

JAZZ APPRECIATION: Black American Music Since 1900

07:700:291

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“office hours”: by appointment

Tuesday & Friday 10:20-11:40

Tillett Hall, Room 258

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 explores the evolution of jazz in America from the early 1900s to the present, from its roots in the black folk music of the 1800s to current jazz 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. While the material is targeted to non-music majors – absolutely no jazz or general musical background is required – the course also will be of interest to experienced musicians and jazz fans.



Core Curriculum Goals:

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 this Core Goal will be measured in the various class assignments and projects (*see details below*).

Required Texts and Assigned Readings

- 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.

The lesson plan/schedule of assignments, below, outlines the assigned readings that should be completed prior to each class. Generally, the readings are meant to reinforce material raised during class meetings, and will be incorporated in the exams.

Website

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.**”

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/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 insight into the lives, careers, and personalities of the creative people who have made, and continue to make, this vital music.

Grading / Assessment

Your final course grade is based on the following three, *equally weighted* elements:

1. midterm exam
2. final exam
3. three radio listening reports

Exams

Exams will consist of a **written portion** (short essay) and a **listening portion**. The written component will require knowledge of historical facts, basic musical concepts, key individuals and their importance, and the social-historical forces that have influenced 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. These Weekly Jazz Radio Listening Reports will be **submitted via email three times this semester for evaluation and grading.**

A full discussion of the assignment appears in a separate document.

Grading Rubric for Radio Listening Reports
Formatting and Organization: The assignment was properly formatted, and clearly and logically organized (10%)
Presentation of Ideas: The assignment is carefully executed with attention, clarity, insight, and creativity. (75%)
Mechanics and Tone: The assignment demonstrates coherent sentence structure, correct spelling and punctuation, and a writing style that is scholarly, yet engaging. (15%)
Reports that are submitted late will be lowered one full grade.

Grading Scale for Listening Reports

- A:** Excellent, meeting the requirements with insight and creativity
- B+:** Very good, meeting the requirements effectively
- B:** Good, meeting most requirements adequately
- C+:** Above average, satisfactory but lacking some key requirements
- C :** Average, adequate but lacking many key requirements
- D:** Poor, lacking most requirements
- F:** Failure, lacking all requirements

Attendance

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. Students with an inordinate number of unexcused absences run the risk of receiving a lower semester grade by one rank: i.e., an “A” 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.

PLEASE NOTE: *In the interest helping you to understand where your tuition dollars go, I want you to know that I am classified as a **part-time faculty member** at Rutgers University. Rutgers hires about 1,800 part-time lecturers each semester to teach more than 30% of the classes across all campuses. We are paid just a fraction of what full-time faculty earn, and are **not** provided with job security or healthcare benefits. Our total salaries comprise less than 1% of Rutgers’ overall budget.*

All faculty contracts, both full- and part-time, expired June 30, 2022, and all Rutgers instructors have been working without a contract since. In this time of record inflation we have essentially been forced to take a pay cut.

Our working conditions are our students’ learning conditions, and so, our union’s campaign for a fair contract is also about improving the quality of education at Rutgers. Please reach out if you’d like to learn more.

LESSON PLAN and SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

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

Week 1:

1/17: **Course Introduction**

1/20: **What Is Jazz?; The Elements of Music; The Instruments of Jazz**

Reading:

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

Jazz101: Chapters 3, 4, 6

Week 2:

1/24: **Jazz and the African-American Aesthetic**

Reading: *Jazz101*: Chapters 7, 8

1/27: **The Blues, Jazz, and Popular Music**

Reading: *Jazz101*: Chapter 5

Week 3:

1/31: **Ragtime and Early Jazz**

Reading: *Jazz101*: Chapters 11, 12

2/3: **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:

2/7: **The First Great Jazz Soloists (*Listening Session*)**

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)

2/10: **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:

2/14: **The Legacy of Duke Ellington**

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

2/17: **The Epitome of Swing: Count Basie**

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

***** FIRST RADIO LISTENING REPORT DUE *****

Week 6:

2/21: The End of “The Big Band Era”

Reading:

- * Bob Bernotas, “The Tradition Continues”
- * Bob Bernotas, “Blues Backstage”

2/24: Jazz Piano Styles (*Listening Session*)

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: *You do not have to do a listening report for this week.*

2/28: The Elusive Art of Jazz Singing

Reading:

Jazz101: Appendix 1

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

***** FRIDAY, 3/3: MIDTERM EXAM *****

Week 8:

3/7: The Bebop “Revolution”

Reading: *Jazz101*: Chapters 16, 17

3/10: Interaction and Communication in Jazz Performances (*Listening Session*)

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

3/11-3/19: SPRING BREAK (*No listening report this week.*)

Week 9:

3/21: 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”

3/24: Two Standards, Many Stories (*Listening Session*)

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

Week 10:

3/28: “The Birth of the Cool”

Reading: *Jazz 101*: Chapters 18, 19

3/31: Hard Bop, Soul Jazz, Vocalese

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

***** SECOND RADIO LISTENING REPORT DUE *****

Week 11:

4/4: "It's not about standing still": Miles Davis

Reading:

- * Michael Ullman, "Miles Davis in Retrospect"
- * Rob Scheps, "Miles Davis and Pop Music"

4/7: "A fuller means of expression": John Coltrane

Reading:

- * "Coltrane on Coltrane"
- * Don DeMichael, "John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy Answer the Jazz Critics"

Week 12:

4/11: Three Modern Jazz Giants: Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus, Rahsaan Roland Kirk (*Listening Session*)

Reading:

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

4/14: Chamber Jazz, Free Jazz

Reading: *Jazz 101*: Chapters 23, 24

Week 13:

4/18: Jazz Around the World: Europe/Brazil

Reading:

Jazz101: Chapter 29

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

4/21: Two Hybrids: Jazz Funk, Jazz Fusion

Reading:

- * Greg Casseus, "From Monk to Funk"
- * Linda Kohanov & Gene Santoro, "Fusion Sells but Is It Jazz?"

Week 14:

4/25: The Loft Scene, the "Young Lions"

Reading:

Jazz 101: Chapter 28

- * Bob Bernotas, "One Divided by Four Equals Infinity: World Saxophone Quartet"
- * Bob Bernotas, "Brass Fantasies: Lester Bowie"
- * James T. Jones IV, "Jazz Youth Elbow Out Musical Elders"

4/28: The State of Jazz, the Future of Jazz (Does Jazz *Have* a Future?)

Reading:

- * Will Layman, "Jazz Ain't Dead, But Charlie Parker Is"

***** THIRD RADIO LISTENING REPORT DUE *****

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