

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for MUS 48

IMPROVISATION LAB

Effective: Fall 2019

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

MUS 48 — IMPROVISATION LAB — 1.00 units

This course exposes students to the fundamental concepts and skills any improviser needs to succeed in a group setting. The course is open to any instrumentalist or vocalist with no audition or experience in jazz required. The course is intended to prepare students for established advanced jazz ensembles in the department like Jazz Combos, Jazz Band, and Vocal East. Emphasis will be on group activities, independent practice, basic theory concepts, and performance.

1.00 Units Lab

Strongly Recommended

MUS 6 - Basic Music Skills
with a minimum grade of C
or

MUS 8A - Harmony and Musicianship I
with a minimum grade of C

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

- Music

	MIN
Lab Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 4

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:

A. MUS6

1. interpret notation of both pitch and rhythm;
2. identify and notate key signatures;
3. identify and construct triads and seventh chords;
4. identify and construct simple intervals;
5. interpret expressive markings such as dynamic indications, accents, repeats;
6. recognize and construct scales: major, minor (3 forms), chromatic, whole-tone;
7. perform simple exercises in ear training and sight singing.

B. MUS8A

1. Write and identify all major and minor scales and key signatures
2. Transpose a given melody to any specified key
3. Construct any interval up to an octave above and below a given note.
4. Identify simple and compound meters.
5. Conduct harmonic analysis of diatonic chord progressions.
6. Visually identify all intervals up to an octave
7. Write and identify any triad in root position and inversions.
8. Demonstrate the ability to hear music with understanding, recognizing patterns and musical functions, by
 - a. aurally identifying all intervals up to the octave - ascending, descending, and harmonic.
 - b. aurally identifying qualities, inversions, and soprano notes of triads.
9. Demonstrate the ability to "audiate" a musical score by
 - a. performing rhythms with divided beats in a variety of meter signatures and tempos.
 - b. sight singing melodies featuring leaps within the primary triads.

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

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

- A. Demonstrate facility and technique in performing improvisations in solo and ensemble contexts
- B. Demonstrate an awareness of individual responsibility to the success of ensemble performance

- C. Demonstrate the ability to play, memorize, and interpret repertoire in a variety of styles
- D. Compile effective setlists, and perform as a cohesive unit.
- E. Analyze, interpret, and integrate study of master improvisers into personal musical language

V. CONTENT:

- A. Facility and technique in improvising melodies, rhythms, and grooves;
- B. Develop recognition and construction of chords;
- C. Play and construct scales used for improvisation in major and minor keys;
- D. Analyze, interpret, and utilize musical material from master improvisers
- E. Awareness of individual responsibility to the success of ensemble performance
- F. Integrate melodic patterns used for jazz improvisation into performances
- G. Compare, formulate, evaluate, and different Jazz styles by periods and artists
- H. Incorporate notions of phrase and development in an improvisation.
- I. Demonstrate the ability to play jazz literature in a Samba style;
- J. Demonstrate the ability to play jazz literature in a Medium Swing style;
- K. Demonstrate leadership role to ensure the success of ensemble performance.
- L. Demonstrate an understanding of advanced harmonic concepts like "Coltrane Changes", modal jazz, chromatic leading tones, and playing "outside" the changes.

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Classroom Activity** -
- B. **Student Presentations** -
- C. Outside practice
- D. **Individualized Instruction** -
- E. **Observation and Demonstration** -
- F. **Audio-visual Activity** -
- G. **Guest Lecturers** -

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading:
 1. Read the internet article on the difference in articulation and phrasing between Medium Swing and Latin jazz and be prepared to demonstrate them.
 2. Read through your part of an assigned chart. Locate difficult passages and formulate an approach for effective practice of these passages.
- B. Arranging:
 1. Choose a jazz standard and arrange it for the group. Demonstrate a good understanding of orchestration, voicings, transpositions, and formal concepts.
- C. Composition:
 1. Compose a 5-7 minute piece for the ensemble and lead the rehearsal by pointing out key elements like form, structure, improvised sections, etc.
- D. Performance:
 1. Demonstrate an ability to play selected chords and scales on their primary instruments.
- E. Preparation for and participation in public concert.
 1. Students are given specific repertoire and will be graded on their preparation and participation in the concert.

VIII. EVALUATION:

Methods/Frequency

- A. Projects
 - 2-4 per semester
- B. Group Projects
 - 1-2 per semester
- C. Class Participation
 - Daily
- D. Home Work
 - Weekly
- E. Final Class Performance
 - One per semester
- F. Final Public Performance
 - One per semester
- G. Other
 - Practice - daily

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Terefenko , Dariusz . *Jazz Theory: From Basic to Advanced Study*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2017.
2. A Una Voz . *Improvisation: The Ultimate Guide (Jazz Harmony & Improvisation Book 2)*. Kindle ed., Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2018.
3. Hill, Alan. *Jazz Melodic Minor Magic: Jazz Theory Demystified* . 1st ed., Independently published, 2018.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: