

SCHOOL OF FINE ART AND MUSIC
Fall Semester 2017
MUSC*2140
HISTORY OF JAZZ



INSTRUCTOR: Howard Spring
TIME: Tuesday, Thursday; 4:00-5:20 pm
LOCATION: MacKinnon Building, Rm. 107
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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30 – 4:00

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 commentaries and recorded examples of important performances.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an historical survey of jazz. You will listen to important jazz recordings, learn how to recognize jazz styles and the performance practice of individual jazz musicians, watch some of the major figures in jazz 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 history and historiography such as the role of technology, the impact of race, how music changes, the nature of improvisation.

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 the technical side of jazz performance. We will not be starting here. Instead, we will start with the history and with listening. As technical terms show up, I will direct you to those parts of the first two chapters and the textbook website that describe, define, and/or demonstrate these terms.

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, and the textbook and course website.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

- Recognize and critically reflect on the various musical and social phenomena that have informed change in jazz practices, thought and contexts.
- Evaluate and critically account for historiographical narratives of jazz history
- Discuss issues related to the changes in and the nature of various jazz styles and aesthetics, relationships between individual talent and social forces in the formation of jazz life, and the roles of “race,” technology, and commerce-
- Demonstrate abilities in “aurality” by identifying and extracting information from selected recorded examples in the jazz repertoire, and assess the examples in terms of their stylistic representation and place in jazz history
- Evaluate the significance and socio-cultural meaning of the jazz recordings by comparing and contrasting them to other musical examples.
- Extract and synthesize information and ideas from a variety of sources and express their thoughts in written formative reports and a summative evaluation
- Recognize and describe the stylistic and cultural similarities and differences between musical styles using basic technical vocabulary.
- Identify and distinguish individual and group jazz styles and transformations orally according to regional American socio-musical practices, and their relation to various African and Latin American musics.
- Recognize that transcultural practices are developed through examination of the music outside the United States, particularly jazz in Canada.
- Express professional, informed, and ethical ideas about issues addressed in the course such as racism, social and cultural equality, and the relationship between commercialism and artistic value in late capitalist society.

REQUIRED TEXT:

1. The textbook for this course was 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). Here is the information you need. The book comes in hardcopy or in an e-book version. You can choose either one. Not both. More information on the e-book can be found at the book website given below.

1. *Jazz* (2nd edition)

Scott DeVeaux; Gary Giddins

W.W. Norton and Company ISBN 978-0-393-93706-0

Students can use either the hardcopy version or the e-book (cheaper). The 2nd edition is quite a bit different than the first edition so make sure you have the right one.

2. Access to the textbook website which includes streaming musical examples, , “Jazz Concepts” demonstrations, and Author Insight videos among other features.

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 streaming music examples, video demonstration of various jazz techniques, video interviews with the authors, and other materials.

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

Required Textbook Material. (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 DeVaux is being interviewed.)
2. Jazz Concepts. 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 understand, then check here first. In my notes for each unit, I direct you to specific parts of the website and the textbook where these concepts are discussed and demonstrated.)
3. Musical examples as discussed in class.
4. Readings as discussed in class.

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.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Five midterm listening tests (15% each).....	(60%)
Final exam (Date Time, Location: TBA).....	(40%)

COURSE STRUCTURE: (APPROXIMATE)

Week 1: Unit 1: The Roots of Jazz and Jazz in New Orleans
Week 2: Unit 2: New York in the 1920s
THURSDAY SEPT. 20. QUIZ #1

Week 3: Unit 3: Louis Armstrong and the First Great Soloists

Week 4: Unit 4: Swing.

THURSDAY OCT. 11 . QUIZ #2

Week 5: Unit 5: The Count and the Duke

Week 6: Unit 6: Swing Soloists and Rhythm Sections

THURSDAY OCT. 25. QUIZ #3 (Thursday Oct. 17)

Week 7: Unit 7: Bebop

Week 8: Unit 8: Post-Bop Performance and Composition. Modal jazz

THURSDAY NOV. 8 QUIZ # 4

Week 9: Unit 9: The avant-garde

Week 10: Fusion

THURSDAY NOV. 22 QUIZ #5

Week 11: Unit 11: Fusion continued

Week 12: Unit 12: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow