



MUJS 3370 – ADVANCED IMPROVISATION IV
(MUJS 5370 – GRADUATE REVIEW OF JAZZ IMPROVISATION)
Fall 2020 | Remote Class | MW 9 - 9:50 am

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Office Hours: By Appointment Only

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COURSE PHILOSOPHY/OBJECTIVES

Jazz is a language. This language is most wholly and thoroughly broken down through the study of bebop. Among other things, bebop provides a detailed and largely measurable explanation of harmony, melody, rhythm and voice-leading. It is arguably the most essential building block to become fluent as a jazz improviser. Without an understanding of bebop, any jazz musician will fall quite short of their potential. 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 not only work to develop a connection to previously learned concepts, but 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:

- Nicholas Payton on *With a Song in My Heart* (from Nicholas Payton, *Payton's Place*)
- Kenny Garrett on *Diverse* (from Roy Haynes, *Birds of a Feather - A Tribute to Charlie Parker*)
- 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*)
- Mulgrew Miller on *Reflections* (from Joe Lovano, *Live at the Village Vanguard*)
- Herbie Hancock on *Dolphin Dance* (from Herbie Hancock, *Maiden Voyage*)
- Herbie Hancock on *All of You* [3rd Set] (from Miles Davis, *The Complete Live at the Plugged Nickel*)

COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

GRADING: Your grade is determined by the following criteria.

25%: Language Journal Entries (6 entries at 5% each, **lowest dropped**)

15%: Solo Singing Exercises (2 entries at 7.5% each)

60%: Exams (4 Exams at 15% 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 25% 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 Mondays** of the weeks in which they are due. This is a **firm deadline: no late work is accepted for any reason** except 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 instructor 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 EXERCISES:

In the language journal assignments, 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 examples of yourself singing along to two great solos throughout the semester. You do not need to transcribe these solos, 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 each 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 four 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. The following grading policy should be understood very clearly, and by taking this course you are agreeing to this policy:

A score of 75% or above on all exams is required 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 opportunities to retake that exam before the end of the semester. If, on the last day of the course (as determined by instructor), any exam grades below 75% remain in the gradebook, that student will receive an “Incomplete (I)” for the class and must retake the relevant exams in the following semester.

In short, you cannot pass this class without passing all four of the exams with a 75% or above. If you do not pass an exam, it is recommended that you begin attending office hours regularly for short lessons. You may retake an exam at any time during office hours, or a designated “exam retake” day will be offered during **finals week** every semester.

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.

COVID-19 IMPACT ON ATTENDANCE:

While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. It is important that you communicate with me *prior to being absent* as to what may be preventing you from coming to class so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, or any of the other possible symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

COURSE SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

Week 1:

Mon Aug 24 - **No Class**

Wed Aug 26 - Syllabus & Class Expectations, Learning from multiple perspectives, Bebop vs Modern, Considering the 'Why' and the 'What'

Week 2: Journal 1 Due

Mon Aug 31 - Intro to Triads over V's and I/i's

Wed Sep 2 - Intro to Triad Pairs

Week 3:

Mon Sep 7 - **No Class (Holiday)**

Wed Sep 9 - Analysis of Transcribed Solo Excerpts, Isolate Shapes/Phrases

Week 4:

Mon Sep 14 - Learning Isolated Shapes/Phrases in 12 keys. Triad Pair Drills in 12 keys. Triad Pairs over a single chord.

Wed Sep 16 - Applying Triad Pairs to V-I/i's and over a Blues, Exam Review

Week 5: Journal 2 Due

Mon Sep 21 - Synthesizing a New Solo from Triad Pairs, Group Solo Construction

Wed Sep 23 - **Exam #1**

Exam #1 Objectives: 1. Students will be able to play the corresponding triad(s) for a set of randomly selected V-I/i's. 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. Students are encouraged to discover and play their own shapes as well.

Week 6:

Mon Sep 28 - Analysis of Transcribed Solo Excerpts, Isolate Shapes/Phrases

Wed Sep 30 - Adding Notes : Intro to Quadrads and Pentatonics

Week 7: Solo Singing 1 Due

Mon Oct 5 - Adding Chromaticism (Bebop Devices)

Wed Oct 7 - Application of Quadrads to a Standard (Playing Day)

Week 8: Journal 3 Due

Mon Oct 12 - Exam Review, Application of Quadrads to a Standard (Playing Day)

Wed Oct 14 - **Exam #2**

Exam #2 Objective: Students will be able to employ previous triad-based as well as new quadrad-based vocabulary effectively over a blues progression, rhythm changes progression, and medium tempo standard.

Week 9:

Mon Oct 19 - Intro to Symmetrical Scales and the 3 Kinds of Diminished Chords

Wed Oct 21 - Diminished Grips

Week 10: Journal 4 Due

Mon Oct 26 - Analysis of Transcribed Solos, Isolate Shapes/Phrases

Wed Oct 28 - Learn Isolated Shapes/Phrases in 12 keys, Continue Diminished Grips in 12 keys.

Week 11:

Mon Nov 2 - Applications of Diminished Grips on Blues/Standard Changes

Wed Nov 4 - Symmetry in Minor 3rds, Practice/Review for Exam #3

Week 12: Journal 5 Due

Mon Nov 9 - Practice/Review for Exam #3

Wed Nov 11 - **Exam #3**

Exam #3 Objective: Students will be able to play over “Sweet Georgia Brown” using the diminished sounds discussed in class as well as triads/quadrads.

Week 13: Solo Singing 2 Due

Mon Nov 16- Analysis of Transcribed Solos, Isolate Concepts

Wed Nov 18 - Motivic development, Working Backwards from Resolutions

Week 14: Journal 6 Due

Mon Nov 23 - Application of Motivic Development on Standards

Wed Nov 25 – **No Class (Holiday)**

Week 15:

Mon Nov 30 – Online Class - Practice/Review for Exam #4

Wed Dec 2 – **Exam #4**

Objective: Students will be able to play motivically over a standard highlighting resolution points as discussed in class.

FINALS WEEK:

Monday Dec 7 from 9 am to 11 am - Exam Retakes

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 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. 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.

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/sites/default/files/06.003.AcadIntegrity.Final_.pdf

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 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 Access.

See: [ODA](#)

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

UNT Policy Statement on Diversity

UNT values diversity and individuality as part of advancing ideals of human worth, dignity and academic excellence. Diverse viewpoints enrich open discussion, foster the examination of values and exposure of biases, help educate people in rational conflict resolution and responsive leadership, and prepare us for the complexities of a pluralistic society. As such, UNT is committed to maintaining an open, welcoming atmosphere that attracts qualified students, staff, and faculty from all groups to support their success. UNT does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status in its application and admission process, educational programs and activities, employment policies and use of university facilities.

See: [Diversity Statement](#)

Link: https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/04.018_PolicyStateOnDiversity.pub 8_.18.pdf

2020-2021 Semester Academic Schedule (with Add/Drop Dates)

See: [Fall Registration Guide](#)

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-registration-guide>

Academic Calendar at a Glance, 2020-2021

See: [Academic Calendar](#)

Link: <https://www.unt.edu/catalogs/2020-21/calendar>

Final Exam Schedule

Note: See updates on the final exam schedule at [Fall 2020 Instructional Guide](#)

See: [Final Exam Schedule](#) <https://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule/fall>

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 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:

See: [Counseling and Testing](#)

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

For more information on mental health issues, please visit: See: [Mental Health Issues](#)

Link: <https://speakout.unt.edu>.

The counselor for music students is: Myriam Reynolds

Chestnut Hall, Suite 311

(940) 565-2741 Myriam.reynolds@unt.edu

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. After the 12th class day, students must first submit a completed "Request to Drop" form to the Registrar's Office. The last day for a student to drop a class in Spring, 2020 is March 30th. Information about add/drop may be found at:

See: [Add Drop](#)

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-add-drop>

STUDENT RESOURCES

The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:

See: [Student Resources](#)

Link: https://www.unt.edu/sites/default/files/resource_sheet.pdf