

# Applied Improvisation Spring 2009 Christopher Merz

## Eligibility policy

Due to the overwhelming demand for this class, admission into Applied Improvisation will be prioritized as follows:

1. Returning students who are music majors who have completed the sequence of Improvisation classes
2. "New" students who are music majors who have completed the sequence of Improvisation classes
3. Returning students who are music majors who have completed one or more semesters of Improvisation classes
4. "New" students who are music majors who have completed one or more semesters of Improvisation classes

NOTE: Students who are eligible for admission into Applied Jazz Saxophone will have priority over all but the first two categories of Applied Improvisation students. Students may NOT elect to take Applied Improvisation instead of an Improvisation class when an appropriate class is available. See Sequence of Study, below.

## Sequence of study

Year 1

Fall: 540:058:01 Applied Jazz Sax (by permission)

Spring: 560:052:01 Jazz Theory

Year 2

Fall: 560:052:01 Beginning Improvisation

Spring: 540:058:01 Applied Jazz Sax OR

540:055:01 or :02, Applied Improvisation (all by permission)

Year 3

Fall: 560:152:02 Intermediate Improvisation

Spring: 540:058:01 Applied Jazz Sax OR

540:055:01 or :02, Applied Improvisation (all by permission)

Year 4

Both Semesters:

540:058:01 Applied Jazz Sax OR

540:055:01 or :02, Applied Improvisation (all by permission)

Students may be advised to take 560:252:01 Advanced Improvisation in either Year 3 or 4 when appropriate. The course is offered in alternate spring semesters.

## Objectives

1. Students will write a list of goals for each semester's study
2. Students will maintain a list of memorized repertoire
3. Students will improve in technical mastery of the saxophone through the study of scale and arpeggio exercises.
4. Students will develop interpretive skills through transcription
5. Students will develop improvisational skills through the study of repertoire, to be determined jointly by student and instructor

### **Required materials**

Materials will be assigned based on stated goals for the semester. Students will be expected to locate repertoire in printed form or transcribe from recordings, where applicable. Each student will need to bring blank manuscript paper and pencil to each lesson, preferably in spiral notebook form.

### **Goals and Repertoire list**

The first assignment, due at the second lesson of each semester, is a list of goals for the semester. This will help both student and instructor focus and select materials to better meet those goals. Students are also asked to keep an ongoing repertoire list, including all tunes studied in applied jazz lessons. This list should also note which keys each tune has been studied and/or performed in.

### **Technical Studies**

I will assign technical studies based on harmonic and/or rhythmic concepts which arise from the study of specific repertoire, selected on the basis of the goals stated for the semester. These are to be executed with a metronome at a range of tempi. Students will be asked to devise technical studies for themselves as well.

### **Transcriptions**

Applied improvisation students are expected to work continually on solo transcriptions. A minimum of one half chorus of a solo per week (16 measures) is expected for a passing grade.

### **Repertoire**

I will work with students individually to determine appropriate literature for study. Many of the techniques from the improvisation classes will be used, and new techniques will be introduced. Students will also be assigned composition projects which will help them come to terms with harmonic and melodic concepts.

### **Grading**

I will give a grade for each lesson, based on student performance in each of the three elements; technical studies, transcriptions, and repertoire. Each student will also perform a jury at the end of the semester covering all three elements. The jury will consist of Dr. Washut, Mr. Bob Dunn and myself. This grade will be averaged together with the weekly lesson grade to determine the final grade.

### **Attendance**

As this class is not required, I do not anticipate any attendance problems. If I should miss a lesson, it will be made up as soon as possible, preferably in advance. If students miss a lesson, it may be made up if a reasonable excuse is given. Examples include illness or absence from campus. ***Forgetting and lack of preparation are not acceptable excuses. Lessons will not be postponed or made up due to lack of preparation. Habitual absences may result in termination of study at the end of the semester. Students are waiting in line to take this class!***

### **Note**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) provides protection from illegal discrimination for qualified individuals with disabilities. Students requesting instructional accommodations due to disabilities must arrange for such accommodations through Student Disability Services. The SDS Office is located at 103 Student Health Center. Phone is: 273-2676 (voice) 273-3011 (TTY); Email: disabilityservices@uni.edu.