MUSA 3255 Improvisation I

Instructor: Shaun Mahoney  
Office: 403. Office hours are posted on my door. I am available by appointment.  
Email: stmahoney@utep.edu

Required Materials:  
- Each student is required to bring their instruments to class.  
- Paper and pencil for note taking  
- Reliable internet connection for locating transcription material on youtube.com  
- Play along/Practice Apps: Drum Genius, ireal pro

Course Description: This course is designed around a succession of progressively more complex jazz compositions. With each song, a new improvisational topic will be introduced and applied.

Course Objective: The objective of this course is the comprehension and application of improvisational tools, methods, and conceptual ideas.

Course Schedule:  
Week 1: Chord Structures and Symbols; Swing 8th notes/triplets

Week 2: Major Scale Modes; Major scale patterns and arpeggios, improvising on one chord (melodic ideas based on rhythm), playing quiz.

Week 3: Little Sunflower and Triplets; Apply major scale patterns and arpeggios, apply triplets, transcription 1.

Week 4: Maiden Voyage; swing 8th notes, modal melodic development, AABA form, playing quiz.

Week 5: All Blues; Major/minor pentatonic scales, Playing in ¾, Pent playing test.

Week 6: Major ii-V-I; Transcribe and compose five ii-V-I lines (4 bars each)
Week 7: **Midterm**; Tune up playing test.

Week 8: **Dominant 7th Substitutions**; Dominant pentatonic scales, Tritone sub.

Week 9: **Superstition**; Groove/Funk

Week 10: **Jazz Blues**; Improvise using modes, pent, and arpeggios

Week 11: **Sundown**; Transcription, Analysis and Playing test.

Week 12: **Summertime**

Week 13: **Bebop**; Play bebop melody and compose one chorus based on similar lines in melody. (Use ears to compose over chord changes)

Week 14: **Impressions/Up Tempo**

Week 15: **Final Exam**; Blues, Tune Up, transcription 5.

**Vocalists:** Vocalists in the class may be separated around midterm to work on jazz and pop vocal repertoire.

**Transcription:** Transcription work will be assigned periodically and graded as homework. All transcriptions will be expected to be played in class.

**Quizzes:** There will be playing quizzes and a couple of written quizzes based on the comprehension of material covered. Grades of playing quizzes will be based on rhythmic and harmonic accuracy.

**Tests:** There will be midterm exam based on **Tune Up.** And the final will be based on material covered throughout the semester.
Grading: The overall final grades will be determined by the following:

Transcriptions: 20%
Quizzes: 40%
Tests: 40%

Attendance: Students will be allowed one absence. There will be no make-ups. Missed assignments will count as zeros.

Accommodations: 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.

Statements on Academic Honesty and Accessibility are posted at:
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