

University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
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General Syllabus
MUSI 2861 Fundamentals of Improvisation I

Credit Hours: 1

Lecture Hours: 1

Laboratory Hours: 1

Prerequisite: Music major or consent of instructor

Effective Catalog: 2019-2020

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

Teaches the skills needed for improvising solos in jazz, pop, and rock music. Focuses on jazz scales, modes, chords, and patterns used to improvise. Ability to read music is not required. Students will apply these concepts through performance.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Perform, dictate and aurally recognize scales/modes intrinsic to jazz.
2. Discuss, write about and problem-solve jazz, scales, chord qualities, guide tones, form, chord symbols, chord progressions and terminology.
3. Perform digital patterns and jazz licks around the cycle.
4. Compose and perform a blues tune.
5. Analyze jazz elements in standard jazz tunes.
6. Improvise on standard jazz tunes and the blues.

B. University Learning Outcomes

MUSI 2861 Fundamentals of Improvisation I enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking

Students will draw conclusions and/or solve problems using proper musical terminology; personal expression within the context of musical performance.

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will communicate proficiently using proper musical terminology; personal expression within the context of a musical performance.

Ethical Decision Making

Students will model ethical decision-making processes whether in musical research, presentation, or performance.

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will appreciate and reflect upon cultural differences and their implications for interacting with people from cultures other than their own.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. Jazz scales/modes
- B. Chord construction
- C. Chord symbols
- D. Digital patterns and licks
- E. Guide tones
- F. Aural recognition
- G. Terminology
- H. Blues composition
- I. Tune analysis