

Course Syllabus

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Syllabus for MUS 176 Jazz Ensemble, Fall 2018

Course meets: Thursdays 3:30- 5:20pm, MM 220

Instructor: Michael Dessen, mdessen@uci.edu (<mailto:mdessen@uci.edu>)

Office hour: Tuesdays at 3:30pm in CAC 3023, and by appointment

Course description and goals

This course is a performance workshop focused on small group jazz. Students should use this course to continue their study of the shared language of jazz traditions, while also beginning to explore the related challenge of finding one's own individual expression. The main goals of this course are:

- To help you improve your skills as a musical improviser and collaborator
- To expose you to diverse repertoire, methods and ideas from jazz traditions

Our repertoire will depend on the instrumentation and experience levels of the enrolled students, so it will be finalized in the first two weeks of the quarter. It will most likely include works by Yusef Lateef (1920-2013), Carla Bley (b. 1936) and Charles Mingus (1922-1979), as well as the collaborative project described below.

Please note that although our public performance on the Jazz Combos concert is in week 7 on Wednesday, Nov. 14, we will continue to hold class and work together throughout the remaining weeks of the quarter.

Collaborative project

This project may determine one of the pieces we will include in our performance, and it will give students an opportunity to explore jazz traditions in a personal way as well as to practice creative collaboration. Through group discussions, you will identify a piece of jazz music that was created before 1990 and was intended by its creators to connect with a social or political issue which you all feel is somehow relevant today. After the group agrees on a piece, you will each bring some ideas to share in class about how to arrange it for our ensemble.

You must identify the piece by our class meeting on October 18 (week 3), and then bring your arrangement ideas to class on Oct. 25. In the first class, I will offer suggestions on how to do research on pieces, how to facilitate your conversations, and how to work on arrangement ideas.

Coursework and requirements

1. **Attendance/participation:** You must arrive each week on time and participate fully in all rehearsals/discussions.
2. **Participation in class concert:** You must perform on the jazz combos concert on Wednesday, Nov. 14 at 8pm, and be available that afternoon for a soundcheck (time TBD).
3. **Regular practice/exercises:** You are expected to dedicate at least 30 minutes per day of your practice routine to working on our repertoire. Practicing with others is encouraged.
4. **Participation in the collaborative project:** You must participate fully in this project, which is detailed above and will be discussed more in class.
5. **Beginning questionnaire and final self-evaluation:** You must complete one questionnaire at the beginning of the quarter. At the end of the quarter, you must complete a brief, one-paragraph self-evaluation, due by the end of exam week, in which you explain the grade you think you deserve and why, based on the grading criteria below and other information on this syllabus.

Grading and absence policy

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

- 50%: Attending and actively participating in all classes and in the Nov. 14 performance (see #1 and #2 above)
- 40%: Demonstrating each week in class through your performance that you have kept up with regular practice of our repertoire, and are engaging fully in the collaborative project (see #3 and #4 above)
- 10%: Completing the questionnaire and self-evaluation (see #5 above)

Given our working method in this course, each class meeting is an important step in the music's development and you are therefore expected to attend all class meetings and complete all assignments on time. Your grade will be lowered if you miss classes other than for a genuine emergency or illness. If you are sick on the day of a class meeting, you should visit the doctor and email me documentation of the doctor visit. If you have an emergency that prevents you from attending class, you should inform me by email the day of the class and be able to provide written documentation. If you expect to miss a class meeting for any other reason, you should speak with me in advance to discuss the impact on your course grade.

In class device usage

Unless you are using a phone, laptop, tablet or other electronic device as part of your musical instrument, I expect you to silence it and put it away when class begins, meaning across the room and not within reach. We need everyone's complete focus in class to make best use of our limited time and even when you are not participating in a section of rehearsal, you are expected to be fully engaged with what is happening. If there is some emergency requiring your attention to a device in class please speak to me beforehand.

Special accommodations

If you have a disability that affects your performance in this course, you must visit the [Disabilities Services](#)

[Center \(https://dsc.uci.edu/\)](https://dsc.uci.edu/) at the beginning of the quarter to ensure a contract is sent to me, then contact me once I have received the DSC contract to discuss any necessary arrangements.

In addition, please note that immigration-related emergencies, including those faced by undocumented students, may qualify for accommodations in the same way as medical or other emergencies.

Academic Integrity

As stated on the website for [UCI's Office of Academic Integrity and Student Conduct \(https://aisc.uci.edu/students/academic-integrity/index.php\)](https://aisc.uci.edu/students/academic-integrity/index.php), "academic misconduct, in its most basic form, is gaining or attempting to gain a grade, degree, or other academic accomplishment by any means other than through your own work. No student shall engage in any activity that involves attempting to receive a grade by means other than honest effort, and shall not aid another student who is attempting to do so."

This course is highly collaborative, but you must still be careful to avoid representing another person's work as your own, and you must follow all the UCI [policies \(https://aisc.uci.edu/policies/academic-integrity/AcademicIntegrityPolicyApproved-04.23.15.pdf\)](https://aisc.uci.edu/policies/academic-integrity/AcademicIntegrityPolicyApproved-04.23.15.pdf) on academic integrity. Please let me know if you have questions about these policies at any time.

Getting help

If you feel you need help to succeed in this course, please start by making an appointment to see me or visiting me during my office hour (listed above). It is important that you do this early rather than later in the quarter. You can always ask instructors for guidance at any time, but contacting them towards the end of a course is typically far too late to have an impact on your coursework and grade.

Course Summary:

| Date | Details |
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