

Jazz and Improvisation Pedagogy

17629 - MUSE 5397 - 007

Instructor: Dr. Chris Reyman

Office: FFA 133

Contact: 747-7805, creyman@utep.edu

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 10:30-11:30am, Tuesdays 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: TBA

Location: FFA 133

Selected Texts

1. *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis* by Mark C. Gridley (Prentice Hall)
*****available in music library*****
2. *The Great Jazz Pianists: Speaking of their Lives and Music* by Len Lyons (Quill)
3. *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art* by Stephen Nachmanovitch (Penguin PutnamInc.)
4. Optional: *Effortless Mastery: Liberating the Master Musician Within* by Kenny Werner (Jamey Aebersold Jazz)

Attendance Policy

Students will be given daily grades for participation in class. If a student is not in class (including excessive tardiness), s/he will not receive a grade for that class period. Students with three or more unexcused absences will not receive a grade higher than a B. Of course, students 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

An in-depth study of methods for teaching jazz and improvisation to students of various levels through research, writing assignments, readings and the through the practice of teaching.

Course Goals

- Develop jazz and improvisation teaching skills
- Build understanding of historical context of jazz and improvised music
- Practice directing jazz/commercial ensembles and teaching jazz/improvisation
- Gain appreciation for improvisation as an art form
- Write syllabi for jazz and improvisation courses
- Write Teaching Philosophy

Course Overview

- Jazz ensemble directing methods
- Jazz/Commercial Piano methods
- Methods for teaching improvisation
- Designing courses and writing syllabi
- Developing a “Teaching Philosophy”
- Writing a cover letter
- Chronological study of jazz/commercial piano styles

Tentative Schedule

Jazz styles and history of jazz/commercial piano

week 1 Topic: Teaching jazz piano for beginning and intermediate level

Reading due: Gridley’s *Jazz Styles*, Chap. 1 (Intro), Chap. 2 (What is Jazz?) and Chap. 3 (Appreciating Jazz Improvisation)

Project assigned: write a brief reflection on the assigned reading

week 2 Topic: Teaching jazz piano for advanced level

Reading due: Gridley’s *Jazz Styles*, Chap. 4 (Origins of Jazz), Chap. 5 (Early Jazz), Chap. 6 (Swing)

Project assigned: write a brief reflection on the assigned reading

Project assigned: survey jazz piano methods texts

week 3 Topic: Directing jazz/commercial ensembles

Reading due: Gridley’s *Jazz Styles*, Chap. 7 (Duke Ellington), Chap. 8 (Count Basie), Chap. 9 (Bop), Chap. 10 (Cool), Chap. 11 (Hard Bop)

Project assigned: write a brief reflection on the assigned reading

Project assigned: Design course and write syllabus for a Jazz History/Appreciation course

week 4 Topic: Teaching jazz/commercial piano class

Reading due: Gridley’s *Jazz Styles*, Chap. 12 (Miles Davis), Chap. 13 (Coltrane), Chap. 15 (pianists)

Project assigned: Write a detailed outline of the pianists that worked with Miles Davis and discuss their significant work within and outside his band.

Suggested: complete Teaching Self-Evaluation #1

week 5 Topic: History of jazz/commercial piano styles and designing a course

Reading due: Lyons *Jazz Pianists*, choose 3 interviews

Project assigned: write a brief reflection on the assigned reading

Midterm project assigned:

1. In a short paper (approx. 4 pages doubled spaced), discuss the history and evolution of jazz/commercial piano styles.
2. Design course and develop syllabus for Jazz Piano Class
3. Outline chronological history of jazz styles, including significant musicians

Improvisational styles and art form

week 6 Topic: Teaching improvisation (beginning to advanced, stylistic to free)

Reading due: Lyons *Jazz Pianists*, choose 3 interviews

Project assigned: write a brief reflection on the assigned reading

week 7 Topic: Teaching improvisation

Reading due: Nachmanovich's *Free Play*, p 4-59

Project assigned: write a brief reflection on the assigned reading

Midterm Project Due

week 8 Topic: Designing improvisation courses

Project assigned: write a brief reflection on the assigned reading

Project assigned: Design and write syllabus for an Improvisation course.

Suggested: complete Teaching Self-Evaluation #2

week 9 Topic: Jazz improvisation

Reading due: Nachmanovich's *Free Play*, p 59-115

week 10 Topic: Teaching philosophy

Project assigned: write a brief reflection on the assigned reading

week 11 Topic: Writing a cover letter

Reading due: Nachmanovich's *Free Play*, p 115-163

Project assigned: Design course and write syllabus for a Jazz/Commercial Ensemble course

Project assigned: Find job announcement and write a cover letter

week 12 Topics: TBA

Project assigned: write a brief reflection on the assigned reading

Suggested: complete Teaching Self-Evaluation #3

week 13 Topics: TBA

Reading due: Nachmanovich's *Free Play*, p 163-199

week 14 Topics: TBA

Project assigned: write a brief reflection on the assigned reading

***At any point during the semester, video record and write self-evaluation on:

1. teaching a class piano class (Tue/Thur 4:30-5:50pm)
2. teaching an individual or group improvisation lesson (Improvisation class M/W 11:30am-12:20pm)
3. directing a jazz band (Tue/Thur 10:30-11:50am)

Discuss scheduling these activities with me, as I would prefer to be present for 1 session. I can also help you find venues for this teaching.

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.