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MUS 495.04: Advanced Jazz Theory and Improvisation

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CREDITS: MUSIC 495 – Spring Semester 2 credits

MEETING TIMES: Tuesday and Thursday from 6:10 pm to 7:00 pm, Room 205

PREREQUISITES: MUS 142 & MUS 143, or consent of instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Advanced Jazz Theory and Improvisation covers a panoply of materials and information, including basic review of MUS 142-143; tune analysis; transcription; analysis of improvisation techniques; and various approaches to improvising over standard tunes. All course content is geared toward developing skills necessary for jazz improvisation.

GRADING: on a traditional basis of 90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D; below 60% = F.

- Transcription Assignment 100
- Mid-Term – written 100
- Final – playing 100
- Final – written 100
- Quizzes/Class Participation 100

500 points

EXTRA CREDIT: Up to fifty (50) points will be given for each additional transcription performed from memory and concomitant legible draft submitted.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is equated with attitude and effort and will be a critical factor in borderline grades.

REQUIRED MATERIALS: Each class member is responsible for his or her instrument except for the piano, which will be provided. Each student is required to bring a music staff notebook and a day planner to each class. The required text is Jazz Piano Voicing Skills by Dan Haerle.

CLASS PROCEDURE: Bring your instrument to class every day unless otherwise instructed. Performance in class will be a primary activity. Classes will also include listening to specific jazz performances, lectures and discussion.

Learning improvisation skills will enhance your ability to express yourself on your instrument. This is not about being perfect; rather, it is about relaxing in the moment, finding a point of focus, and finding the balance between initiation and response. Set the intention of learning the information you receive in this class so well that you internalize it, and from that place you can let go of thinking and simply express yourself through the language of music.