



MUJS 3370 – ADVANCED IMPROVISATION IV
(MUJS 5370 – GRADUATE REVIEW OF JAZZ IMPROVISATION)
Spring 2026 | T TR 9:30 - 10:50 am | MU263

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COURSE PHILOSOPHY/OBJECTIVES

Jazz is a language. In this course, our focus will be on new “dialects” of the language previously learned in Improv I, II & III. We will not only reinforce the foundational pillars of melody and harmony found in pre-bop and bebop, but will start to approach harmony with a focus on sounds, structures and shapes. We will work to develop a connection to previously learned concepts, and also new perspectives and approaches with the ultimate goal of creating a lasting method by which students can continue to develop on their own, even after this course.

COURSE CONTENT/MATERIALS

There is no textbook required for this course, but students should be able to seek out recordings on their own through legal means.

You should create a playlist of the following tunes/solos and begin *actively listening* to them NOW:

- Joe Henderson on *Inner Urge* (from Joe Henderson, *Joe Henderson Big Band*)
- Mark Turner on *Iverson's Odyssey* (from Mark Turner, *Dharma Days*)
- Dayna Stephens on *Seems Like Yesterday* (from Dayna Stephens, *Reminiscent*)
- Kenny Garrett on *November 15* (from Kenny Garrett, *Songbook*)
- Joshua Redman on *Coax* (from Redman, Parks, Penman, Harland, *James Farm*)
- Aaron Parks on *I'll Be Seeing You* (from AC Trio, *Dear Someone*)
- Mulgrew Miller on *Reflections* (from Joe Lovano, *Quartets Live at the Village Vanguard*)
- Herbie Hancock on *Dolphin Dance* (from Herbie Hancock, *Maiden Voyage*)
- Brad Mehldau on *All the Things You Are* (from Brad Mehldau Trio, *Art of the Trio, Vol. 4*)

COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

GRADING: Your grade is determined by the following criteria.

30%: Language Journal Entries (6 entries at 5% each,

12%: Solo Singing Exercises

3%: Submission and Class Presentation

55%: Exams (5 Exams at 11% each)

The final grade is determined by the following scale:

A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79%, D = 60-69%, F = below 60%.

Grades that are one point or less below a cutoff can be rounded up at the sole discretion of the instructor based on a student's overall effort, disposition, and attendance both in class and in office hours. For example, 89.1 and 89.0 *can* be rounded up to a 90.0 at the instructor's discretion, 88.9 *cannot*.

LANGUAGE JOURNALS:

Each student is expected to keep a "language journal" (for a total of 30% of the grade). This should be kept as **one file** in a notation program. It should be continuous throughout the whole semester: you should not re-order anything. The goal is to track and remember all of your favorite "bits of language" from various solos we study in class, and to witness your own growth in real time.

Within this semester, there are six journal assignments. Journal assignments will include transcribing and performing excerpts from different solos, breaking down the solos into shapes and phrases, analyzing them, internalizing them in twelve keys (in and out of the context of a piece of music), and synthesizing a new solo in a new context using the concepts you have internalized.

You are free to handwrite assignments for your own benefit, but all submissions must be **computer notated** and in **concert key (treble clef)**. Neatness and presentation are a part of your grade for each.

All journal assignments are submitted through **Canvas** by **9 am on the day it is due**. This is a **firm deadline: late work is accepted for a maximum score of 50%** except for an excused absence. If you email the instructor to ask about submitting a late assignment, you will simply be referred to the policy here in the syllabus. Illegibility, unclear images or recordings will not be graded.

Do not email assignments to the instructor, only use the Canvas platform.

The grader will provide individual feedback through the Canvas platform and advise if extra work is needed in office hours. Please be sure to check Canvas for comments and feedback on your submissions.

SOLO SINGING EXERCISE:

In the language journal assignment, we spend a long period of time on a small amount of material (just a

few solo excerpts). We go into tremendous depth, breaking down concepts, devices, and vocabulary. It is akin to learning a second language: breaking down the grammar and learning to piece words together in a very focused way. While this is a valuable method of learning improvisation, it can be equally valuable to learn a high volume of material with much less depth - this is what some would call “learning by osmosis.”

For this reason, you are also expected to submit an example of yourself singing along to a great solo this semester. You do not need to transcribe this solo, and your singing does not have to be pitch-perfect. But it must be very clear that you know the solo inside-and-out, that you are aware of the phrasing, articulations, and other unique elements of the solo. This exercise is designed to help you (or force you, if need be) to keep listening to the great recordings, and to absorb the general “sound” of the jazz language. It is akin to learning your first language: picking up general phonetics, rhythmic flow, etc.

EXAMS:

The five exams will be highly specific musical tasks related to the concepts and language discussed in each unit. It is important to note that the exams measure your internalization of the concepts discussed *in this course*, not your overall improvisational skill, nor your improvisational vocabulary acquired prior to this course.

Being a great player is not enough to pass an exam. Regular practice is essential for success on these exams; you should not procrastinate or “cram”.

Furthermore, all exams are considered to be essential tasks for passing this course and for your personal and musical development.

A score of 75% or above on all exams is HIGHLY recommended in order for a student to pass this class, regardless of performance in other course assignments.

If a student fails to achieve a 75% or above on a given exam, the student will be afforded extra help and one opportunity to retake that exam before the end of the semester.

In short, it is not recommended that you move on from this class without passing all five of the exams with a 75% or above. If you do not pass an exam, it is recommended that you begin scheduling a meeting for extra help. You may retake an exam the week before **finals week** every semester as well as any other agreed upon time between you and/or the TF or Professor.

ATTENDANCE:

Please note: Attendance is not directly factored into any of these grading criteria, but each unexcused

absence **after the THIRD** will lower your **final grade** by 5%, regardless of performance in any of the above criteria. This is a generous attendance policy that allows you to miss approximately 10% of class meetings with no questions asked. After your third absence, the policy is strictly enforced.

Excused absences are, of course, permitted with ample notice and reasonable cause. These absences do not count towards the three unexcused. Please email the instructor to clear these in advance, or as soon as possible after-the-fact in case of emergency. Please provide documentation/verification.

If you feel overwhelmed in any way, or if you are dealing with something that is causing you to miss a significant amount of class, the best thing to do is speak with the instructor as soon as possible. Do not wait until the end of the semester when grades are published.

COURSE SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

Week	Date	Topic/Assignments
1	1/13	Syllabus & Class Expectations, Learning from multiple perspectives, Bebop vs Modern, Considering the ‘Why’ and the ‘What’, Exam Testing Times. Scale Degree Fundamental ‘Exam’ and Classroom Review.
1	1/15	Upper Structure Triads and Rhythmic Introduction + Exam #1 Overview + Rhythm Task #1
2	1/20	UST Review + Rules and Analyzing Solos + Triad Pairs *** Journal 1 Due Mark Turner and Dayna Transcriptions and Mark Turner Reading/Quiz.
2	1/22	*** Class Submission & Presentation Due All students must submit a set of triad pair rules to be presented in class
3	1/27	Analyzing Solos *** Journal 2 Due Aaron Parks and Kenny Garrett Transcriptions
3	1/29	Tonic Resolutions
4	2/3	Analyze a select few Journal #3 Entries + Exam Practice *** Journal #3 Due Triad Pairs and Tonic Resolution Etudes
4	2/5	Exam #1
<p>Exam #1 Objectives: 1. Students will be able to play the corresponding triad(s) for a set of randomly selected V-I/i’s of both two bars per chord and one bar per chord. Students will also be able to play any triad pair with a constant stream of eighth notes, using the shapes (“rules”) from the assigned solos discussed in class as well as their own shapes (“rules”). + Rhythmic check-in #1: RH + LH, RF + LF</p>		
5	2/10	Exam #2 Overview + UST’s over Blues , Standard, Voice-leading on Inner Urge + Rhythm Task #2
5	2/12	Voice-leading over <i>Inner Urge</i> *** Solo Singing #1 Due <i>Inner Urge</i> - Joe Henderson Big Band

6	2/17	UST's over Blues
6	2/19	Voice-leading over Standard *** Journal #4 Due Write out and play your own solo on a Standard
7	2/24	Exam #2
Exam #2 Objective: Students will be able to employ triad-based vocabulary effectively over a blues progression, medium tempo standard and <i>Inner Urge</i> . + Rhythmic check-in #2: RH + LF RH + RF		
7	2/26	Exam #3 Overview + Diminished Scale and Triads + Rhythm Task #3
8	3/3	Analyze Solo + Diminished Vocabulary *** Journal #5 Due Herbie Hancock and Mulgrew Miller Transcription
8	3/5	Diminished Grips + Triad Pairs
	3/10	Spring Break
	3/12	
9	3/17	Diminished Etudes
9	3/19	Exam #3 Review
10	3/24	Exam #3
Exam #3 Objectives: Students will be able to play over <i>Sweet Georgia Brown</i> using the diminished sounds discussed in class as well as the upper structure triads, triad-pairs and tonic alterations + Rhythm check-in #3: RH + LH + RF, RH + LH + LF		
10	3/26	Exam #4 Overview + 2's & 3's + 5/8 + Groupings
11	3/31	Analyze Solo + Accents & Resolutions *** Journal #6 Due Joshua Redman Transcription (TBC)
11	4/2	Rhythms, Syncopations & Playing over the Bar Line
12	4/7	5/8 Application to Standards
12	4/9	Exam #4
Exam #4 Objective: Students will play the 4-limbed 5/8 rhythmic exercise practiced in class. Additionally, students will have to solo over <i>All The Things You Are</i> in 5/8		
13	4/14	Exam #5 Overview
13	4/16	Analyze Solo + Phrasing and Rhythm *** Solo Singing #2 Due <i>All the Things You Are</i> - Brad Mehldau - 1:48-2:28, 4:12-6:55
14	4/21	7/4 Application to Standards
14	4/23	Exam #5 Review
15	4/28	Exam # 5 + Retakes

15	4/30	9:30am-11:00am - Exam #5 + Retakes
Finals week	5/5	No Class

OTHER COURSE INFORMATION

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. Dizack from your personal email address, through Instagram 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. Dizack (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.

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.

Course Syllabi Information

For complete information on course syllabi requirements, please see the [university's policy](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049).
(<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049>)

In addition to the information below, course syllabi should minimally include the following information:

- Course Title and Course Number

- Course Objectives
- Instructor Office Hours
- Attendance Expectations
- Grading Criteria
- Statement on timely return of student work, particularly final exams or final projects
- Statement that students should not schedule their end-of-semester jury against a regularly scheduled class
- For Faculty, Teaching Fellows and Adjuncts:
 - ✓ All undergraduate syllabi for lecture courses are required by law to be available to the public. At UNT, undergraduate syllabi for lecture courses should be uploaded into the Faculty Information System by the 7th class day.
 - To access the Faculty Information System, go to your my.unt home page. Under the Faculty Tab, click on Faculty Information System.
 - ✓ UNT requires that all graduate course syllabi to be uploaded into FIS.

Rather than including the text for the information below, it is also an option to include the links in course syllabi and review the information on the first day of class.

DEFIBRILLATORS IN THE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

- Music Building: Across from the west side of the Music Commons, directly across from the elevator
- Music Building: Third floor hallway, across from the staircase that comes up from the Copy Room. Next to Room 322
- Music Building: Across from the Copy Room next to Room 293
- Music Building: Voertman Lobby by the big double set of doors that lead out to the courtyard
- Music Building: Main Office (247) under the student worker's desk
- Music Annex: Next to room MA117, near the triple set of doors on the east side of the building
- Music Practice Building North: First floor on the Avenue C side
- Music Practice Building South: First floor on the Avenue C side
- Bain Hall: First floor by the restrooms
- Murchison Performing Arts Center: Located off the main lobby, beyond the grand staircase, across from the single occupancy restroom (next to the public water fountains)

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](http://oda.unt.edu)

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

Health and Safety Information

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

Registration Information for Students

See: Spring Academic Calendar Information

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-academic-calendar.html>

Semester Calendar, Spring 2026

See: Spring Semester Calendar

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/sites/default/files/spring-2026-academic-calendar.pdf>

Final Exam Schedule, Spring 2026

See above

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 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>

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.

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/spring-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>

