Playing Jazz
K40.1316
Gallatin School
New York University
Spring 2012
Tuesday 3:30-6:10PM
Drummers Collective

Bill Rayner
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Off.Hr. Tues. 2-3, 6-8PM
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Syllabus

Course Goal:
The goal of this course is to give student musicians the opportunity to begin to learn, or improve their existing ability to play Jazz.

Method:
This course will explore the concepts and fundamentals of playing Jazz, especially those of improvisation. Students will learn chord structures, modes, chord progressions, rhythmic applications, song forms and options for organizing an improvisation. Students will learn by playing, listening and analyzing examples of improvisation to help discover the ambient factors of their organization. Class lectures will focus on and reinforce concepts proposed in the texts with emphasis on their application.

Student Requirements:
1) To learn the concepts and/or philosophies of playing jazz.
2) To learn theoretical concepts behind the harmonic, rhythmic, melodic and formal structure of standard jazz repertoire.
3) To learn the basic chords, chord progressions, and scales needed to play jazz.
4) To explore the nature and practice of improvisation in music through, listening, readings and practice.
5) To be able to improvise during the performance of standard jazz tunes at a level commensurate with a semester of study.

Student Assignments:
Weekly: 1) Practicing new tunes, scales, chord progressions, etc. that will be assigned
2) Listening to professional jazz musicians
The 10th class: A written exam on concepts, tune structures, chords, and scales.
Final Playing Exam: 1) To play some unprepared tunes
2) To play some prepared tunes
3) To show some facility improvising on their instrument

Required Books and Materials:
Patterns for Jazz, Jerry Coker, Warner Bros. Publications

**Recommended Books:**

*Building a Jazz Vocabulary: A Resource for Learning Jazz Improvisation*, Mike Steinel


*Improvising Jazz*, Jerry Coker, Simon and Schuster

**Grading Policy:**
Letter grade. Students will be graded according to (1) their weekly work, (2) written work, and (3) the final playing exam. These grades will average out to your final grade. Your playing grade will be judged by the improvement commensurate with your playing level at the beginning of the course. Attendance, tardiness, and leaving class early will affect final grade.

**Approximate Class Schedule**

1/24
1) Get acquainted
2) Short talk about jazz vocabulary
3) Review syllabus
4) Play

1/31
1) Introduction of theories and philosophies
2) Play

2/7
1) Discussion of ensemble roles (soloing and accompanying)
2) Forms, rhythm
3) Play

2/14 and 2/21
1) Jazz harmony, chord extensions, etc.
2) Play

2/28 and 3/6
1) Chords, alternate blues progressions
2) Play

3/20
1) Scales, modes
2) Play
Spring Break March 12-16

3/27
1) Written test review
2) Play

4/3
1) Written test
2) Play

4/10
Play

4/17
Final playing test review

4/24
Final playing exam, (instrumental and unprepared tunes)