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# MUJS 4120/5130/5490

## VOCAL JAZZ STYLES/GRADUATE IMPROVISATION (VOCAL)



### Description & Objectives of the Course

Vocal Jazz Styles serves as the final classroom curriculum course for vocalists in the UNT Division of Jazz Studies, with the purpose of bringing together many facets of what it takes to be a successful professional jazz vocalist once you will be leaving the program. There will be heavy emphasis on vocal improvisation skills at a high level, moving past “making the changes” and into content that is practical and relevant. Those graduate students who are enrolled for Graduate Improvisation will follow the same syllabus and curriculum for the class, but will use more advanced song selections for the same assignments, and often at different tempos.

By the end of this semester, you will be able to:

- Improvise competently in a way befitting the voice at fast tempos, blues, and straight eighth-note grooves, including lyric improvisation and wordless improvisation (scat singing).
- Develop practice methods for starting to practice improvising over chord changes in a combination of theoretical and aural ways.
- Have a grasp of who the most important current jazz vocalists (soloists and ensembles) are.
- Have more confidence with self-accompaniment at the piano.
- Be confident with concepts related to musical programming and performance aesthetics in recital, concert and gig settings.

### Course Information

T/Th 11 - 11:50 am Rm. 292

Instructor: Jennifer Barnes

Office: Rm 346

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cell: (661) 713-0260

Office Hours: By appt. - see  
office door or online for options

## Course Attendance, Grading & Policies

- Absences are limited to two for the semester. If there is a medical emergency, the student and instructor will work out a modified due date for the assignment(s) missed ASAP. Other than a medical impossibility of singing, all other assignments that were due in class must be submitted by recording on the day due or will be subject to a late penalty. (see below)
- Each assignment/performance will be graded on Blackboard; the grade is determined by the quality of preparation and the musicality of the assignments/performances.
- The final semester grade will be calculated as follows:
  1. Attendance and class participation – 15%
  2. Assignment grades, averaged – 60%
  3. Mid-term (10%) & final exam (15%)
- Homework, in-class performances or projects that are submitted late will be subject to a grade reduction off the total grade on the following scale, but will still be expected to be completed, since you must learn the material (exceptions will only be made for excused absences cleared in advance):
  - 1 – 2 days late = 10% reduction
  - 3 – 6 days late = 25% reduction
  - 7 – 13 days late = 50% reduction
  - 14+ days late = no credit
- Please silence your cell phone prior to entering the classroom space and put it in an inaccessible place to avoid causing distraction to yourself or anyone else. The only exception will be when you plan to use your phone as a recording device, in which case it must remain in “AIRPLANE MODE”.
- Laptops may be used for note-taking and recording, but no other activities. Students found to be doing so will earn a failing grade for class participation for that day.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Although this syllabus is a guide to our plan for this class, the final word on scheduled assignments, due dates and specific content for each assignment will be on **Blackboard**, NOT this syllabus, due to adjustments that will invariably need to be made to accommodate the individual pace and level of this specific class. It is each student’s responsibility to consult the online course to verify each assignment’s content and due date.

*If you do well in this class, you too can be successful, like these people!*



**Required Textbook:**

*Vocal Jazz Improvisation: An Instrumental Approach (Intermediate & Advanced Studies)*, by Darmon Meader (audio examples by Darmon Meader and Rosana Eckert!). Available for purchase at the UNT Barnes & Noble Bookstore.

**Additional University policies:**

Academic Integrity Policy: <http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity>

Student behavior policy: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

ODA Statement: [disability.unt.edu](http://disability.unt.edu)

Retention of Student Records: <http://ferpa.unt.edu/>

Final Examination Schedule: <http://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule/fall>

#	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT (see Bb for more specifics)
1	8/29	Introduction to class; Syllabus review; Intro to blues and transcription of chord changes.	
2	8/31	Blues vocabulary; soloing over "McDuff's Groove"; Intro to piano assignment format	Sing 2 choruses over "McDuff's Groove"; play 1 chorus (not simultaneously).
3	9/5	Blues performances (piano and vocal); begin discussing "book" organization methods; song lists; start discussion of programming.	Take notes on JB Faculty recital, specifically related to programming and aesthetics.
4	9/7	Programming discussion, Part 2.	Create a 50-minute recital program.
5	9/12	Programming discussion, Part 3.	Create a 60-minute thematic concert program.
6	9/14	Methods of Shedding Changes & Chord Surfing review on "Alone Together" (Styles) & "I Remember You" (Improv)	Practice vocal improv. Learn to play changes on piano.
7	9/19	In-class performances of piano changes and trial run of a cappella vocal choruses.	One a cappella vocal chorus.
8	9/21	In-class performances of a cappella chorus; intro to motivic development.	Self-evaluation of a cappella performance; prep for two choruses of accompanied soloing.
9	9/26	In-class performances; further motivic development.	Self-eval; prep for final motivic development performance; 1st chorus accompanied, 2nd a cappella.
10	9/28	In-class performances; start Darmon Meader vocabulary etude.	Self eval; practice Meader etude; upload performance by 10/3 class time.
11	10/3	Meader etude work; Vocabulary & Licks	Meader etude #2 - upload by 10/5 at midnight

#	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT (see Bb for more specifics)
12	10/5	Wrap vocabulary/licks; start "Miss Jones" & "Joy Spring"	Work changes for soloing. Learn piano changes.
13	10/10	Workshop and feedback on tunes.	Practice for first performance of "Jones/Joyspring". Record video of yourself playing changes (upload by 10/17 classtime).
14	10/12	First grade on "Jones"/"Joyspring" (120 bpm); discuss Midterm Performance Exam.	Self-eval; continued work at faster tempi; choose mid-term song selection and upload title for approval.
15	10/17	Second grade on "Jones"/"Joyspring" (180 bpm)	Self-eval; continued work at faster tempi.
16	10/19	Third grade on "Jones"/"Joyspring" (220 bpm)	Self-eval; grad improv students upload 260 bpm recording (by 10/21 at midnight for feedback; Midterm Exam Prep
17	10/24	MIDTERM EXAM PERFORMANCE. Discuss current artist reports & draw due dates.	Self-evaluate your Midterm Performance.
18	10/26	Bossas: Comping and soloing style	Extra credit: Write comparison paper on 4 different performances of a Jobim "standard".
19	10/31	"Corcovado" - workout. Diminished scale work in Meader book.	Prep piano & soloing on "Corcovado"; upload piano performance by 11/2 classtime.
20	11/2	In-class vocal performances of "Corcovado".	Self-eval; work "Spain" & "Chega"; upload piano performance by 11/7 classtime.
21	11/7	Current Artist Reports (3)	Written assignment on one of the artists.
22	11/9	In-class performances of "Spain/Chega"	Self-eval
23	11/14	Ballad delivery and lyric improvisation; piano skills; discuss final exam.	Prep ballad
24	11/16	Current Artist Reports (3)	Written assignment on one of the artists.
25	11/21	Ballad performances	Choose up-tempo song for lyric delivery assignment and upload title.
26	11/23	THANKSGIVING DAY - NO CLASS!	
27	11/28	Current Artist Reports (2); FIPE/GIPE discussion.	Prep up-tempo lyric delivery.
28	11/30	Current Artist Reports (2); In-class performance of up-tempo song	Self-eval; Written assignment on one of the artists from the past TWO days of reports.
29	12/5	FIPE/GIPE trial run #1	Self-eval
30	12/7	FIPE/GIPE trial run #2	Prep for final.
	12/12 11 am	<b>Final Performance Exam - Room TBD - Open to the "public"</b>	