I. Locator Information:

Instructor: Dr. Neal Finn

Course # and Name: Beginning Jazz Improvisation
Semester Credit Hours: 3
Day and Time Class Meets: TTH 1230-145
Office Location: R-211
Office Phone: 672-1397
Email address: nfinn@uncfsu.edu

II. Course Description:

A user-friendly course of study in the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic practices associated with the art of jazz improvisation, including the theoretical background associated with it and the stylistic and idiomatic considerations as well. Students learn through a “hands-on” approach, they are called upon to improvise jazz in actual playing situations on a weekly basis. Students also learn through the study of jazz harmony and theory and through analysis of classic jazz recordings made famous by the masters of the craft.

III. Disabled Student Services: In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1st Floor); 910-672-1203.

IV. Textbook:

V. Student Learning Outcomes –

Upon completion of the course the student will:

• gain an understanding of jazz chord progressions, scales, modes, rhythmic and melodic concepts commonly used in the jazz idiom. It will then be possible to apply these concepts to create original improvisations.

• acquire an understanding of jazz theory and the concepts associated with it. Among these concepts included will be: jazz harmony, extensions and their usage, voice leading, tension and release, melody and melodic tendencies (because improvising is actually spontaneous melodic composition).

• create original improvisations in a TONAL type setting (as opposed to free/atonal/avant-garde type of improvisation).

• Be introduced to and become familiar with some of the jazz repertoire and jazz melodies (“heads”) that are widely performed by jazz musicians and soloists. There will be an emphasis on quick analysis of chord progressions so that the student will be able to “make the changes.”

We will be working with the following types of jazz chord progressions and jazz tunes:

Modal – made up of one or two harmonic centers

Standards – the popular repertoire of jazz musicians, with all the traps and pitfalls

Blues – still so much a part of all we do in jazz improvisation through all of the style periods.

Bebop – the more difficult and challenging music associated with this period of jazz history and all of the stylistic considerations

VI. Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Weekly Progress
As much as anything else this will be a playing class. Be prepared to put your horn to your chops, hands on the keyboard, or whatever you do to produce a sound on a weekly basis. No holding back. Everyone in the class is expected to play.

Strive to improve on a weekly basis. Strive to make jazz improvisation a part of you and a personal form of musical expression. Making the same mistakes week after week is what happens with little effort applied to the course.
**Considerations for Weekly Progress**

RHYTHM!!!!

Time
Style
Note and Scale Choices

Melodic Content – does it make any sense or just endless streams of notes?

Incorporation of Discussed Materials into Improvisations

Following the Form – Making the Changes

**EXAMINATIONS**

There will be a short quiz on a WEEKLY basis related to jazz theory concepts discussed in class. Anything from previous class sessions or quizzes is fair game for inclusion.

**Mid-Term Examination**

Covering jazz theory and formal concepts discussed in class. The date for the mid-term examination will be October 11.

**Final Examination**

The final examination will consist of two parts:

**Written** – this will be a comprehensive theory examination covering all materials discussed during the course of the semester.

**Playing** – students are required to demonstrate ability to improvise effectively over the following chord progressions. You are required to know the melody and chord progression *FROM MEMORY*. No lead sheets allowed.

* a blues – “Billie’s Bounce”, Sonny Moon for Two” or “Blue Seven”
* a sequence of 11-V-I utilizing all twelve keys
* a third tune of your choice from the semester repertoire (other than a blues)

The date for the final examination for this semester will be

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**Examination/Quiz Policy**

The only way that is fair to all students is that everyone takes the same examination/quiz on the same day and time. I do not give make-up examinations.
Grading Distribution

25% Attendance and Participation
20% Theory Quizzes
15% Weekly Progress
15% Mid-Term Examination
25% Final Examination (written and playing)

FSU Grading Scale

A 92-100
B 83-91
C 73-82
D 64-72

Course Outline

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Music</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Intro to course/content</td>
<td>Improvising in one key</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to chord/key relationship</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Quiz #1 – chords/key centers</td>
<td>“Milestones” (Miles Davis)</td>
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<td>Chord construction (major-minor-dominant)</td>
<td>“So What” (Miles Davis)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Quiz #2</td>
<td>Improv in four random keys</td>
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<td>Dominant chord/major key relations</td>
<td>“Maiden Voyage” (Herbie Hancock)</td>
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<td>Song Forms: Two-Part, AABA</td>
<td>“Silver’s Serenade” (Horace Silver)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Quiz #3 – ChordSCALE identification</td>
<td>“Tune Up” (Miles Davis)</td>
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<td>Extensions. Chord spelling. Song forms. Key</td>
<td>“Maiden Voyage” (review)</td>
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<td>center relations</td>
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<td>Jazz styles, use of accents, style periods</td>
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<td>Introducing the ii-V progression</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Quiz #4 - covering all previous material</td>
<td>“Sonny Moon for Two” (Rollins)</td>
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<td>Introducing “the blues.” Significance and</td>
<td>Blues in Minor</td>
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<td>Development. Minor pentatonic scale.</td>
<td>“Watermelon Man” (Herbie Hancock)</td>
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<td>Using “blue notes.”</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>The blues continued. Examples of dom, minor,</td>
<td>“Duke’s Place” (Duke Ellington)</td>
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<td>minor, bebop. Blues “licks”</td>
<td>“Summertime” (Gershwin)</td>
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<td>“Freddie the Freeloader” (Miles )</td>
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<td>“Footprints” (Wayne Shorter)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Review for mid-term.</td>
<td>“Billie’s Bounce” (Charlie Parker)</td>
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<td>Introducing the jazz repertoire</td>
<td>“Impressions” (John Coltrane)</td>
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<td>“Song For My Father” (Horace Silver)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mid-term examination covering</td>
<td>“Satin Doll” (Duke Ellington)</td>
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<td>everything up to this point</td>
<td>“Killer Joe” (Benny Golson)</td>
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</table>
Introducing the jazz repertoire

9 Introducing rhythm changes. Introducing the 16 measure cycle
“Cotton Tail” (Duke Ellington)
“Doxy” (Sonny Rollins)

10 Quiz #5
More 16 measure cycle, rhythm changes
“Flyin’ Home” (Lionel Hampton)
The Preacher” (Horace Silver)
“Oleo” (Sonny Rollins)

11 Quiz #6
Introducing whole tone scale and #11
“Take the A Train” (Billy Strayhorn)
“Blue Room” (Rogers/Hart)
“Yesterdays” (Jerome Kern)

12 iiV chord progression in all twelve keys
“Lover” (Rogers/Hart)
“Sister Sadie” (Horace Silver)

13 Jazz repertoire continued.
“Shaw Nuff” (Dizzy Gillespie)
“Bye Bye Blackbird”
ii-V sequence in all twelve keys

14 Quiz #7
Jazz Repertoire Continued
“Nutville” (Horace Silver)
“St. Thomas” (Sonny Rollins)
“Pent-Up House” (Sonny Rollins)

15 Introduction of things to come
Jazz repertoire continued
“Have You Met Miss Jones” (Rogers)
“All Blues” (Miles Davis)

16 Review for final examination

Band In A Box

I will be posting via Blackboard the MP4 files based on Band In A Box software program for your practice sessions.

Teaching Strategies

Live playing sessions, lecture/demonstration, audio/video review and analysis, computer application
**Selected Bibliography**


Haerle, Dan, *The Jazz Language*. Hialeah, FL: Columbia Pictures, 1985


**Improvisation Computer Software**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Company/Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SmartMusic</td>
<td>Coda Music Software</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band In A Box</td>
<td>PG Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jammer Professional</td>
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<tr>
<td>MiBac Jazz Improvisation</td>
<td>MiBac Music Software</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp, Version 4.2</td>
<td>Microworks</td>
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**Instructional Video/DVD**