



MUAC 1532/3531/5531/6531 - JAZZ PIANO
(or MUJS 4720, MUJS 5535, MUGC 6951-54 - RECITAL)

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COURSE PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

These courses consist of regular applied lessons as well as a weekly departmental meeting, with the aim of developing the functional skills and aesthetics required of the modern-day jazz pianist. Students in the BM and MM will also complete a culminating recital in their capstone semester (MUJS 4720 and MUJS 5535 respectively). Students in the DMA program enroll in four semesters of MUJS 6531 as well as four dissertation recitals (MUGC 6951-54). **This syllabus covers policies for all of the above courses.**

COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE AND GRADING:

Your grade is determined by the following:

- 25% final jury or semester project
- 75% lesson attendance and progress

In the first two weeks of each semester, students consult individually with their instructor (Prof. Meder, the current adjunct instructor in jazz piano, or a jazz piano teaching fellow) to set three or four **semester goals**. These goals should be informed both by the teacher's expertise and the student's artistic vision. Examples may include:

Student A: beginning stride piano techniques applied to blues progressions (as seen in Fats Waller's "E Flat Blues"), strategies for playing in 5/4 time (via a Brad Mehldau excerpt), and vocabulary/style of Bud Powell (via listening/study of select albums)

Student B: increasing fluency with quartal voicings (via McCoy Tyner), fostering a more relaxed uptempo playing technique (via a Chopin etude), and exploring pianistic/compositional structures of Andrew Hill

Student C: general recital preparation, masterclass/feedback on trio or duo playing, etc.

Goals are usually wide-ranging, but they are structured so that they can be reasonably accomplished in a single semester. The idea is that over *several* semesters of instruction, with various instructors in the jazz piano area, the student covers a comprehensive set of styles and skills that will inform their own artistry.

Final jury or project (25%) requirements are determined **primarily by the student** based on

these semester goals. Rather than the traditional “music school jury” model, in which professors impose specific requirements; this format allows students to suggest specific final jury requirements and grading metrics to the instructor. The instructor will modify and/or approve them. In this way, students will begin to practice the ability to **develop their own specific goals and determine specific ways to assess their own achievement**. Such skills are absolutely necessary in a professional career.

In semesters with **degree recitals**, the final jury / project is the recital itself. There is not a separate jury. In other semesters, the instructor encourages students to be creative when planning semester goals and final jury / project requirements for themselves. The “jury,” for instance, could simply be a submission to a jazz piano competition or award, under the advisement of the instructor. It could also be a non-degree recital or public performance occurring sometime at the end of the semester. Some students may wish to make an EP or other collaborative project during a specific semester. Such options are highly encouraged, but the “jury,” whatever form it may take, must demonstrate improvement on the artistic projects for that particular semester.

For **lesson attendance and progress (75%)**, students will be given specific weekly assignments aiming towards their final jury / project. **As a courtesy, the lowest individual lesson grade will be dropped from calculations.**

All juries / projects, recitals and individual lessons are graded on the following rubric:

- A (90-100%): Extraordinary level of preparation and improvement, transcription assignments performed with near-exact note accuracy and mostly correct style, tunes learned functionally in all keys, technical studies well-rehearsed and accurate, demonstrating regular, consistent practice. For juries, clear evidence of student mastering and finding artistic freedom within the assigned materials.
- B (80-89%): Adequate preparation, transcription assignments are mostly correct but with some significant errors, tunes learned in most keys, technical studies near-accurate, demonstrating a good amount of weekly practice. For juries, some level of mastery and evidence of student finding artistic freedom within the assigned materials.
- C (70-79%): Some level of preparation and improvement in the above listed areas, but much left to be accomplished. For juries, some evidence of student finding artistic freedom within the assigned materials, but more effort is placed on simply playing or recalling the concept.
- D/F (0-69%): Very little preparation and improvement in the above listed areas, no evidence of creativity and artistic freedom within the assigned materials.

Receiving a low grade in a given lesson should not be taken as an artistic insult. It only reflects your progress **in that week**. The **lowest lesson grade is dropped**, with the understanding that sometimes the semester gets busy and practice time becomes limited.

Weekly **departmental** is a chance to perform for the whole studio and receive critical feedback from peers and the instructor. You are expected to attend weekly and participate actively. Your attendance / participation in departmental is not directly part of your grade for this

course. However, students are only allowed **three unexcused absences** from departmental. Each subsequent absence lowers the **final grade** by a **full letter**, regardless of performance in other parts of the course. The instructor may send a courtesy notice to alert students that they have reached the three-absence limit, but such a notice is not required.

Students are expected to be present at every lesson unless Prof. Meder reschedules with advance notice. If students need to reschedule, they should contact their fellow students to switch lesson times before contacting Prof. Meder. Excused absences are, of course, permitted with ample notice and reasonable cause. Please email the instructor to clear these in advance, or as soon as possible after-the-fact in case of emergency. Usually some form of documentation/verification is needed.

PREREQUISITES AND COURSE OF STUDY:

Per the handbooks, jazz piano students enroll in the following pattern (below).

Note: UG means “undergraduate”, “MM” refers to masters students, and “DMA” refers to doctoral candidates. Lessons marked as “2 units” equate to 50 minutes per week, while “1 unit” equates to 25 minutes per week or 50 minutes in every other week (at instructor discretion).

- **1st year UG: MUAC 1501 Piano, 2 units** (no jazz piano lessons)

These lessons (with the MUAC prefix) are offered through the Division of Keyboard Studies, not the Division of Jazz Studies. Questions regarding teachers, scheduling, or other logistics should be directed to the administrative coordinator of that division. These lessons have historically been referred to as “classical lessons,” but in reality, they deal with the development of sustainable and lasting technique that prepares students for future jazz piano lessons.

At the end of the 1st year, students in these lessons will complete a jury. If passed, the student’s “classical piano” requirements are deemed to be **complete**, and they may begin jazz lessons in the 2nd year. Depending on the jury, we may assign the student to split classical and jazz lessons in the 2nd year, or to stay in classical lessons for the 2nd year (beginning jazz lessons in the 3rd year).

- **2nd year UG: either MUAC 1501 Piano, 2 units or MUAC 1532 Jazz Piano, 2 units** (or a split of these two, at 1 unit each, if deemed necessary by the 1st year jury panel)

- **3rd year UG: MUAC 3531 Jazz Piano, 2 units**

- **4th year UG: MUAC 3531 Jazz Piano, 2 units**

NOTE: MUJS 4720 Jazz Senior Recital Capstone replaces MUAC 3531 in final semester

- **MM: 3 semesters of MUJS 5531 Jazz Piano, 2 units**

NOTE: MUJS 5535 Jazz Recital replaces MUJS 5531 in final semester

- **DMA: 4 semesters of MUJS 6531 Jazz Piano, 3 units**

+ 4 semesters of **dissertation recitals (MUGC 6951, 6952, 6953, 6954)**

For DMA students, MUJS 6531 consists of weekly applied lessons. The dissertation recital courses **do not** involve regular applied lessons, only **meetings as needed** to prepare for your dissertation recital for that semester. Most DMA students choose to complete their degree in three years, so some semesters they must enroll in *both* MUJS 6531 applied lessons and a dissertation recital course (this usually occurs in the 2nd year). In these cases, we meet for normal weekly lessons and extra meetings as needed to prepare for the dissertation recital that semester, although usually the lessons end up tying into the dissertation recital.

The first three dissertation semesters (MUGC 6951, 52, 53) can be taken for 1, 2, or 3 credits. Most DMA students take them for 1 credit hour, because they do not confer any extra weekly lesson. The fourth dissertation semester reflects the completion of your final dissertation and/or lecture recital and therefore **must be valued at 3 credits**.

All jazz piano majors not in Keyboard Division (“classical”) lessons will study with either Prof. Meder, the current adjunct instructor in jazz piano, or a jazz piano teaching fellow. **Studio assignments are subject to change at any time**, and a student can be switched into an alternate studio **at any point** in the semester depending on changing factors such as effort, attendance, attitude, changing needs and/or goals, or other extenuating circumstances.

All jazz piano majors have been admitted to this prestigious program and are welcomed and valued as artists. Your studio placement is not a reflection of your artistic promise, it is only a reflection of your artistic **needs** at the current moment in your development. Studio placements are adjusted every semester to ensure each student has a chance to learn from Prof. Meder, the current adjunct professor of jazz piano, and jazz piano teaching fellows.

DEPARTMENTAL:

“Departmental,” as we call it, is our weekly meeting as a jazz piano studio. All jazz piano students are **required** to attend every departmental meeting **and** perform at least twice in a semester. This policy also applies to 1st/2nd year students who may be studying only with a classical piano teacher.

The sign-up sheet is found online (link to be provided by Prof. Meder), and further instructions are provided on the webpage.

All students are granted **three unexcused absences from departmental**, no questions asked. Beyond that, each absence will lower your **final lesson grade** by a full letter.

The focus of departmental is to **EXPERIMENT** and **BE CREATIVE** in a non-judgmental environment. Your performances are not graded in any way. Please feel free to perform new works, arrangements, standards, free improvisations, or anything you may be working on in your lessons.

Students in the audience should listen actively with the goal of offering helpful and respectful criticism. Positive comments are of course permitted, but keep in mind that it is more valuable to learn how to take and receive criticism without malice or ego.

STUDENT RECITAL ATTENDANCE:

You are required to attend all jazz piano senior capstone, MM, and DMA recitals. We cannot grow in the music unless we learn from each other and offer support to our peers. Unexcused absences from such performances will count towards the **three unexcused absences** you are granted for departmental.

EMAIL USE:

It is expected that you use your **UNT** email address for all correspondence related to your degree. Any university-related questions emailed to Prof. Meder from your personal email address, through Facebook or any other social media platform, or through SMS (text messaging) will not receive a response.

Furthermore, you must check your **UNT** email **DAILY**. **All inquiries from Prof. Meder (or any other professor or administrator) should be responded to within 24 hours.**

For better or for worse, effective use of email is essential to your career as a professional musician. In the modern-day music business, timely responses are mandatory in order to be considered for many gigs and opportunities. Consider your use of email at UNT to be training for your professional career.

CANVAS:

All jazz majors must register for the Division of Jazz Studies Canvas page. All degree information is found on this page, and it is the primary method that the department uses to notify you of important information. You can also check your individual lesson grades on Canvas from week to week, find contact information for other students, check the syllabus policies, and other tasks.

PROFESSIONALISM AND INCLUSIVITY:

All students are expected to contribute to an environment of inclusivity and mutual respect, in this course and in all department courses. Please consider how some words, phrases and actions that you feel are harmless and acceptable may actually be perceived by others as an attack on their very identity. Show proper respect for all of your peers and treat others how they would like to be treated.

In addition, compulsive tardiness, inadequate preparation, ineffective use of email or delayed response times, and/or disrespectful behavior towards fellow students or professors are not only grounds for grade reductions and other department-level actions, they will also naturally prevent you from receiving any professional referrals that may arise, as well as letters of recommendation for various paid and unpaid opportunities.

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, 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.

LINK: <http://vpaa.unt.edu/dcgcover/resources/integrity>

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 classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

LINK: Student Code of Conduct - <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.

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 Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of

accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation.

LINK: disability.unt.edu. (Phone: (940) 565-4323)

FINANCIAL AID AND SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS:

Undergraduates

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 registered hours per term. 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 being doing so.

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

Graduates

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.

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 Blackboard/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.

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

COUNSELING AND TESTING:

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor whose position includes 16 hours per week of dedicated service to students in the College of Music and the College of Visual Arts and Design. Please visit the Center's website for further information:

<http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>. For more information on mental health issues, please visit: <https://speakout.unt.edu>.

The counselor for music students is:

Myriam Reynolds

Chestnut Hall, Suite 311

(940) 565-2741 | Myriam.Reynolds@unt.edu