

Improvisation 1 MUSA 2217

Instructor: Dr. Chris Reyman

Office: FFA 133

Contact: 747-7805, cereyman@utep.edu

Class Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30am-12:20pm

Location: FFA 101 and remote

***Due to COVID-19, this class will be delivered in a hybrid format, with options for meetings on campus during class time, synchronous classes remotely during class time, and asynchronous materials completed remotely. If classes are not already remote, the remainder of the semester after Thanksgiving break will be remote. I have designed the course to function fully online, if necessary.

Office Hours: Due to social distancing regulations, all office hours will be held remotely via ZOOM conference calling app (available for free) on Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10:30-11:30AM. You can also email me to set up another time to talk via phone or video call.

Required Materials:

- 1) staff paper for assignments and notes
- 2) metronome or metronome app
- 3) ability to listen to recordings while playing your instrument
- 4) ability to record assignments with video and audio
- 5) all social distancing and hygienic materials (face mask, hand sanitizer, etc.)
- 6) access to your instrument and practice space off campus

Attendance policy:

Due to COVID-19, there will not be any grade given for attendance. I will work with each of you if you miss face-to-face classes due to illness. **DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE SICK.**

Course Description

Introduction to improvisational practices of commercial styles focused on theoretical analysis, ear training and improvising with diatonic melodic and harmonic devices.

Course Goals

- Develop music skills through listening, analysis and performance
- Demonstrate deep listening and theoretical skills through transcription and improvisation

- Develop flexibility to adapt to ever-changing musical environments

Course Activities

- 1) ear training
- 2) theory tests
- 3) playing assignments
- 4) listening assignments
- 5) theory analysis
- 6) transcription projects

Assignments

**All assignments will be due on Wednesdays, unless otherwise indicated.

MODULE 1: Cantaloupe Island

Week 1: syllabus, intro to improvisation

Assignment #1 (5pts): Getting into the groove

- Record yourself performing along with the given audio track focusing on connecting to the groove (rhythm and meter). Listen to your recording. Re-record an improvisation, listen to it and turn it in. **Due Sept. 2.**

Week 2: Cantaloupe Island and Transcription Project #1

- Listen to Herbie Hancock's Cantaloupe Island. See if you can keep track of the 16-measure form throughout the entire recording. Use cues from the rhythm section (accents/fills leading to phrases, especially the beginning of the form) and the harmonies (improviser, piano and bass) to keep track of where you are in the form.
- Start Transcription Project #1 (Cantaloupe Island), **due October 7** (see Assignment in blackboard)
- Practice the melody along with the original recording and the play-along version.

Week 3: Pentatonic Scales and Circle of 5ths

- Pentatonic Scales (major and minor)
- **Assignment #2 (5pts):** Record yourself performing Cantaloupe Island with the play-along track provided. Play the melody 2 times through (32 measures), then improvise using the F minor pentatonic scale 2 times through (32 measures), then play the melody 2 times to end (32 measures). Listen to your recording. Turn in your recording. **Due Sept. 16.**

Week 4: Modes

Major = Ionian

Dominant = Mixolydian

Minor = Dorian

- play/sing all 12 major scales, 1 octave, moving through the circle of 5ths (up by 4th or down by 5th)

Assignment #3 (5pts):

- play/sing all 12 Mixolydian modes, 1 octave, moving through the circle of 5ths (up by 4th or down by 5th)
- Practice Cantaloupe Island improvisation focusing on the groove and phrasing. Record yourself improvising through 2 choruses (32 measures) with good, clear 4-measure phrasing and rhythms that lock into the rhythm section (piano, bass, drums). Listen to your recording and then turn in. **Due Sept. 23.**

Week 5:

- **QUIZ 1 (10pts):** play/sing all 12 Dorian modes, 1 octave, moving through the circle of 5ths (up by 4th or down by 5th). Record and turn in. **Due Sept. 30.**
- Using the play-along, play/sing through the 3 scales/modes that correspond to the 3 chords for Cantaloupe Island. Play/sing eighth-notes in time with the track and change scales when the chord changes. You can play/sing in any octave you want, but stick to stepwise motion. Record 2 choruses (32 measures) and listen back to what you played.

Week 6: Sharing the practice

Assignment #4 (5pts):

- Practice improvising through Cantaloupe Island with the play-along recording using the F minor pentatonic scale and the 3 scales that correspond to the 3 chords of the composition. Be sure to focus on performing with good time and style, making clear 4-measure phrases.
- Record yourself improvising through 1 chorus of Cantaloupe Island and post to the class Discussion Board. Use any of the concepts that we've been working on. **Due Oct. 7.**

Week 7: EXAM #1 (20pts), **Oct. 14.**

Transcription: perform transcription along with recording. Turn in notation of transcription.

Cantaloupe Island: record yourself performing along with the play-along recording. Execute the following things:

- Melody 2 times
- Improvise using F minor pentatonic scale 1 chorus
- Improvise using the scales/modes that go with each chord for 2 choruses

Focus on performing with good rhythm that locks in with the rhythm section and clear 4-measure phrasing that has a distinct beginning and end.

MODULE 2: The Blues

Week 8:

- Listen to examples of blues recordings. Count the 12-measure form using cues from the rhythm section (drums and harmony) to keep track of where you are in the form.
- Start **Transcription Project #2** (Blues on My Mind), **due December 9.**

Week 9: B-flat blues

- Learn the riff blues melodies (C-Jam Blues, Sonny Moon for Two, Night Train, Centerpiece) from the recording and practice playing them with the B-flat blues play-along.
- **Assignment # 5 (5pts):** Improvise through 2 choruses of blues (24 measures) with blues scales. **Due Oct. 28.**

Week 10: **QUIZ 2** (10pts):

- Play/sing through riff blues melodies from memory with play-along
- Improvise through blues with blues scales and parts of riff blues melodies
- Record yourself playing 1 riff blues melody (2 choruses = 24 measures) and improvising through 2 choruses of the blues using the blues scales and parts of the riff blues melodies. **Due Nov. 4.**

Week 11: Jazz Blues form

- Outline triads, 7th and 9th chords with the F blues play-along.
- ii V I
- Secondary dominants
- Lead sheet melodies (Straight No Chaser, Billie's Bounce)

Week 12:

- Improvise through the jazz blues in this format:
 - Measures 1-7 use blues scales
 - Measures 8-12 outline the chords
- **Transcription Project #2 check-in (5pts)** - record yourself playing/singing through the first chorus (12 measures) of the transcription. **Due Nov. 18.**

Week 13

- Play/sing through the modes that correspond to each chord of the jazz blues form
- **Assignment #6 (5pts):** Record yourself Improvising through 2 choruses of the jazz blues in this format:
 - Measures 1-7 use blues scales
 - Measures 8-12 outline the chords
 - Listen back to your recording
 - Re-record 2 choruses and turn in. **Due Nov. 25.**

Week 14-15: Sharing the practice and Preparation for the Final Exam

- **Assignment #7 (5pts):** Record yourself performing 1 riff blues melody of your choosing (2 choruses = 24 measures) and improvising through 2 choruses of the jazz blues using any/all concepts we have worked on. **Due Dec. 2.**
- Wrap up progress on Transcription Project #2
- Practice blues improvisation
- Practice blues melodies

FINAL EXAM Dec. 9 (20pts):

- Perform 2 riff blues melodies
- Improvise through the bass blues form using blues scales
- Improvise through the jazz blues form in the following format:
 - Blues scale for 1 chorus
 - Outline chords for 2 choruses
- Perform Transcription Project #2 and turn in notation

Grade Breakdown

Assignments: 40%
 Quizzes: 20%
 Transcription projects = 20%
 Exams: 20%

Statement for Accommodations and Support

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact *The Center for Accommodations and Support Services* (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/CASS.

UTEP Policies regarding COVID-19

The UTEP [Temporary Health and Safety Policy](#) requires all faculty, staff, and students to follow these guidelines:

- **Stay at home** if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test.
- **Report** (screening.utep.edu) if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test.
- **Complete screening questions** (screening.utep.edu) every day before coming to campus and follow instructions provided.
- While on campus:

- **wear face coverings** when in common areas or when others are present;
- maintain a minimum **separation of six (6)** feet between yourself and others when possible, and arrange spaces to make this possible in almost all circumstances;
- **adhere to room/space limitations** on number of occupants; and
- **wash and/or sanitize hands** frequently.

Faculty Responsibilities (a select list for your information)

- Complete self-screening (screening.utep.edu) prior to every campus visit.
- Inform students that they are required to complete self-screening (screening.utep.edu) prior to every campus visit. You should provide this information even if your course is entirely online because students may come to campus for other reasons (e.g., library, computer or internet access).
- Have a backup plan for instruction in the event that you become ill or must self-isolate.
- Verify that you have the ability to provide accommodations to students who might miss class, assignments, or exams because of COVID-19. When possible, discuss accommodations in syllabi.
- Include a COVID-19 statement(s) for classroom/lab/studio preventive policies in the syllabus and/or other official course documents (see below).

Student responsibilities

- Complete self-screening (screening.utep.edu) prior to every campus visit.
- Complete COVID-19 student training at [this site](#).
- Contact instructor if temporary accommodations due to COVID-19 are needed (i.e., due to positive COVID-19 test, symptoms, or exposure).
- If unable to wear a face covering (e.g., medical reasons), the best course of action is to enroll in courses that are entirely online or to work with academic advisors, if necessary, to identify alternative courses. If this is not possible, request an accommodation from [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS) prior to coming to campus for in-person activities. Students who receive an accommodation to not wear a face covering must share this with the professor and work to minimize contact with others in the class.

Statement Regarding COVID-19 Precautions:

- You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at screening.utep.edu. If you know anyone who should report any of these three criteria, encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to COVIDaction@utep.edu.
- For each day that you attend campus—for any reason—you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website (screening.utep.edu) prior to arriving on

campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

- Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present. You must wear a face covering over your nose and mouth at all times in this class. If you choose not to wear a face covering, you may not enter the classroom. If you remove your face covering, you will be asked to put it on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear a face covering and follow preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 *Health and Safety* and Section 1.2.2.5 *Disruptions* in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures.
- Please note that if COVID-19 conditions deteriorate in the City of El Paso, all course and lab activities may be transitioned to remote delivery.
- Students are not permitted on campus when they have a positive COVID-19 test, exposure or symptoms. If you are not permitted on campus, you should contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange necessary and appropriate accommodations.
- Students who are considered high risk according to CDC guidelines and/or those who live with individuals who are considered high risk may contact [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS) to discuss temporary accommodations for on-campus courses and activities.

**I want this class to be beneficial to you personally. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns you may have about a particular assignment, the class as a whole or anything else.

***The content of this course is subject to change at any time. I will be adjusting the course to fit the particular needs and interests of this group of students. If anything changes in how I will evaluate you, I will let you know as soon as I can.