



MUJS 5480 – PEDAGOGY OF JAZZ **MUJS 6020 – SEMINAR IN JAZZ PEDAGOGY**

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

The subject of jazz pedagogy takes many forms in university curricula. Some focus on rehearsal techniques and repertoire selection, specifically in the context of big band repertoire. In a music education degree, the course might need to focus on the basics of jazz instrumentation, style, and general practice. Other versions might focus on administrative topics, such as the inner workings of higher education. Years ago, at UNT, this same course emphasized the pedagogy of jazz improvisation, surveying a vast number of print instructional books and other prominent literature. The nature of jazz pedagogy is always evolving, and it means many things to many people.

It is difficult to distill all these different angles into a single course. But, hopefully we can start with one common principle: that the act of teaching jazz in the 21st century first requires us to critically examine how this music has historically been taught, and how we have deviated from these traditions, for better or for worse. The first unit of this course will help us gain this much needed context. Then, we need to become self-aware about how we learned this music in our own practice. This is not so easy, especially as we grow more advanced in this art form. Art, music, and especially jazz is often stereotyped and mythologized, and it is challenging to remember how we mechanically arrived at our current artistic position, or how we managed to cognitively master everything that we currently know. How can we effectively impart skills to those who are less experienced if we do not understand how we ourselves acquired those skills in the first place? Therefore, in my offering of this course, we borrow literature from cognitive science and educational psychology on the process of learning. Given that jazz is a *social language*, we will also borrow from the field of linguistics.

With one foot in the history of this music, and the other in the science of teaching, we can then make some inferences about the best way to impart knowledge in this ever-growing field. We can critically evaluate the current slate of literature available in improvisation, theory, aural fundamentals, and other subfields. Armed with a framework, we can compare, contrast, and debate the effectiveness of these various resources. We can use this information to design intelligent lesson plans, syllabi, and other educational materials that reflect a keen awareness of how students cognitively digest information. Finally, we can test these skills in real world teaching sessions.

COURSE POLICIES

GRADING

Your grade is determined by the following criteria.

25% Unit Culminating Projects
25% Midterm and Final Teaching Sessions
25% Module Quizzes
25% Classroom Preparation and Participation

The final grade is averaged from the above categories and translated to a letter grade by the following scale: A (90-100%), B (80-89%), C (70-79%), D (60-69%), F (below 60%)

UNIT CULMINATING PROJECTS

There are four units in this course, each consisting of several modules. At the completion of each unit, you will complete a culminating project that tests your mastery of all materials and concepts from that unit. Each culminating project takes different forms and guidelines.

To be successful in these projects, you must be diligent in keeping up with the reading and study materials for each module. Seek to understand the readings with enough depth that you can draw valuable connections between them, compare / contrast their respective approaches, and ultimately re-create, reorganize, and apply the knowledge in your own way through the culminating projects.

These projects are to be submitted through the Canvas platform **only**. The submission portal closes at the stated time, and **no late work is accepted**. Allow yourself extra time for technology mishaps and “Murphy’s Law” (anything that *can* go wrong, *will* go wrong) and submit assignments well before the deadline. Please do not email late assignments to instructor; you will simply be referred to this policy in this syllabus.

MIDTERM AND FINAL TEACHING SESSIONS

These are longer in-class teaching sessions wherein you demonstrate a real-time application of the concepts discussed in the materials.

MODULE QUIZZES

Whereas the culminating projects are intended for you to demonstrate higher levels of mastery (e.g. analysis, synthesis, evaluation), the quizzes are simply intended to test your recall of the smaller (but important) details from the readings and class discussions.

To be successful, you should take detailed notes while reading the materials **and** during class discussions. **Quiz questions will come from both sources**. For this reason, it is also essential that you obtain notes and /or recordings from any missed classes. The lowest quiz score is dropped as a courtesy.

A quiz for a given module is generally not available until one or two modules **after** the current one. This delayed timing is deliberate: it is meant to encourage you to recall forgotten information from previous module, long after the material is “fresh” in your mind. We will discuss in Unit 2 why such retention strategies can be beneficial in course design.

CLASSROOM PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION

Since this course involves substantial class discussion, all students are expected to contribute

to an environment of inclusivity and mutual respect of all viewpoints, opinions, and attitudes.

It is essential that you come to class prepared, having thoroughly read and understood the materials assigned for the module. Like most graduate seminars, classes are almost entirely **discussion-based**, not lecture-based. In this model of learning, students are expected to have learned the new concepts from readings **on their own** before class. Class time is reserved for asking questions of each other, discussing big ideas, applying concepts, and arriving at novel conclusions together as a class. Therefore, participation is absolutely essential, and failure to contribute will negatively impact the grade for that day.

For ease, daily grades are assigned using the “Attendance” function in Canvas, with a green check (present) representing 100%, an orange clock (traditionally meaning “tardy / late”) representing 50%, and a red X (absent) representing 0%. Please do not confuse these marks with **actual attendance** - they are simply an easier way to represent the following rubrics:

- 100% (green check) for “excellent preparation”: student correctly answers most direct concept-based questions asked by instructor, asks intelligent questions of instructor and peers demonstrating clear analysis of materials, and actively participates in class discussion
- 50% (orange clock) for “some preparation”: student may correctly answer a direct concept-based question asked by instructor, but also demonstrates a broader lack of preparation or understanding of main ideas or factual details from the materials, and/or only participates occasionally in class discussion
- 0% (red X) for “insignificant or no preparation”: student did not attend class or cannot correctly answer basic concept questions from the instructor, asks few (if any) questions of instructor and peers and does not participate significantly in class discussion.

The daily participation grades are averaged together. Please note that actual class attendance is not graded directly in this course. **For instance, you could attend a class meeting but receive a 0% that day if you did not contribute to the discussion.**

Excused absences, including documented physical conditions or mental health treatment, verifiable university-related performances, or unusually significant professional performances (not routine gigs) are, of course, accepted, and they will not affect your participation grade. Please provide as much notice as possible. Communicate to the instructor any unusual circumstances that may be affecting your class performance *as they occur*, not at semester end.

COMMUNICATION

Please use your **official UNT email** for all school-related correspondence. Communication from personal accounts, texts, or social media will not be answered. Check your UNT email daily, and please reply (if requested) to course related correspondence **within 48 hours during the workweek**. This is not just arbitrary policy - it mirrors the expectations of professional life. In addition, please make sure your Canvas notification settings are set up to receive messages from me. Canvas messaging (which should push to your email) is my primary means of sending course-wide announcements, updates, etc. Please also be advised that I leave specific feedback on your assignments via comments on your Canvas assignment submissions, so be sure to check these after assignment grades are posted if you want to understand your grade.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam [or specify alternative sanction, such as course failure]. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Academic Integrity), who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

See: [Academic Integrity](#)

LINK: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

See: [Student Code of Conduct](#)

LINK: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect.

See: [Eagle Connect](#)

LINK: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

ODA STATEMENT

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability

Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter. You can now request your Letters of Accommodation ONLINE and ODA will mail your Letters of Accommodation to your instructors. You may wish to begin a private discussion with your professors regarding your specific needs in a course. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access.

See: [ODA](#)
LINK: disability.unt.edu
PHONE: (940) 565-4323

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Students can access information about health and safety at:
<https://music.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness>

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

See: [Registration Information](#)
Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/students>

FINANCIAL AID / SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Undergraduate (UG)

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total hours registered. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

Students holding music scholarships must maintain a minimum 2.5 overall cumulative GPA and 3.0 cumulative GPA in music courses.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended that you to schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

See: [Financial Aid](#)
LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

Graduate (MM/DMA)

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per term. Music scholarships require a 3.5 cumulative GPA. Students cannot exceed maximum timeframes

established based on the published length of the graduate program. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended you schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college, an advisor in UNT-International or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course.

See: [Financial Aid](#)

LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates.

See: [FERPA](#)

Link: <http://ferpa.unt.edu/>

COUNSELING AND TESTING

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor for students in need. Please visit the Center's website for further information:

See: [Counseling and Testing](#)

Link: <http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>.

For more information on mental health resources, please visit:

See: [Mental Health Resources](#)

Link: <https://disparities.unt.edu/mental-health-resources>

ADD/DROP POLICY

Please be reminded that dropping classes or failing to complete and pass registered hours may make you ineligible for financial aid. In addition, if you drop below half-time enrollment you may be required to begin paying back your student loans. See Academic Calendar (listed above) for additional add/drop Information.

Drop Information: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

STUDENT RESOURCES

The University of North Texas has many resources available to students.

For a complete list, go to:

See: [Student Resources](#)

LINK: <https://success.unt.edu/aa-sa-resources>

CARE TEAM

The Care Team is a collaborative interdisciplinary committee of university officials that meets regularly to provide a response to student, staff, and faculty whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others.

See: [Care Team](#)

LINK: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team>