

JAZZ APPRECIATION: Black American Music Since 1900
07:700:291

Instructor: Bob Bernotas bob@jazzbob.com
Tuesday 10:20-11:40 / Friday 12:00-1:20
Rutgers Cinema One, Livingston Campus

We have a natural human tendency to take the safe route – to do the thing we know will work – rather than taking a chance. But that’s the antithesis of jazz, which is all about being in the present. Jazz is about being in the moment, at every moment. It’s about trusting yourself to respond on the fly. If you can allow yourself to do that, you never stop exploring, you never stop learning, in music or in life.

– **pianist-composer Herbie Hancock**

The bottom line of any country is, what did we contribute to the world? We contributed Louis Armstrong.

– **singer Tony Bennett**

Jazz is America's greatest cultural gift to the world, a gift originally fashioned by the first and second generations of free black Americans from diverse musical sources. Today jazz, having blossomed from its humble folk roots, is performed, listened to, and loved by people in every nation on the planet, a true "world music."

This course surveys the evolution of jazz in America, from its roots in the black folk music of the 1800s to its current styles and genres. It also examines the influence that jazz and jazz musicians have had on popular music and vice versa. *And a particular emphasis of this course is learning how to listen to and appreciate recorded and live jazz performances.*

Class presentations will feature recorded audio examples as a way to illustrate and enhance the course material and stimulate discussions. From time to time I also will email you video clips of some of the artists we’ve covered in class. Assignments include required readings, radio listening, and concert attendance. While the material is targeted to non-music majors – absolutely no jazz or general musical background is required – the course also will be of equal interest to experienced musicians and jazz fans.



Assessment

The course will serve to satisfy SAS requirements for the following Core Curriculum Goals:
AH:p.: Analyze arts in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies. Student achievement of these Core Goal wills be measured in the various class assignments and projects (*see details below*).

Required Texts

John F. Szwed, *Jazz 101*, New York: Hyperion, 2000. ISBN: 978-0195012699

Rex Stewart, *Jazz Masters of the 30s*, New York: DaCapo, 1982. ISBN: 978-0306801594

Amazon links for these books can be found on www.jazzbob.com.

Other required readings will be posted on www.jazzbob.com.

The lesson plan, below, outlines the reading that should be completed prior to each class. Generally, the readings will be expanded on during class meetings and included in the exams.

Website

All class handouts, assignments, additional readings, and examples of musical concepts and jazz genres introduced in class will be posted on my website, www.jazzbob.com, and can be accessed via the home page by clicking the link, “**For Rutgers Students.**”

Grading

Grade assessments are based on the following components:

1. midterm and final exams
2. concert review assignment
3. listening journal
4. class attendance
5. class participation

Components are weighted as follows toward your final course grade:

- midterm exam – 1/3
- final exam – 1/3
- concert review, listening journals, class participation – 1/3

Exams

Exams will consist of a **written portion** and a **listening portion**. The written component will require knowledge of historical facts, key individuals and their importance, and the forces that have shaped the evolution of jazz. The listening component may include identifying the style or form, as well as other key elements, of a particular recording.

Concert Reviews

Students must attend *one* concert performance selected from a list to be announced. (These can be on-campus events.) After the concert you will write and submit a concise concert review based on guidelines outlined in a separate handout. Reviews should be *no less than 300 words, typed only*. **It is recommended that reviews be submitted within one week after the performance, either in class or by email.** (Listening to a recorded version of a performance is *not* an acceptable alternative to attending.)

Listening Assignments

Beginning with the second week of the course, students are required to listen to *one hour of jazz radio programming each week* and keep a journal of their listening. (You may, of course, listen to more than that.) **Listening Journals will be handed in three times this semester for evaluation.** (The dates are specified in the course outline.) The full completion of this assignment is critical – you cannot do well in this course without spending adequate time on it.

The journals should be typed only, and may be submitted to me either in class on the days they are due or by email (as attachments) by midnight of that day. Inordinately late submissions will be dropped one grade. A discussion of Listening Journal formats and content, and a list of suggested jazz radio programs, appears in a separate handout.

Attendance and Participation

Since listening to jazz is a central focus of this class, **regular and consistent attendance** is essential for the successful completion of the course. An inordinate number of unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your semester grade by one point: i.e., an “A” is lowered to a “B+,” etc.

Students are encouraged to raise questions and offer their reactions and opinions about the topics and the music presented in class.

Learning Outcomes

Students who regularly attend class, keep up with the assigned readings, and complete all of the assignments in a timely manner can expect to come away from the course with the following skills:

- Ability to trace the historical and sociological contexts of jazz’s origin and evolution
- Ability to identify distinctive African-American aesthetic elements inherent in the jazz tradition, as well in American popular music generally
- Ability to discuss the development and characteristics of specific jazz styles and genres
- Ability to explain how jazz has both influenced and been influenced by other forms of music
- Ability to listen to live and recorded jazz performances with a greater depth of appreciation and enjoyment.

In addition, it is expected that students will gain a special insight into the lives, careers, contributions, and personalities of the creative people who have made, and continue to make, this vital music.

LESSON PLAN

Readings marked with an asterisk [*] can be found on www.jazzbob.com.

Week 1:

9/5: Course Introduction; Student Introductions

9/8: The Elements of Music; What Is Jazz?; The Instruments of Jazz

Reading:

* Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “On the Importance of Jazz”

Jazz101: Chapters 3, 4, 6

Week 2:

9/12: Jazz and the African-American Aesthetic

Reading: *Jazz101*: Chapters 7, 8

9/15: The Blues, Jazz, and Popular Music

Reading: *Jazz101*: Chapter 5

Week 3:

9/19: Ragtime and Early Jazz

Reading: *Jazz101*: Chapters 11, 12

9/22 Who Was Louis Armstrong and Why Is He Important?

Reading: *Jazz Masters of the 30s*: “Boy Meets King (Louis Armstrong)” (pp. 39-50)

Week 4:

9/25 The First Great Jazz Soloists

Reading:

Jazz Masters of the 30s: “Coleman Hawkins: The Father of the Tenor Saxophone” (pp. 60-70)

Jazz Masters of the 30s: “The Cutting Sessions” (pp. 143-150)

9/29: Swing and the Rise of the Big Bands

Reading:

Jazz 101: Chapter 14

Jazz Masters of the 30s: “Smack! Memories of Fletcher Henderson” (pp. 19-27)

* Bob Bernotas, “The Birth of Swing”

Week 5:

10/3: The Legacy of Duke Ellington

Reading: *Jazz Masters of the 30s*: “Ellingtonia” (pp. 80-139)

10/6: The Kansas City Scene and Count Basie

Reading: * Bob Bernotas, “The Definition of Jazz”

***** FRIDAY, 10/6: FIRST LISTENING JOURNAL DUE *****

Week 6:

10/10: The End of “The Swing Era”

Reading: * Bob Bernotas, “The Tradition Continues”

10/13: Jazz Piano Styles

Reading:

Jazz Masters of the 30s: “Genius in Retrospect: Art Tatum” (pp. 181-191)

* Bob Bernotas: “Genius on the Edge: Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk”

Week 7:

10/17: The Elusive Art of Jazz Singing

Reading:

Jazz101: Appendix 1

* Jody Rosen, “Frank Sinatra and Billie Holiday: They Did It Their Way”

***** FRIDAY, 10/20: MIDTERM EXAM *****

Week 8:

10/24 The Bebop “Revolution”

Reading: *Jazz101*: Chapters 16, 17

10/27: Hearing the Subtleties and Nuances in Jazz Performances (Listening Session)

Reading: * Brent Vaartstra, “How Phrasing and Space Can Radically Improve Your Solos”

Week 9:

10/31: The Afro-Latino Connection: Afro-Cuban Jazz, Mambo, and Beyond

Reading:

* Bobby Sanabria, “Afro-Cuban Jazz: The Journey”

* Bob Bernotas, “Our Man from Havana: Paquito D’Rivera”

11/3: “Summertime” and “Laura”: Familiar Songs, Original Stories (Listening Session)

Reading: * Gary Giddens: “Fifty Years of ‘Body and Soul’”

Week 10:

11/7: “The Birth of the Cool”

Reading: *Jazz 101*: Chapters 18, 19

11/10: Hard Bop, Soul Jazz, Vocalese

Reading: *Jazz 101*: Chapters, 20, 21

***** FRIDAY, 11/10: SECOND LISTENING JOURNAL DUE *****

Week 11:

11/14: Two Towering Figures of Modern Jazz: Miles Davis and John Coltrane

Reading:

- * Michael Ullman, "Miles Davis in Retrospect"
- * "Coltrane on Coltrane"

11/17: Three Modern Jazz Giants: Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus, Rahsaan Roland Kirk

Reading:

- * Bob Bernotas, "Recent Rollins"
- * "Sonny Rollins Speaks"
- * Bob Bernotas, "Dark Passions, Bright Moments"

Week 12:

11/21: THURSDAY SCHEDULE

11/22: FRIDAY SCHEDULE: NO CLASS

Week 13:

11/28: Chamber Jazz, Free Jazz

Reading: *Jazz 101*: Chapters 23

12/1: Jazz Around the World: Europe and Brazil

Reading:

Jazz 101: Chapter 29

- * Bob Bernotas, "A Day in a (Double) Life: Claudio Roditi"
- * Bob Bernotas, "From Russia with Jazz: Valery Ponomarev"

Week 14:

12/5: Motown, Funk, Jazz Funk

Reading: *Jazz 101*: Chapter 27

12/8: Jazz Fusion, The Loft Scene, The "Young Lions" Movement

Reading:

Jazz 101: Chapters 24, 28

- * Bob Bernotas, "One Divided by Four Equals Infinity: The World Saxophone Quartet"
- * Bob Bernotas, "Brass Fantasies: Lester Bowie"

Week 15:

12/12: The Future of Jazz (Does Jazz Have a Future?)

Reading: * Will Layman, "Jazz Ain't Dead, But Charlie Parker Is – So Let's Move On, Shall We?"

*****TUESDAY, 12/12: THIRD LISTENING JOURNAL DUE *****

***** FINAL EXAM: TBA *****