



National Taiwan University of Science and Technology

2021 Winter Program

MUS 110 History of Jazz

Course Outline

Course Code: MUS 110

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

Home Institution: New England Conservatory, Boston Massachusetts

Email: bert@bertseager.com

Credit: 4

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 listen intently. You will learn about rhythm by drumming on your laps, marching in-place to the music, and even, on your own, singing 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.



By learning to how listen, you will increase your familiarity with the sounds that the individual instruments make, giving rise to a new depth of your appreciation. We will learn about the roles that each instrument plays and the innovations and departures from those roles that these great musicians discovered.

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.

Course requirements:

We are still unable to meet in person due to the pandemic. This requires that the class be taught via pre-recorded lectures. This consists of about seven hours of lectures per week that you will watch. Once each week I will require you to meet with me together as a class on Zoom remotely to go over what you have watched. We will also cover how to do the assignments, and I will answer any questions that you may have about the content and the work that is required of you.

A short paper about a musical piece will be assigned. Your writing should be informed by our classwork and will demonstrate your repeated close listening to a track of music.

Instead of a text book we are using a video : Ken Burns 10-episode film documentary “Jazz.” Available on iTunes, YouTube, Amazon Prime. It is a wonderful movie, with great music, and performances, interviews and history, and it will help ignite your passion for this great art form. There is a version out there with Chinese subtitles. I have included excerpts of this in my lectures.

Attendance and Participation: Attendance for the four Zoom sessions is required. NTUST policy is that any student who has more than three “absences” will fail the course. Any unexcused absence will lower your grade. NTUST requires a medical certificate to be excused. Arriving late or leaving early will count as a partial absence.

Grading:

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 25%

One paper: 20%

Two assignments: 30%

Final in-class essay/listening exam 25%

A+:4.3——95-100

A :4.0——87-94

A -:3.7——82-86

B+:3.3——78-81

B :3.0——75-77

B -:2.7——71-74

C+:2.3——68-70

C :2.0——65-67

C -:1.7——61-64

D :1.0——55-60

E :0.0——49-54

X :0.0——0



WEEK # 1

Lesson # 1 - Introduction - US History backdrop

63 minutes -

Lesson # 2A- Introduction to Rhythm

33 minutes

Lesson # 2B - The Blues

1 hour 22 minutes

Assignment # 1 - Mapping Blues Choruses

21 minutes



Episode # 1 - Ken Burns Jazz - “Gumbo”	1 hour and 24 minutes
Lesson # 3B - Jazz DNA - and its birth	42 minutes
Lesson # 4 - The birth of Jazz	52 minutes
Lesson # 5A - The Jazz Age - Louis Armstrong	45 minutes
Lesson # 5B - Louis Armstrong - innovator	39 minutes

Week # 2 The years 1928 - 1942

Lesson # 7A - Duke Ellington - Cotton Club	44 minutes
Lesson # 7B - Duke Ellington - His Music	47 minutes
Lesson # 8A - The Depression - Benny Goodman	1 hour 7 minutes
Assignment # 2 - Singing Miles Davis Solo	14 minutes
Lesson # 8B - Art Tatum - Dancers - Billy Holiday	24 minutes
Lesson # 9A - Big Band Era	45 minutes
Lesson # 10A - The Swing Singers - Billie Holiday	49 minutes

Week # 3 The years 1943 to 1963

Lesson # 11B - Koko - The birth of Bebop	43 minutes
Lesson # 12B - Bird and Diz	36 minutes
Lesson # 13A - Miles Davis - with Bird	45 minutes
Lesson # 13B - Miles Davis - Kind of Blue	46 minutes
Assignment # 3 - Paper on listening to a piece	20 minutes



Lesson # 14A - Miles - the 2nd Quartet	47 minutes
Lesson # 14B - John Coltrane - The tree of Jazz	50 minutes
Lesson # 15A - Hard Bop - Blue Note Records	45 minutes

Week # 4 The years 1963 - 1975

Lesson # 15B - John Coltrane -	46 minutes
Lesson # 16A - John Coltrane - A Love Supreme	45 minutes
Lesson # 17A - Free Jazz: Questioning	53 minutes
Lesson # 19 A - Electric/Funk Fusion	50 minutes
Lesson # 20 B - Summary - Final Exam Instructions	23 minutes