



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

Dave Meder

Associate Professor of Jazz Piano | MU123
Office Hours By Appt: dave.meder@unt.edu

Fredrick Sanders

Adjunct Professor of Jazz Piano
fredrick.sanders@unt.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES

All the above-mentioned courses consist of regular applied jazz piano lessons and a required weekly departmental forum. Through these courses, students develop the technical, stylistic, and creative tools necessary for the modern jazz pianist. BM and MM students will complete a culminating recital in their final semester (MUJS 4720 or MUJS 5535). DMA students complete four semesters of applied lessons (MUJS 6531) and four dissertation recitals (MUGC 6951–54). **This syllabus applies to all the above.**

COURSE POLICIES

GRADING

In any of the above-listed courses, with any instructor, your final grade is based on:

- 75% - weekly lesson progress
- 25% - the final jury, degree recital (if applicable), or approved external project

At the start of each semester, students will develop a few specific semester goals with their instructor. These will be shaped by both the instructor's expertise and the student's needs.

Examples:

Student A: introductory stride piano techniques via Fats Waller and James P. Johnson transcriptions; fluency within 5/4 time through rhythmic training and contemporary repertoire; study of Bud Powell's language via analysis of *The Amazing Bud Powell*, Vol. 1.

Student B: build fluency with quartal voicings via McCoy Tyner and Chick Corea transcriptions and abstract exercises; develop more relaxed uptempo playing via Chopin etudes and breathing/phrasing techniques; explore Andrew Hill's pianistics and compositional structures

Student C: prepare for recital with more open-ended feedback-style lessons; improve duo/trio playing through group sessions; experiment with arranging or free improvisation

FINAL JURY / RECITAL / EXTERNAL PROJECT (25%)

A “jury”, in music school parlance, is a final performance exam. Historically, juries have had standardized requirements, usually dictated by the instructor. This course is different in that it allows **you** to define your own culminating assessments. You will also propose a specific system for the instructor to evaluate your success. The instructor will make necessary edits and give final approval to your final jury proposal to ensure alignment with college standards. The philosophy behind this approach is to help you develop skills for self-guidance and self-teaching, which will be critical to your success as professional artist after graduation.

You may choose **ONE** of the following:

1. **GRADUATION OR OTHER DEGREE RECITAL:** If you are performing a required recital this semester, your recital grade will serve as your final jury grade. There is no additional requirement.
2. **EXTERNAL PROJECT:** This option allows you to apply your semester’s study in a professional or public context. **This option is highly encouraged**, as it helps build your professional credentials and networks. Examples may include:
 - a well-prepared application to a jazz competition or summer camp
 - a commercially released EP featuring material developed in lessons
 - a meaningful off-campus performance presenting semester material

Students may propose alternate external projects. The key criteria are that the project **reflects what you have been studying this term** and that it **demonstrates professional creative application**.

Ineligible external projects might include:

- performances unrelated to your semester’s lesson material
 - sideman gigs without significant connection to your studies
 - hastily or otherwise poorly prepared competition submissions
3. **TRADITIONAL JURY:** You will collaborate with your instructor to design appropriate requirements based on your semester goals, and you will be assessed accordingly during jury week. For this option, a jury proposal form would be due around week 9 or 10 for review and approval. More information will be provided beforehand.

LESSON PROGRESS (75%)

You will meet with your assigned lesson instructor regularly, and your weekly assignments will be directly connected to the semester goals you design. Each lesson is assessed using the following rubric:

A (90–100%): exceptional preparation and improvement; transcriptions accurate and stylistically appropriate; tunes learned in all keys; technical exercises executed cleanly; clear evidence of consistent, focused practice and emerging creative mastery of the material.

B (80–89%): good preparation and progress; some transcription errors or technical issues; tunes covered in most keys; evidence of strong practice habits; growing fluency and confidence with the material.

C (70–79%): inconsistent preparation; partial completion of assignments; limited creative fluency; patchy familiarity with materials but not showing evidence of internalization

D/F (0–69%): minimal preparation or progress; little evidence of engagement with materials; missed lesson; extreme tardiness to lesson, etc.

Note: A low grade in any given lesson is not a critique of your overall artistry. It simply reflects your preparation that week. **The lowest three individual lesson grades in the semester will be dropped** (i.e. not factored into your final grade), as an acknowledgement that semesters are busy and that personal circumstances can change from week to week.

DEPARTMENTAL / RECITALS

“Departmental” is our weekly studio forum, involving instructor masterclasses, student performances, and occasional guest artist masterclasses. It is a required class meeting for **all jazz piano majors**, including 1st and 2nd year undergraduates studying with a Keyboard Division TF. All majors are expected to perform and provide thoughtful feedback to your peers. **Performances are not graded.** Use this forum to experiment, share new ideas, and test work-in-progress in a supportive, positive environment.

Attendance at all senior capstone (BM), MM, and DMA jazz piano recitals is **required** for all jazz piano majors. These events are an essential part of our studio community.

ATTENDANCE / PROFESSIONALISM

All students are allowed a **total** of **three unexcused absences** from departmental meetings and recitals per semester. Please do **not** notify the instructor when taking an unexcused absence – this is your choice. **Do** notify the instructor if you have an **excused absence**, as these do not count towards the total. Excused absences may include a scheduled performance or sound check for your lab ensemble, a documented illness or personal crisis, or a religious observance.

After **three unexcused absences**, any additional unexcused absence from a departmental meeting or student recital will reduce your **final applied lesson grade** by **one full letter** per occurrence. The instructor may choose to notify students upon reaching the three-absence limit, but **this is not required**. It is incumbent on you (the student) to monitor your own absence count. This policy is quite generous, as it allows you to skip 20% of our departmental meetings, for gigs, personal/social events, etc. Therefore, the final grade reduction will be strictly enforced after three unexcused absences.

Regarding your regular applied lessons, **the lowest three lesson grades in each semester are dropped from the final grade calculation**, so theoretically you are free to skip three lessons without consequence. However, in practice, this policy is in place to give you “cushion” for those weeks in which you are less prepared for your lessons.

If you will miss a lesson for any reason (excused or unexcused), please follow professional courtesy and alert your instructor with as much advance notice as possible.

If you need to reschedule a lesson in a particular week for a minor/routine reason (e.g. a gig, a common cold, or a personal obligation), **please attempt to swap times with a peer**. You may use the **studio email group** to make a request to switch. Your instructor has dedicated a specific weekly time for you in their professional schedule. The instructor is not obligated to find an alternate lesson time for you except in cases of excused absence, major emergency or other extraordinary personal circumstance. Such absences must be cleared in advance when possible, or immediately afterward in case of emergencies. Documentation is usually required. In these cases, the instructor will offer a **make-up lesson at a mutually agreeable time**.

Please maintain respectful hygiene and dress code for lessons, given how close we sit to each other at the pianos. Your instructor's office is professional creative workspace, not a practice room or informal hang.

ENROLLMENT / REGISTRATION

Every jazz piano major will be assigned to a **variety of applied lesson instructors** during their time at UNT: either Prof. Meder, the current adjunct professor for jazz piano, or an advanced jazz piano teaching fellow. These studio assignments are based on pedagogical need and current goals. They are also designed to ensure a relatively equal amount of time with each instructor. Studio assignments are **not** made based on any assessment of ability or rank. All students are valued equally in this program.

For all students, registration/ tuition for a 2-credit applied lesson course (or a 3-credit course for DMA students) entitles you to **thirteen** 50-minute lessons per semester. Registration/ tuition for a 1-credit applied lesson course entitles you to **thirteen** 25-minute lessons (or 50 minutes biweekly at the instructor's discretion).

A semester is **16 weeks** (14 weeks of regular instruction, 1 week reserved by university policy for review and juries, and 1 week reserved for final exams). Typically, lessons **begin** in the **second week** of the semester, and they do **not** typically occur during the review/jury week or finals week (though we may use these weeks for make-up lessons). In certain semesters, due to an instructor's professional/tour schedule, lessons might need to start during the first week of classes, or in rare cases during the week or weekend before the semester (subject to student availability). Please be open to such changes as your schedule allows.

If you have not been offered the equivalent of thirteen sessions by the end of finals week, through regularly scheduled lesson times and/or make-up lessons for excused absences, please contact Prof. Meder and/or the Chair of the Division of Jazz Studies.

Per the handbook, jazz piano majors enroll according to the following pattern:

Undergraduate (UG)

- **Year 1: MUAC 1501** (2 credits) - Keyboard Division 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 universal, sustainable, and lasting technique that prepares students for future jazz piano lessons. Repertoire does include classical music, but it is technical etude focused and tailored to student needs. Prof. Meder assists in selecting initial repertoire and helps assess students during their semester juries.

At the end of the 1st year, students in these lessons will complete a final jury. If passed, the student’s Keyboard Division lesson requirements are deemed to be **complete**, and they may begin Jazz Division lessons in the 2nd year. If the jury shows improvement, but the panel determines that more technical work is needed, the student may be assigned to “split” Keyboard Division and Jazz Division lessons in the 2nd year. If the jury is failed entirely, the student will stay in Keyboard Division lessons for the 2nd year (and then begin Jazz Division lessons in the 3rd year).

- **Year 2: MUAC 1501** Keyboard Division lessons (2 credits), **or MUAC 1532** Jazz Division lessons (2 credits), **or 1-credit each** of both courses (determined based on jury outcome)
- **Years 3 and 4:** three (3) semesters of **MUJS 3531** (2 credits each)
MUJS 4720 (Senior Capstone Recital) replaces MUJS 3531 in the final semester.

Master of Music (MM)

- Three (3) semesters of **MUJS 5531** (2 credits each)
MUJS 5535 (Jazz Recital) replaces MUJS 5531 in the final semester.

Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)

- Four (4) semesters of **MUJS 6531** (regular applied lessons at 3 credits each)
- Four (4) semesters of **MUGC 6951–54** (recital or dissertation courses)

The first three recital/ dissertation courses (6951, 6952, and 6953) may be taken for 1-3 credits, at your discretion. Typically, students choose 1 credit, as these recital courses do not confer any additional regular applied lessons, only irregular meetings as needed to finetune recital or dissertation material. The final recital semester (6954) involves the presentation of your final recital and/or dissertation and therefore must be taken for 3 credits, per college policy.

If DMA students wish to complete the degree in **three years**, this would necessitate some period of concurrent registration in regular applied lessons (MUJS 6531) and recital/ dissertation credit (MUGC 6951-54). Please be conscious of this overlap, and work with your advisor accordingly.

COMMUNICATION

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 to faculty **within 48 hours**. This is not just school policy - it mirrors the expectations of professional life. In addition, all jazz majors must join the Division of Jazz Studies page on Canvas (our course management platform). All program information, lesson grades, contact info, and division announcements are posted there.

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>