

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

**Instructor: Bob Bernotas bob@jazzbob.com**  
**Tuesday & Friday 10:20-11:40**  
**Rutgers Cinema Three, 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 central 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 and weekly radio listening. 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 will be measured in the various class assignments and projects (*see details below*).

### Required Texts

- John F. Szwed, *Jazz 101*, New York: Hachette Books, 2000. ISBN 9 780786 884964
- Rex Stewart, *Jazz Masters of the 30s*, New York: DaCapo Press, 1982. ISBN 9 780306 801594

**These books are available at the Barnes and Noble Bookstore (100 Somerset St.) or via Amazon. Other required readings will be posted on [www.jazzbob.com](http://www.jazzbob.com).**

The lesson plan, below, outlines the reading assignments 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](http://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. weekly radio listening reports
3. class attendance and participation

Components are weighted as follows toward your final course grade:

- midterm exam – 1/3
- final exam – 1/3
- weekly jazz radio listening reports; class participation – 1/3

### Exams

Exams will consist of a **written portion** (short essay) 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.

### Weekly Radio Listening Reports

**Beginning with the second week of the course**, students are required to listen to **one hour of jazz radio programming each week** and produce a report on their listening. (You may, of course, listen to more than that.) **These Weekly Jazz Radio Listening Reports will be handed in three times this semester for evaluation.** (The dates are specified in the course outline.) A full discussion of the assignment appears in a separate handout.

### **Attendance and Participation**

Since learning how to listen to jazz is a central focus of this course, we will spend a considerable amount of class time doing that, as we break down and analyze the elements that make up this music. For this reason, **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 successfully complete all of the written 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 forms, styles, and genres
- Ability to explain how jazz has both influenced and been influenced by other genres of music
- Ability to listen to live and recorded jazz performances – and musical performances, *in general* – with a greater depth of appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment.

In addition, it is expected that students will gain a special insight into the lives, careers, 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](http://www.jazzbob.com).

## Week 1:

**9/4: Course Introduction; Student Introductions**

**9/7: 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:

**9/11: Jazz and the African-American Aesthetic**

**Reading:** *Jazz101*: Chapters 7, 8

**9/14: The Blues, Jazz, and Popular Music**

**Reading:** *Jazz101*: Chapter 5

## Week 3:

**9/18: Ragtime and Early Jazz**

**Reading:** *Jazz101*: Chapters 11, 12

**9/21: 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)

**9/28: 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:

**10/2: The Legacy of Duke Ellington**

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

**10/5: The Essence of Swing: Count Basie**

**Reading:** \* Bob Bernotas, "The Definition of Jazz"

**\*\*\* FRIDAY, 10/5: FIRST RADIO LISTENING REPORT DUE \*\*\***

**Week 6:**

**10/9: The End of “The Big Band Era”**

Reading: \* Bob Bernotas, “The Tradition Continues”

**10/12: 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:**

**10/16: The Elusive Art of Jazz Singing**

Reading:

*Jazz101: Appendix 1*

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

**\*\*\* FRIDAY, 10/19: MIDTERM EXAM \*\*\***

**Week 8:**

**10/23: The Bebop “Revolution”**

Reading: *Jazz101*: Chapters 16, 17

**10/26: Hearing the Subtleties and Nuances in Jazz Performances (Listening Session)**

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

**Week 9:**

**10/30: 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”

**11/2: “Summertime” and “Laura”: Familiar Songs, Original Stories (Listening Session)**

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

**Week 10:**

**11/6: “The Birth of the Cool”**

Reading: *Jazz 101*: Chapters 18, 19

**11/9: Hard Bop, Soul Jazz, Vocalese**

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

**\*\*\* FRIDAY, 11/9: SECOND RADIO LISTENING REPORT DUE \*\*\***

**Week 11:**

**11/13: "It's not about standing still": Miles Davis**

**Reading:** \* Michael Ullman, "Miles Davis in Retrospect"

**11/16: "I've got to keep experimenting": John Coltrane**

**Reading:** \* "Coltrane on Coltrane"

**Week 12:**

**11/20: NO CLASS (THURSDAY CLASS SCHEDULE)**

**11/22 (FRIDAY CLASS SCHEDULE): 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 13:**

**11/27: Chamber Jazz, Free Jazz**

**Reading:** *Jazz 101*: Chapters 23

**11/30: Jazz Around the World: Europe and Brazil**

**Reading:**

*Jazz101*: Chapter 29

\* Bob Bernotas, "A Day in a (Double) Life: Claudio Roditi"

\* Bob Bernotas, "From Russia with Jazz: Valery Ponomarev"

**Week 14:**

**12/4: Two Hybrids: Jazz Funk, Jazz Fusion**

**Reading:**

\* Greg Cassus, "From Monk to Funk"

\* Linda Kohanov & Gene Santoro, "Fusion Sells but Is It Jazz? "

**12/7: The Loft Scene, The "Young Lions"**

**Reading:** *Jazz 101*: Chapter 28

\* Bob Bernotas, "One Divided by Four Equals Infinity: The World Saxophone Quartet"

\* Bob Bernotas, "Brass Fantasies: Lester Bowie"

**Week 15:**

**12/11: 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, 12/11: THIRD RADIO LISTENING REPORT DUE \*\*\***

**\*\*\* FINAL EXAM: FRIDAY, 12/21 @ 9:15 \*\*\***