

Improvisation

11046 - MUSA 2217 - 001

Instructor: Dr. Chris Reyman

Office: FFA 133

Contact: 747-7805, creyman@utep.edu

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 10:30-11:30am, Mondays 12:30-1:30pm, Thursdays and Thursdays 3:30-4:30pm

*Please let me if you'd like to meet (even if it is during my scheduled office hours).

I will do my best to make myself available at times other than these listed - just ask!

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

Location: FFA 102

Required Materials:

- 1) 3-ring binder for materials
- 2) staff paper for assignments and notes
- 3) metronome
- 4) ability to listen to mp3s while playing your instrument

Attendance policy: Students will be given daily grades for participation in class. If a student is not in class (including tardiness), they will not receive credit for that class period. Students with three or more unexcused absences will not receive a grade higher than a B. Of course, you will be excused for university-related events as long as they are approved by me at least two weeks in advance via email correspondence.

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

Improvisation also enables students to:

- Build openness to unexpected and unpredictable situations
- Foster willingness to take chances and get out of comfort zone

Course Activities

- 1) ear training
- 2) theory tests
- 3) playing assignments
- 4) listening assignments
- 5) theory analysis
- 6) transcription projects
- 7) group/ensemble performance assignments

Course Schedule (tentative)

week 1-3 major scale, minor scale and pentatonic scale improvisation over 1 chord
vamps/grooves
Cantaloupe Island
U.C. Level 1 and 2
commercial style analysis and transcription
Assign Transcription #1
PERFORMANCE AND THEORY EXAM 1: Sept. 18

week 4-6 MODAL JAZZ improvisation
Summertime and Song for My Father
U.C. Level 3 and 4
transcription project 1 Due Oct. 9 (Cantaloupe Island)
PERFORMANCE AND THEORY EXAM 2: Oct. 9

week 7-9 BLUES, chord-scale relationships, Mixolydian mode
riff blues heads
U.C. Level 5 and 7
Assign Transcription #2
PERFORMANCE AND THEORY EXAM 3: Oct. 30

week 10-12 ii-V Is and secondary functions
jazz blues, Blue Bossa, Take the A Train
All major (Ionian), minor (Dorian) and Mixolydian scales and arpeggios
PERFORMANCE AND THEORY EXAM 4: Nov. 15

week 13-15 turn arounds altered dominants, whole-tone and octatonic scales
Cantaloupe Island, Summertime, Song for My Father, blues, Blue Bossa, A Train

Ionian, Dorian, Mixolydian, whole-tone and octatonic scales and arpeggios
transcription project 1 Due Dec. 13 (Blues on My Mind)
FINAL EXAM: Dec. 13, 1-3:45

Grade Breakdown

Class assignments/performances: 25% = 1%/class (25 classes, not including exams)

Unit tests: 30%

Performance and Theory Exam #1 = 6%

Performance and Theory Exam #2 = 7%

Performance and Theory Exam #3 = 8%

Performance and Theory Exam #4 = 9%

Transcription projects:

Transcription Project #1 = 10%

Transcription Project #2 = 10%

Final exam (cumulative) = 25%

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.

**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.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Sept. 4 (Labor Day) NO CLASS

Dec. 13, 1-3:45 FINAL EXAM