

SCHOOL OF FINE ART AND MUSIC
Winter Semester 2015
MUSC*2140-DE
HISTORY OF JAZZ



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CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

A survey of the major styles, personalities, and performances of the jazz tradition in terms of its social and cultural contexts through the examination of jazz texts and commentary, autobiographies of musicians, and recorded examples of important performances.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an historical survey of jazz. During this twelve week course you will listen to important jazz recordings, learn how to recognize jazz styles and the performance practice of individual jazz musicians, watch videos of some of the major jazz figures in performance, read about the lives of many of the great jazz musicians, think about the context in which this music was made and how the circumstances and the music interacted, discuss some of the major issues in jazz such as the role of technology, the impact of race, how music changes, the nature of improvisation, and analyze some different approaches to jazz history. In short, how jazz works. We will also be dealing with some musical terms and techniques (although previous background in music is not required). The first two chapters of the textbook deal with musical terms as does the website. Instead of starting by looking at musical terms for a couple of weeks, we will start right off with the history and listening. As terms show up, I will direct you to those parts of the first two chapters and the website that describe and/or demonstrate these terms.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Aurally identify jazz from any period
- Aurally identify some of the major performances in the jazz repertoire
- Identify the significance of these performances
- Describe styles and specific performances
- Describe the contexts in which jazz musicians perform and how they inform performance.
- Explain the kinds of knowledge that jazz musicians must have in order to do what they do and how this has changed over time.
- Describe the different periods in jazz history
- Explain why changes in jazz performance practices changed.
- Appraise and critique a jazz performance.
- Relate the data presented in this course to the overall themes of the course.
- Compare and evaluate the different approaches to jazz history
- Use musical and social language related to jazz in appropriate ways

REQUIRED TEXT:

My notes found on the course website in the Units (see the navigation bar at the top of the screen). These notes provide instructions on activities, and assignments, as well as commentary on the readings, listening, video, and author's insights.

We are using a new textbook for this course written by Gary Giddins, a long-time jazz journalist who has been in the thick of jazz life for many years, and Scott DeVeaux, one of the best of the new generation of jazz scholars out there (and not a bad jazz pianist).

1. Jazz Scott DeVeaux; Gary Giddins W.W. Norton and Company ISBN 978-0-393-97880-3
2. CD's for the above textbook
3. Interactive Listening Guides (ILG) available from textbook website.
4. Access to the textbook website

Using the textbook Website

This book extends the traditional notion of textbook by making use of computer technology through its interactive listening guides, video demonstration of various jazz techniques, video interviews with the authors, chapter summaries, overviews, listening and chapter quizzes, flashcards, and podcasts. All of this is available by buying the hardcopy of the textbook and the accompanying CDs, or by buying the e-book, which is cheaper.

There are a number of very good features of the text website that I want you to use including:

Required (testable)

1. Author's Insights.

Here the authors discuss various aspects of each chapter in more detail, examine issues not discussed in the book and, in some cases, provide musical examples (especially when author Scott DeVeaux is being interviewed.)

2. Jazz Concepts

Use as required. This, along with the glossary, provides links to video and audio material that illustrate various musical concepts, forms, and instruments. If you run into something that you don't get or understand, then check here first. I also direct you to specific parts of the website and the textbook where these concepts are discussed and demonstrated.

3. Interactive Listening Guides (ILG) This free software available at the textbook website helps you with the listening part of the course. After you upload the CDs to your computer and open the ILG program you can click on any of the musical examples when required and find:

- a. "Overview" material for each example (same as in the textbook)
- b. "Listen for..." material, which consists of a number of important points for the example. When you click on each point, the software automatically takes you to the place in the music where can hear what the point is referring to. Cool!
- c. "Guide". When you click on the guide the example plays the example from the beginning to the end. As you go through the piece, text will appear pointing out what's going on at that particular moment in the piece. Very cool!

- d. Quiz. When you click on this, you are taken to a part of the website that provides a quiz on all the listening examples for that chapter. Since this is a 12-week course, we don't listen to all of the examples. I will provide which questions you should try and answer for each chapter.

Useful (not tested)

- Overview and outline.
- Read these before you delve into the chapter. It will help you frame the material.
- Podcasts.
- Here, the authors answer some general questions about the book and about themselves.
- Chapter quiz and flash cards. Go through these for fun and edification. Our course is only 12 weeks long and this book is actually meant for a longer course so we won't be covering all the material that you are presented with in these quizzes and the flash cards. Nevertheless, I highly recommend that you go through them. You'll learn a lot, you'll get an idea of where your deficiencies lie, and we can always discuss the answers at the course website. On my tests, I will only ask about the material that I have designated as required.
- General and further course resources can be found in the Resources tab in the navigation bar at the top of the page.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Reflection Report (Week 5: February 2-8, 2015).....	30%
Multiple Choice Test (Week 9: March 9-15, 2015)	30%
Final Exam (April 15, 2015, 7-9pm; location TBA).....	40%

LEARNING STRATEGIES

You cannot cram in this course. Do not fall behind! This course is cumulative. You can't really understand what's going on at any one point without knowing what happened before. Second, you can't rush listening. Listen to each example at least four times or until you can hear it in your head. Don't wait. Do it right away.

Learning is not like eating a sandwich. It is not something you consume. It requires your engagement with the material. With this in mind I expect you to politely question, discuss, argue, disagree with, add to, or expound on, the material you find in this course. To do this, and to be successful in this course, you have to keep up with the readings, the listening, the textbook and course website assignments and tasks.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

- Week 01: Unit 01: The Roots of Jazz and Jazz in New Orleans
- Week 02: Unit 02: New York in the 1920s
- Week 03: Unit 03: Louis Armstrong and the First Great Soloists
- Week 04: Unit 04: Swing.
- Week 05: Unit 05: The Count and the Duke (REFLECTION REPORT)
- Week 06: Unit 06: Swing Soloists and Rhythm Sections
- Week 07: Unit 07: Bebop
- Week 08: Unit 08: Post-Bop Performance and Composition.
- Week 09: Unit 09: Modal Jazz (MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST)
- Week 10: Unit 10: The Avant-garde
- Week 11: Unit 11: Fusion.
- Week 12: Unit 12: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow