporating simple and advanced voice-leading techniques and chord-scale applications.
- ▶ understand and incorporate non-harmonic tones into their improvisations.
- ▶ develop their ear through solo transcription and careful listening to the vanguard of jazz.

Materials: Spiral-bound or other music manuscript notebook, pencil, your instrument, and your EARS.

Attendance:

- ▶ Class begins at 11:00. Be ready to play or take notes!
- ▶ Your first tardy is free; each following tardy lowers grade ½ (A to A-, etc.)
- ▶ Attendance at ALL classes is expected. **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES MAY RESULT IN A SEVERELY LOWERED GRADE.**
- ▶ Make this class a priority. Do your best to schedule recitals/rehearsals/sound checks at times other than our class time. Please communicate any pending UNAVOIDABLE absences to me as soon as you know about them so we can make arrangements for make-up work.

Schedule (Subject to change with fair warning):

January:

- 18: Syllabus & Introduction to chords and chord scales – modes of major
Assignment: practice modes of major and common arpeggios in 12 keys
- 23: Major modes continued – Modal tunes & rhythmic vitality
Playing quiz: modes of major
Listening: Miles on *So What*
Assignment: Practice improvising on *So What*
Begin transcription – Miles Davis on *So What*

- 25: Bb Blues – introduction to basic voice-leading and blues scales
 Playing quiz: play solo on *So What*
 Assignment: write solo on Bb Blues using basic voice-leading
- 30: Basic voice leading continued – introduction to non-harmonic tones
 Playing quiz: play written solo
 Assignment: edit written solo – practice improvising using voice leading on Bb blues
- Due: Miles Davis transcription**
Begin transcription – Clifford Brown on *Blues Walk*

February:

- 1: Incorporating non-harmonic tones into improvisation
 Playing quiz: improvise on Bb Blues
 Assignment: incorporate non-harmonic tones into Bb blues
- 6: Modes of melodic minor
 Playing Quiz: improvise on Bb blues with non-harmonic tones
 Assignment: practice modes of melodic minor in 12 keys
- 8: Melodic minor continued – introduction to advanced voice leading
 Playing Quiz: modes of melodic minor
 Assignment: apply advanced voice leading and melodic minor to Bb blues
- 13: Melodic minor continued – harmonic applications
 Playing Quiz: improvise on Bb blues using advanced voice leading and melodic minor
- Due: Clifford Brown transcription**
Begin transcription - Gerry Mulligan on *What is This Thing*
- 15: *What is This Thing Called Love* – melodic minor applications
 Assignment: memorize and practice improvising on *What is This Thing*
- 20: CLINIC WITH PAVEL WLOSOK
- 22: Pentatonic & Diminished scales
 Playing Quiz: *What is This Thing*
 Assignment: continue on *What is This Thing*
- 27: Upper structure triads & triad pairs
 Playing Quiz: *What is This Thing*
- Due: Gerry Mulligan Transcription**

March:

- 1: Review for written and playing midterm exams
- 6: Review
- 8: **Midterm written exam – covers EVERYTHING up to this point**
- 13: **Midterm playing exam**
- 15: *Stella By Starlight*
 Assignment: memorize changes to *Stella by Starlight*
Begin Transcription #4 (TBA)
- 20: Augmented and whole-tone scales
 Written quiz: *Stella*
 Assignment: practice improvising on *Stella*
- 27-31: SPRING BREAK

April:

3: More chord scale applications

Playing Quiz: *Stella*

Assignment: apply augmented and whole-tone scales to *Stella*

Due: Transcription #4

Begin Transcription #5 (TBA)

5: Useful modes of harmonic minor and harmonic major

Playing Quiz: *Stella*

10: Introduction to “Rhythm” changes

Assignment: memorize and practice “Rhythm” changes

12: “Rhythm” changes continued

Playing Quiz: “Rhythm” changes

17: Review

Due: Transcription #5

19: Review

24: Review

26: Review

May:

1: Review

3: Review

10: FINAL PLAYING AND WRITTEN EXAM – 10:30-12:30 – COVERS ENTIRE SEMESTER

Grading:

- ▶ Daily Quizzes: 40%
- ▶ Transcriptions: 20%
- ▶ Midterm Exam: 20%
- ▶ Final Exam: 20%
- ▶ Attendance – see policy above.

If you have a disability and need academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or services, please see me privately as soon as possible. You should also register with the Access Office, A048 Brady Commons, 882-4696 for assistance.

Students are expected to do their work in the completion of course assignments, term papers, and examination; academic honesty is strongly encouraged. The instructor is obligated to report any incident of academic dishonesty to the Provost’s Office and inform the Director of the School of Music. Penalties for academic dishonesty vary with the nature of the offense and range from a lowered final course grade to suspension or expulsion.