



Beijing Jiaotong University

2020 Summer Session

MUS 110 History of Jazz

Course Outline

Term: July 13-August 7, 2020

Class Hours: 18:00-19:50 (Monday through Friday)

Course Code: MUS 110

Instructor: Bert Seager, jazz pianist, composer, Faculty NEC

Home Institution: New England Conservatory, Boston Massachusetts

Office Hours: Monday to Thursday 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Email: bert@bertseager.com

Credit: 4

Class Hours: This course will have 52 class hours, including 32 lecture hours, professor 8 office hours, 8 one-hour TA discussion sessions, 4 one-hour review sessions.

Course description and goals:

From its very beginning about one hundred years ago and throughout its entire history, jazz music has evolved by bringing together elements of overlapping cultures. Understanding its evolution as a reflection of the places and times it sprang from helps us appreciate the mystery, majesty, and genius of its creators.

In this course you will learn not only the relevant facts of American history that allowed this indigenous art form to flourish, but also gain an understanding of the musical innovations that propelled this art form to the future.

In this course you will gain an appreciation of how to listen and understand the music. Jazz has always excited people and I trust that this will be the same for you.

We will, of course, read, and listen intently. In class we will also drum on our laps, walk/dance to the music, and sing along with it; all as a way to understand, hear, and feel it better. You will begin to both intellectually and intuitively sense the basic symmetries and forms of the music. And then be able to



grasp the music's inner meanings, its ties to the blues, and its relationship with popular culture and high-brow artistic culture.

Learning to how listen, and by increasing your familiarity over time with the sounds that the individual instruments make, gives rise to a new depth of appreciation.. We will learn about the roles that each instrument plays and the innovations and departures from those roles that these great musicians showed us. My goal is to help you begin to discern for yourselves the skill level and breadth of imagination of the performer, composer, and arranger so that you leave class with a desire to listen further to the artists you enjoyed the most, exploring more deeply the artists that piqued your interest, and cultivating a life-long love of this music.

Required Text: Ted Gioia, *The History of Jazz*, second edition (Oxford University Press, 2011) ISBN 798-0-19-539970-7.

Everyone must demonstrate that they have purchased the text book, either an actual hard copy (preferred) or a version in an e-reader and that have a listening device where they can download and hear MP3s. Other readings will be sent out via email PDF.

Course requirements:

Participation in class is not only fun but essential to pass this class. The listening and musical skills we will develop are learned by doing. We will spend some time practicing in class as a group. Especially on Fridays. Everyone will be called upon to demonstrate before the group. There will be reading and listening assignments on most nights which you are expected to do. Your grade will reflect your ability to contribute to the discussion about the reading and listening assignments. Spot quizzes to identify music will be given.

In-class work will also include listening to jazz recordings, viewing videos, and having students respond to these activities through class discussion. I will always lead the discussion by asking questions.

Two short papers about musical pieces will be assigned. Your writing should be informed by our classwork and your reading, and will demonstrate your repeated close listening of a track of music. And a third short paper will be a review/critique of a live jazz show of your choice that you will attend.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. BJTU policy is that any student who has more than three absences will fail the course. Any unexcused absence may impact a students grade. BJTU requires a medical certificate to be excused. Arriving late or leaving early will count as a partial absence.

Grading:

BJTU awards grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, and F. Most colleges and universities do not award transfer credit for grades of D or F.

In this course, grading will be based on the following:



Attendance and participation and quizzes: 30%

Three papers 15% each: 45%

Final in-class essay/listening exam 25%

Course schedule

Week # 1 Precursors of Jazz: Up to 1890s

The Blues - origins

New Orleans Jazz - the advent of recording technology

Chicago Jazz

New York piano jazz.

paper assigned - due Monday

In class musical topics to practice together: pulse - meter - and call and response

Week # 2 Kansas City Jazz

Duke Ellington

The Swing Era

The Advent of Radio

The Birth of Bebop

second paper assigned - due Monday

In class musical topics to practice together: the blues scale and blues form

Week # 3 Bebop

Hard Bob

The Blue Note recordings

Miles Davis

John Coltrane

third paper assigned - due Monday

In class musical topics to practice together: subdivision of the beat, triplets and even eighth-notes.

Week # 4 The Fragmentation of Jazz Styles

Free Jazz

Fusion

European Jazz

Latin Jazz

Current Artists and trends

The advent of the internet

In class musical topics to practice together: singing or talking along with a recording.

Final Exam.