

MUJS 5440 Introduction to Research in Jazz Studies

John Murphy, Ph.D.

Syllabus Spring 2019 University of North Texas

1 Why is this class like a swimming class?

This class is like a swimming class because the classroom is like the classroom next to the pool. The way to get better at swimming is to swim, receive coaching on your swimming, and study examples of excellent swimming, not hear a lecture about swimming. The way to get better at doing research is to do research, receive feedback on your work, and study examples of excellent research, not hear a lecture about how to do research. You need to learn new things to do research better, but the in-class lecture is not the only way, or even the best way, for you to learn them. Some class meetings, especially in the early weeks of the semester, will be professor-led in order to acquaint you with a set of research tools and techniques that may be unfamiliar. Other class meetings, especially later in the semester, will be student-led, as you present your work in progress and talk through challenges you have experienced in your research and how you dealt with them. And some class meetings may be cancelled when the students agree that it would be more productive to spend that time doing research. Throughout the semester there will be ample time for individual meetings so you can get one-on-one feedback on your work.

2 Catalog description

5440. Introduction to Research in Jazz Studies. 3 hours. Bibliography, discography, interviewing; sociocultural aspects of research on jazz; scholarly writing; connections between jazz studies and musicology, ethnomusicology, and related disciplines. Prerequisite(s): MUJS 4470 [which master's students now take as MUJS 5430] or consent of college [this means passing the Jazz History Proficiency Exam].

3 Instructor

John Murphy, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Division of Jazz Studies. Email: john.murphy@unt.edu. Phone: 940-565-4344. You must use your UNT email or messages in Canvas for all class-related emails. Office hours are by appointment. If you need to make an appointment, send several blocks of time during which you can meet in an email from your UNT address and I will reply to confirm the earliest time that fits my schedule.

4 Course goals (Learning objectives)

This course is intended to enable you to:

1. Understand what research is, what makes a good research question, and how to join academic conversations by reading the arguments of others carefully, summarizing them accurately, and thinking critically about them.
2. Construct an argument of your own about a jazz research topic that is important to you.
3. Understand that learning to do research is more than just learning how to use research tools and write citations. It's also a matter of being socialized into one or more communities of research, writing, and speaking.
4. Find and critically evaluate publications and recordings.
5. Understand conventions of scholarly use of intellectual property, and understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.
6. Do interviews and use them in research.
7. Understand social and cultural aspects of research on jazz.

8. Use sources on jazz topics in languages other than English using your language skills and computer translation.
9. Develop research skills in areas of music scholarship that are closely related to jazz studies, such as historical musicology, ethnomusicology, music theory, and music education.
10. Think critically and write clearly with an awareness of audience.
11. Understand technological topics that relate to academic research, such as file formats, proprietary and non-proprietary formats, file compression, transfer of large files, operating systems, backing up data, and ensuring the long-term integrity of research files.
12. Apply research and writing skills to the tasks of teaching and getting a job.
13. *Go beyond the default.* For many people, research means the first page of web search results. Students with graduate-level expertise need to go beyond that.

5 Readings

Required Text: Gordon, Maxine. *Sophisticated Giant: The Life and Legacy of Dexter Gordon*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2018.

I didn't order it at the bookstore. You may get it in the format you choose. It's available in hardcover and Kindle editions. You don't have to own a Kindle to use the Kindle edition.

We will study this just-published biography of Gordon by his widow as an example of the variety of sources and research methods that are available to us as jazz scholars. After promising Dexter Gordon that she would complete the autobiography he had started, Maxine Gordon returned to college to improve her research skills. The resulting book has received much attention as a model for representing the life and work of a jazz musician that includes the roles played by managers (as the author was for Dexter Gordon) and others involved in the music business.

For the rest of our readings, we'll use the library and the web.

Recommended readings are found on Canvas.

6 Grading

Research Project	75%
Essay on Gordon book	10%
Application Project	15%

Letter grade point ranges:

A	89.5%–100%
B	79.5%–89.4%
C	69.5%–79.4%
D	59.5%–69.4%
F	59.4% and below

I do not assign or accept extra credit work.

7 The Research Project (75 points) weeks 1-13

In the previous course design, there was a unit on research tools, then a unit on doing a research project, then a unit on research on jazz in related disciplines. In the new course design, these are integrated into one research project. As you study each element of the research process, each module will form part of your research project. Each module includes activities to build knowledge and skills and an assignment. You'll include sources from related disciplines in the project. The due dates on Canvas will all be on Sunday evening by 11:59 p.m. When the due date is stated as "the end of week 3," for example, that means 11:59 p.m. on Feb. 3, the Sunday that precedes the start of week 4 (Feb. 4).

7.1 Module 1 Choosing a topic (5 points) Due at the end of week 2

Your degree has a recital instead of a written thesis. Consider this research project the equivalent of your master's thesis. Choose a topic in jazz studies that interests you deeply. It must have some time depth because it must be one that enables you to work with all of the types of sources described below. Avoid choosing a topic that is narrowly focused on performance technique or equipment because a topic like that will not allow you to work with a full enough range of sources. Avoid topics that are covered in most jazz history textbooks. It must be a topic that you have not researched for a previous class. More coaching on topic choices is in the module.

Topics: Choosing and refining a topic in order to join a scholarly conversation; structure of a research paper.

Assignment: topic statement and outline.

7.2 Module 2 Bibliography (5) Due at the end of week 3

Learning how to find and evaluate the quality of sources is the heart of every research methods class. Topics: Bibliography, bibliographic search tools and software. Reference books and scholarly monographs. Print and electronic periodicals. Citing sources, ethics of research, plagiarism, citation styles.

Assignment: a bibliography for your topic

7.3 Module 3 Discography (5) Due at the end of week 4

Recordings are the primary sources for jazz research. Finding reliable information about recordings is a core jazz research skill. Topics: Discography. History of jazz recording.

Assignment: a discography for your topic

7.4 Module 4 Scores (10) Due at the end of week 5

Printed musical sources are important for many jazz research topics. They are essential for knowledge of the U.S. popular song repertoire that forms the basis for much jazz performance. Topics: Printed musical sources. Finding songs. Archives.

Assignment: find and critique several kinds of scores of one standard

7.5 Module 5 Photo and film (10) Due at the end of week 7

Audiovisual documents, when used critically, can be important research sources. Topics: Using photos, film, and video for research purposes.

Assignment: research on one image and one video clip

7.6 Module 6 Interview (15) Due at the end of spring break

Much of what is known about jazz history can be traced to interviews with musicians and others who were directly involved in the music. The interview is still a widely-used method of generating new knowledge about jazz. The process of transcribing from

recorded speech to edited text is not obvious or easy. It's an art. Topics: Finding and using published interviews and oral histories. Doing an interview. Journalistic profile/interview: examples, how to write one.

Assignment: interview

7.7 Module 7 Rough draft (15) Due at the end of week 10

This module will focus on the writing process, writing for an expert audience, proper treatment of sources, and clear writing.

Assignment: your rough draft

7.8 Module 8 Final draft (10)

Professional researchers are asked to critique the work of colleagues, informally and as part of anonymous pre-publication peer review. We'll review best practices for providing constructive feedback. This will help you respond to feedback on your rough draft from the professor and your peers as you prepare the final draft.

Assignment: serve as peer reviewer for another student's rough draft (5) (due at the end of week 12)

Assignment: your final draft (5) (due at the end of week 13)

8 Essay on Gordon book (10) due at the end of week 14

In an essay of 1000 words, reflect on what you learned about doing research by reading the Gordon book while doing your research project.

9 Application Project (15) due at the end of week 15

The purpose of the application project is for you to apply your research and writing skills to a project that will be professionally useful for you. You may choose from the three options outlined here or propose a different one.

9.1 New media project based on research paper (video documentary, audio documentary, or other new media project)

Video and audio documentaries are important means of communicating research arguments. Topics: How to make a short video for the web that communicates research content.

Assignment: new media project

9.2 Research in support of teaching jazz history at the undergraduate level. The skills you learn in this module can be applied to other kinds of teaching.

Topics: Syllabus design, textbooks, finding audiovisual sources and using them in class.

Assignment: syllabus, lesson plan, statement of teaching philosophy

9.3 Job Application

Do a project that demonstrates the research can help you get a job.

Topics: How to search for job openings, write a cover letter and CV, ask for recommendations, do a phone or video interview, do a campus interview.

Assignment: CV, cover letter, portfolio, interview preparation

10 Calendar

We will meet in room 288 from 10-10:50 on M-W-F. The schedule of class meetings is open to revision based on what students need. Class meetings can be canceled if you need more time to work on your projects.

11 Finals week

There will not be a final exam because the course is project-based. There will be a final review of significant topics and research tools during week 15.

12 This class and your comprehensive exam

Jazz Studies majors will have questions based on this class at your master's comprehensive exam. You'll be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the research process, specific research tools, and publications. Students who are using this class as part of a related field may have questions based on this work on your comprehensive exam.

13 Attendance

We will follow the UNT attendance policy. Article 7 says this: "Any instructor who so informs students in writing about the necessity of class attendance may request of the Registrar that a student be dropped from the course with a grade of WF upon the accumulation of the stated number of absences."

I affirm the necessity of class attendance in order to reach your maximum level of understanding. The maximum number of *unexcused* absences allowed is three. Students who have four or more unexcused absences and have not communicated effectively about them to establish a valid reason for excessive absences may receive the final grade of F.

Excused absences are limited to:

1. University-sponsored activities (things like ensemble tours, recording at Panhandle House with your small group)
2. Illness only if it is serious or chronic enough to be documented by you to the Dean of Students office and you provide me with the documentation from the Dean of Students office; for ordinary occasional illness, use one of your three allowed unexcused absences.
3. Up to three absences for documented professional reasons such as an out-of-town audition, gig, or other professional activity; each absence after the fourth will be counted as an unexcused absence. If you expect to have more than three absences that are excused for professional reasons, keep your unexcused absences to a minimum. If you are in a UNT ensemble that will cause you to be absent from class, those absences will count in this category (the excused absence category). If you expect to have more than three absences in this category, you must see me about it in advance of the absences.

If you expect an absence to be marked excused, you must communicate about it either in advance or within 24 hours after the ending time of the missed class.

14 Participation

An important part of the university experience is thinking of an argument, a comment, or a question and communicating it for other people to respond to. Participation in class discussions is expected. If we use discussions on Canvas, participation is expected.

15 Expectations

15.1 I expect you to:

1. Take responsibility for your learning in this class
2. Contribute to class discussion
3. Attend every class meeting, arrive on time, and stay the entire time
4. Communicate effectively, including about absences, using UNT email or Canvas messages
5. Put in the work time outside of class that is necessary for you to reach your maximum potential
6. Understand the syllabus policies, especially the attendance policy
7. Be alert and engaged in class
8. Let me know if there are any errors in your grade or attendance information in the gradebook
9. Let me know if there something I can do to help you do your best work

15.2 You can expect me to:

1. Treat every student with respect and to expect that every student is capable of doing well in this class
2. Be prepared for class and demonstrate the scholarly methods we are studying
3. Allow time for questions and discussion in class
4. Limit discussion if necessary so that we can reach our goals
5. Begin and end class on time

6. Be available outside of class in the office and by email
7. Have realistic expectations about the workload
8. Be willing to modify what we do in class in order to help you learn better as long as it still enables the class as a whole to reach its learning objectives
9. Apply the syllabus policies fairly to all students
10. Give notice when syllabus policies, including calendar and due dates, are changed

16 UNT policies

UNT policies that all instructors are asked to include in their syllabi are posted on Canvas. They are to be considered part of the syllabus.

17 File name convention

For assignments submitted online, the file name must have these elements, all in lowercase, in this order:

1. your last name
2. hyphen (not an underscore)
3. course number (just 5440)
4. hyphen
5. one-word description of the assignment (example: for the bibliography: biblio)
6. filetype suffix (examples: .doc, .docx, .odt, .pdf, .txt) Do not submit assignments in Pages format.

Example: lastname-5440-biblio.pdf

When an assignment requires you to turn in more than one file, they must be combined into one zip archive. The zip archive and all the files within it must follow the file-naming convention.

You may benefit from using naming conventions for the files on your computer. It makes finding and organizing files easier. It's especially important to avoid including spaces in filenames. When you use a file with spaces in the filename on different operating systems, the space can be rendered with formatting characters (like %20) that make the filename harder to read.

18 UNT closing

If UNT classes are canceled because the university has to close due to weather or some other reason, we will use Canvas to communicate and stay on schedule.

19 UNT Ally

I participated in UNT Ally training in Fall 2010 in order to learn more about creating an environment for learning in my classes that is characterized by mutual respect. From the UNT Ally website:

“Ally Training educates and trains students, faculty, and staff to create safe spaces and support people of all gender identities and sexualities at UNT. Ally Training is for beneficial for allies and people in queer communities, as we all strive to create a culture in which any person can study and/or work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment. Participants receive an Ally certificate to display in their office, workspace, or residence hall. The certificate signifies completion of the training, but it also helps others identify individuals on campus (‘Allies’) who are open and understanding and who they can talk to, in confidence, about issues, questions, and concerns. Ally Training supports UNT’s mission of providing a culturally diverse and mutually respectful environment where every member of the university community can feel safe, respected, and accepted.”

I am also an ally of students who are living with depression or other psychological conditions, students on the autism spectrum, and neurodiverse students in general. I am a member of UNT’s new Autism Ambassadors team, a group of faculty, staff, and administrators that is working to improve the experiences of students on the autism spectrum.

20 Changes

This syllabus, including due dates of assignments, point values of assignments, and dates of class meetings, is subject to change with notice. Students will be consulted in advance on all changes and given a chance to voice their opinion about the proposed changes.