Music 98/198: “An Introduction to Jazz” DeCal

Syllabus

Spring 2017: 1 Unit, P/NP
Class time: TBA (Tentatively: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 7-9pm)
Facilitators: Nathan Le, Adam Aucoin, and Brian Thorsen
Instructor of Record: David Milnes
(Music Department Chair: Cindy Cox)

Prospectus (Question #1, 2, 3):

Welcome to the world of jazz!

In this course, we will introduce you to the basics of jazz theory through a lot of in-class playing to teach you how to improvise over chord changes and play a jazz solo. We will also listen to classic recordings of the jazz giants, like Miles Davis and John Coltrane, and cover a bit of jazz history to gain a greater appreciation for the evolution of jazz.

Possible topics:

- Reviewing major chords and scales
- How do you “swing” a note?
- What is a dominant chord?
- Adding a “blues note,” forming the blues scale
- Basic piano voicings (just focus on 3rd and 7th)
- Blues changes
- Recognizing iiVI progressions
- Learning how dorian and mixolydian modes function
- Learning “licks”
- Listening to essential recordings (i.e. Kind of Blue) to help open people’s ears to jazz
- “So What” voicings
Class Structure:

- Course materials fee: $85 covers membership in UC Jazz, allowing for access to practice rooms, instruments, amps, handouts, and other equipment. If you need a locker, you can get one through the Student Musical Activities (SMA) office right across from UCJ.
- Location: UCJ studio, in basement of Cesar Chavez Student Center
- We will be using a Spotify playlist and YouTube links for listening assignments. The best way to learn jazz is to get your ears used to listening to the greats, so we will do our best to highlight the most influential recordings!
- Auditions: held during week of September 5th in UCJ studio (more info below)
- First class: week of September 12th
- Max class size: 20 students
- Meet once/week for 110 minutes
- Office hours will be held by appointment, with review sessions held during the semester as necessary

Assignments/Grading (Question #4):

- P/NP class (need >70% to pass)
- Attendance and in-class assignments (50%)
  - Attendance Policy: Attending class is a critical part of the course, so we will mark you down 10% for every unexcused absence. If you miss 3 classes, then you will not pass the course.
- Weekly homework assignments checked for completion (15%)
- 3 Quizzes (5% each, 15% total)
- Attempt (with confidence!) an improvised solo for the class by the end of the semester (20%)

Audition information:

Auditions will be held during the first full week of classes in the UC Jazz studio, located at the end of the hall in the Cesar Chavez Student Center’s basement. You do not need any prior jazz experience to enroll in this class! However, you will need to have experience playing your instrument and have a basic understanding of classical theory in order to take this class. A signup sheet will be posted on the billboard outside of the UC Jazz studio, next to the Student Musical Activities (SMA) office, so please sign up for an audition spot by January 22nd. For your audition, you will:

- Play major scales in all keys on your primary instrument
- Sight read a short passage
- Play a prepared piece (any genre does not have to be jazz!)
**Tentative syllabus:**

**NB: This syllabus is subject to change to meet student need**

Week 1 (1/30, 2/1, 2/2): Introduction to jazz

- What instruments does everyone play?
- What is your musical background?
  - Do you know your major scales?
  - Do you know the notes of a minor7 chord?
  - Have you ever improvised before? If so, was it jazz or another genre?
  - Favorite jazz or nonjazz artist?

- Listen to recordings and recognize what a “swung 8th note” feels like; what do you notice? How would you define or classify this music? Rhythms? Swing? Chords? Form? Can you recognize the melody?
  - Miles Davis, “So What” (1959)
  - John Coltrane, “Giant Steps”

- Rhythmic exercises: clapping, counting, tapping, etc. with nonswing and swing feels.
  - 8th notes notated differently to show swing rhythm

- Scales: from classical theory to jazz theory...
  - Major chords → Major 7th chords
  - Natural minor scales
  - Introduce maj7 and min7 chords
  - Mention dom7 chord

- Using Spotify and/or YouTube for listening assignments

- Introduce: dominant 7th chord and scale
  - Write out chord tones, then play through the associated scales

- Introduce: major iiVI progression
  - Combining the min7 with the dom7, resolving to the maj7
  - In jazz, you will see chord changes at the top of each chart, which tells you which scales to use when you’re soloing. One of the most common progressions is the major iiVI.

- Homework for next week:
  - Practice major, minor, and dominant scales
  - Go through swung-8th note rhythm exercises
  - Listen to recordings on playlist, select at least one song you like and discuss what musical aspects you like about it for next week
Week 2 (2/6, 2/8, 2/9): The Basic Sound of Jazz; the iiVI progression

- Bring instruments every class from now on!
- Review scales, arpeggios exercises on instruments
- Swing 8th notes during ionian, dorian, and mixolydian scales
- “Autumn Leaves”
- Play parent scale over the iiVI changes
- HW:
  - Analyze first, note where all of the iiVI’s are
  - Practice recognizing iiVI’s using Real Book charts (handouts)
  - Listening:
    - “Blue Train,” John Coltrane
    - “Freddie Freeloader,” Miles Davis

Week 3 (2/13, 2/15, 2/16): The Blues

- Play through “Autumn Leaves” arpeggios
- Introduce: main tenets of soloing (essentially the basis of this class!)
  - Phrasing (2 bar phrases → 4 bar phrases)
  - Repetition and sequences
  - Hear what you play!
  - Rhythm is just as important as the pitches
- Listen to blues recordings
  - “Freddie Freeloader” (Miles)
  - “Blue Train” (Coltrane)
- Introduce: 12bar blues
  - Standard form, common changes
  - Common keys: F, Bb → explain how IIIV chords refer to the key of the blues
  - The “tonic key” is a dominant 7th chord, not a major 7th chord
- Blues scale
  - Compare with pentatonic scale
  - Importance of the “blues note”
- Play blues scale exercises over blues
- Have students work on soloing over blues
  - Work on phrasing and sequencing, repetition, hearing what you play
- HW:
- Practice blues scale, explore soloing with the blues note and main chord tones (3rd and 7th)

**Week 4 (2/20, 2/22, 2/23): More blues, iiVI review**

- Review: major iiVI progressions, write out notes of those chords

- Alternative chords for blues changes
  - Using a iiV substitution for a V chord

- Bebop blues changes
  - More iiV substitutions

- Other notes to solo over a blues with than the blues scale
  - Passing tones and the “bebop” scale
  - Mixolydian scale

- HW:
  - Prep for quiz, continue blues soloing
  - Listen to more blues recordings
  - Practice playing blues “heads,” as well as using licks and the blues scale to solo over a few choruses

**Week 5 (2/27, 3/1, 3/2): Quiz 1; more Blues licks, Blues heads**

- Quiz 1: scales, iiVI’s, blues changes, blues scales

- Play through Blues heads
  - “Blue Monk”
  - “Freddie Freeloader”

- Practice soloing over iiVs on loop

- Then practice soloing over iiVs in Autumn Leaves or Satin Doll (or others)

- HW: Continue working on soloing over iiV progressions

*The following classes will focus on individual jazz musicians and what they each contributed to the jazz repertoire. The schedule may change as the semester progresses.*

**Week 6 (3/6, 3/8, 3/9): Miles Davis**

- Mini review session: blues, iiVs, dorian and mixolydian modes, phrasing

- Brief history of Miles Davis

- Kind of Blue “So What”

- Learn “So What” voicings on piano (all students) and the bass line on instrument
● Introduce: dorian scale

● “Milestones”
  ○ Learn head, standard piano voicings
  ○ Solo over form, using dorian scale

● Listening
  ○ Birth of the Cool  focus on the arrangements
    ▪ “Boplicity”
    ▪ “Israel”
  ○ Miles Smiles
    ▪ “Footprints”
    ▪ “Freedom Jazz Dance”

Week 7 (3/13, 3/15, 3/16): John Coltrane

● Brief history of Coltrane

● Giant Steps (album)
  ○ Listen for harmonic rhythm, complexity of improvised solo

● “Mr. P.C."
  ○ Modified blues
  ○ Learn head
  ○ Play with class

● “My Favorite Things”
  ○ Play through head, introduce voicings

● “A Love Supreme”
  ○ Deep spiritual connection to his music
  ○ Possible chance for class to open up and play freely, not adhering to scales

● Listening
  ○ “Naima”
  ○ “Impressions”

Week 8 (3/20, 3/22, 3/23): Review; opening up the “Real Book”

● Review session: tailored to students needs
  ○ Licks
  ○ Tenets of soloing

● “My Favorite Things”

● “So What” and “Impressions”

Week 9 (4/3, 4/5, 4/6): Quiz 2; Bill Evans
• Quiz 2: “So What” voicings, analyzing ii-VI’s (based on “Satin Doll” and “Autumn Leaves” analyses), 12bar blues (revisited), listening on Miles Davis and John Coltrane

• Brief history of Bill Evans

• Recordings
  ○ Portrait in Jazz (album)
  ○ “Waltz for Debby”
  ○ “Autumn Leaves” (revisited)
  ○ “Nardis”

• Play through heads
  ○ “Take the A Train”
  ○ “All the Things You Are”
  ○ “Satin Doll”

Week 10 (4/10, 4/12, 4/13): Latin music

• Guest speaker: UC Jazz director, Ted Moore

• Back to “straight 8ths” feel

• In the Real Book, “Latin” can mean a number of different styles

• Key figures and their history emphasis on listening

• Antonio Carlos Jobim
  ○ “Girl from Ipanema”

• Brazilian music

• Listening for the difference between bossa nova, samba, and others

Week 11 (4/17, 4/19, 4/20): Quiz 3; Latinfusion, rock/funkfusion

• Quiz 3: Bill Evans, Latin bossanova music

• Chick Corea
  ○ “Spain”

• Herbie Hancock
  ○ “Watermelon Man”
  ○ “Cantaloupe Island”
  ○ “Tell Me A Bedtime Story”
  ○ Early blue note, to headhunters, to today...

• Work on solos over “Butterfly” vamp
Phrasing, sequencing, etc.
What to play over a single chord (F7)

- Weather Report
  - “Birdland”

Week 12 (4/24, 4/26, 4/27): Final class, take improvised solos; the state of jazz today

- Play a final improvised solo for the class!