



WACO, TEXAS

**COURSE SYLLABUS
AND
INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

**Improvisation Theory I
MUSC 2214 001**

Jon Fox

NOTE: This is a 16-week course.

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Course Description:

Materials and practices for improvisation or extemporaneous performance in the jazz idiom. Introduces the scale-chord relationships for triads, major 7 chords, dominant 7 chords and minor 7 chords; compose an appropriate solo line over selected harmonic progressions; perform appropriate extemporaneous solos over ii-V-I progressions and minor and dominant blues.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:

Prerequisites: MUSC 2213 and MUSC 2311

Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:

Improvisation Theory I is designed to provide the student with the basic skills, knowledge and techniques to improvise melodies in various stylistic and harmonic contexts, including modal tunes, blues and over ii-V-I chord progressions in major keys. This will be accomplished through transcription (written and performed) of recorded solos, the presentation of theoretical concepts related to improvisation and the application of those concepts in a performance setting.

Instructor Information:

Instructor Name: Jon Fox

MCC E-mail: jfox@mclennan.edu

Office Phone Number: 299-8286

Office Location: BPAC 119

Office/Teacher Conference Hours: TBA

Required Text & Materials:

Title: *Note Choice, Melody and Execution: A Classroom Guide to Beginning Jazz Improvisation*

Author: Jon Fox

The required text will be available online within the course. Students will need to bring staff paper, note paper and writing utensils (pencils recommended) as well as their instrument (including any applicable patch cords, etc.) to every class session unless otherwise indicated by the instructor.

MCC Bookstore Website: <http://www.mclennan.edu/bookstore/>

Recommended Additional Resources:

Band-in-a-Box (software). PG Music, Inc. (www.pgmusic.com).

The Aebersold Play-Along Series. Jamey Aebersold Jazz (www.jazzbooks.com).

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The Jazz Theory Book by Mark Levine. Sher Music Co., 1995

How to Improvise: an Approach to Practicing Improvisation by Hal Crook. Advance Music, 1991.

Methods of Teaching and Learning:

Class meetings will include both lecture and performance elements. Students will be expected to prepare and **perform in class** material relevant to the topics covered in the text and during lecture. Students will also be required to complete up to 2 solo transcription projects, performing them in class along with the original recording and providing a written copy in order to encourage and develop good ear-training, active listening and analysis skills. Performance and written exams will be given.

Transcriptions: Transcription projects will consist of three components:

1. All students (vocalists and instrumentalists alike) will first be asked to sing the transcription in class along with the original recording.
2. Instrumentalists will then be asked to perform the transcription on their instrument in class along with the original recording.
3. All students will also be required to produce a written copy (computer notated) of the transcription including the harmonic context (chords) and the improvised melody.

Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

The student will demonstrate proficiency in basic improvisational skills, knowledge and techniques, including:

- Knowledge of and ability to play (through the cycle of fourths as well as through a set of chord changes) major 7, minor 7, and dominant 7 chord arpeggios
- Knowledge of and ability to play (through the cycle of fourths as well as through a set of chord changes) appropriate related scales for each chord type
- Knowledge of and ability to play blues and pentatonic scales
- Knowledge of and ability to compose (through a set of chord changes) guide tone melodies
- Ability to transcribe (perform as well as notate) melodic material from a recording
- Ability to analyze transcribed material and convert musical ideas into exercises

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- Ability to transpose exercises into all keys and use them appropriately in various harmonic contexts

Course Outline or Schedule:

(Subject to change, students will be notified in class of any changes)

- Unit 1 (wk 1-4) – introduction and basic concepts / transcription assignment #1 / 7th chord construction / minor 7th chords and related scales / vocal improvisation
- Unit 2 (wk 5-8) – dominant 7th chords and related scales / blues progressions / blues scales / melodic patterns / major 7th chords and related scales / melodic construction
- Unit 3 (wk 9-12) –mid-term exam / voice-leading and guide tone lines / transcription assignment #2 / in-class performance and improvisation assignments
- Unit 4 (wk 13-16) – in-class performance and improvisation assignments (continued) / final project and final exam

Course Grading Information:

Grading will be calculated from a cumulative point total based on outside-of-class preparation for and in-class participation in daily and weekly assignments (including in-class performances), tests, quizzes and exams, transcription assignments and additional projects.

Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:

Written/notation and performance assignments will incur a 10% deduction for each class period that they are late. **Assignments will not be accepted more than two class periods (one week) late.**

Quizzes may be given at any time and may include any material covered in class up to that point in the semester. **There will be NO make-up quizzes or tests without prior notification of an absence. With advance notice of an upcoming absence and at the discretion of the instructor, a test or quiz may be taken prior to the test date.**

Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:

Students are expected to maintain classroom decorum that includes respect for other students and the instructor, prompt and regular attendance, and an attitude that seeks to take full advantage of the educational opportunity.

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- All electronic devices should be silent and put away. Electronic communication of any kind (sending or receiving e-mail, text messages, etc.) during class time will result in the student being asked to leave the class until the next meeting. Any electronic communication sent or received during a test or quiz will result in an automatic F.
- Professional, courteous and respectful behavior is expected of all students. Threatening, hostile or profane language or behavior will not be tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal from the course.
- As per the official MCC Attendance Policy (see below), absence (or the equivalent 3 tardies) from more than 7 scheduled class meetings (25% of the course) will result in the student being withdrawn from the course with a grade of W. If reached after the official drop date for the semester, the student will receive a grade of F.
- Leaving class early or an excessively late arrival (missing more than 25% of class time) will result in an official absence for the day.
- No food or drink (except water in a container with a sealable top) in class.
- **MUSC 2214 is a performance-intensive class. Students MUST practice outside of class, attend class regularly and be prepared to perform in class if they hope to be successful.**

[Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)

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Click on the link above for the college policies on attendance and absences. Your instructor may have additional guidelines specific to this course.

Course Attendance/Participation Guidelines:

If a student is not in attendance in accordance with the policies/guidelines of the class as outlined in the course syllabus as of the course census date, faculty are required to drop students from their class roster prior to certifying the respective class roster. A student's financial aid will be re-evaluated accordingly and the student will only receive funding for those courses attended as of the course census date.

Before the 60% point of the semester, a student who is absent for 25% or more of a face-to-face or blended course or who misses 25% or more of assigned work for an online course will be withdrawn from the course with a grade of W. A student may also request to be withdrawn with

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a grade of W before the 60% point of the semester. After the 60% point of the semester, the student may request to be withdrawn if the student is passing, or be assigned the final grade earned at the end of the semester after grades have been updated to reflect missing work.

Updated 07/18/2023



ACADEMIC RESOURCES/POLICIES

Accommodations/ADA Statement:

Any student who is a qualified individual with a disability may request reasonable accommodations to assist with providing equal access to educational opportunities. Students should contact the Accommodations Coordinator as soon as possible to provide documentation and make necessary arrangements. Once that process is completed, appropriate verification will be provided to the student and instructor. Please note that instructors are not required to provide classroom accommodations to students until appropriate verification has been provided by the Accommodations Coordinator. For additional information, please visit www.mclennan.edu/disability.

Students with questions or who require assistance with disabilities involving physical, classroom, or testing accommodations should contact:

disabilities@mclennan.edu 2542998122 Room
319, Student Services Center

Title IX:

We care about your safety, and value an environment where students and instructors can successfully teach and learn together. If you or someone you know experiences unwelcomed behavior, we are here to help. Individuals who would like to report an incident of sexual misconduct are encouraged to immediately contact the acting Title IX Coordinator at titleix@mclennan.edu or by calling, Dr. Claudette Jackson, (Accommodations/Title IX) at (254) 299-8465. MCC employees are mandatory reporters and must report incidents immediately to the Title IX Coordinator. Individuals may also contact the MCC Police Department at (254) 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at (254) 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a

confidential resource for students. Any student or employee may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/>. Go to McLennan's Title IX webpage at www.mclennan.edu/titleix/. It contains more information about definitions, reporting, confidentiality, resources, and what to do if you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct, gender-based violence or the crimes of rape, acquaintance rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence, or domestic violence.

Student Support/Resources:

MCC provides a variety of services to support student success in the classroom and in your academic pursuits to include counseling, tutors, technology help desk, advising, financial aid, etc. A listing of these and the many other services available to our students is available at <http://www.mclennan.edu/campus-resource-guide/>

Academic Support and Tutoring is here to help students with all their course-related needs. Specializing in one-on-one tutoring, developing study skills, and effectively writing essays. Academic Support and Tutoring can be found in the Library and main floor of the Learning Commons. This service is available to students in person or through Zoom. You can contact the Academic Support and Tutoring team via Zoom or email (ast@mclennan.edu) by going to our website (<https://www.mclennan.edu/academic-support-and-tutoring/>).

College personnel recognize that food, housing, and transportation are essential for student success. If you are having trouble securing these resources or want to explore strategies for balancing life and school, we encourage you to contact either MCC CREW – Campus Resources Education Web by calling (254) 299-8561 or by emailing crew@mclennan.edu or a Success Coach by calling (254) 299-8226 or emailing SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu. Both are located in the Completion Center located on the second floor of the Student Services Center (SSC) which is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff. To schedule an appointment, go to https://mclennan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_07byXd7eB8iTqJg. Both the Completion Center and Paulanne's Pantry are located on the second floor of the Student Services Center (SSC).

MCC Foundation Emergency Grant Fund:

Unanticipated expenses, such as car repairs, medical bills, housing, or job loss can affect us all. Should an unexpected expense arise, the MCC Foundation has an emergency grant fund that may be able to assist you. Please go to

<https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/scholarships-and-resources/emergencygrant.html>

to find out more about the emergency grant. The application can be found at

https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf.

MCC Academic Integrity Statement:

Go to www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity for information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating. The unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) for classwork can be a violation of the College's General Conduct Policy. Whether AI is authorized in a course and the parameters in which AI can be used in a course will be outlined by each instructor.

Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace:

Go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teachingandlearning/FacultyandStaffCommons/requirements.html> for information on the minimum system requirements needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning management system.

Minimum Technical Skills:

Students should have basic computer skills, knowledge of word processing software, and a basic understanding of how to use search engines and common web browsers.

Backup Plan for Technology:

In the event MCC's technology systems are down, you will be notified via your MCC student email address. Please note that all assignments and activities will be due on the date specified in the Instructor Plan, unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

Email Policy:

McLennan Community College would like to remind you of the policy (<http://www.mclennan.edu/employees/policy-manual/docs/E-XXXI-B.pdf>) regarding college email. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to use their McLennan email addresses when conducting college business.

A student's McLennan email address is the preferred email address that college employees should use for official college information or business. Students are

expected to read and, if needed, respond in a timely manner to college emails. For more information about your student email account, go to www.mclennan.edu/studentemail.

Instructional Uses of Email:

Faculty members can determine classroom use of email or electronic communications. Faculty should expect and encourage students to check the college email on a regular basis. Faculty should inform students in the course syllabus if another communication method is to be used and of any special or unusual expectations for electronic communications.

If a faculty member prefers not to communicate by email with their students, it should be reflected in the course syllabus and information should be provided for the preferred form of communication.

Email on Mobile Devices:

The College recommends that you set up your mobile device to receive McLennan emails. If you need assistance with set-up, you may email Helpdesk@mclennan.edu for help.

You can find help on the McLennan website about connecting your McLennan email account to your mobile device:

- [Email Setup for iPhones and iPads](#)
- [Email Setup for Androids](#)

Forwarding Emails:

You may forward emails that come to your McLennan address to alternate email addresses; however, the College will not be held responsible for emails forwarded to an alternate address that may be lost or placed in junk or spam filters.

For more helpful information about technology at MCC, go to [MCC's Tech Support Cheat Sheet](#) or email helpdesk@mclennan.edu.

Disclaimer:

The resources and policies listed above are merely for informational purposes and are subject to change without notice or obligation. The College reserves the right to change policies and other requirements in compliance with State and Federal laws. The provisions of this document do not constitute a contract.