

The New School For Jazz and Contemporary Music

Theory 2A

Course #: JCTH 2101A

Mondays, 2:00-3:50

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Course Syllabus

Nuts and Bolts

1. Attendance Policy

You have to come to class. 3 unexcused absences are grounds, albeit not automatically so, for a failing grade. Any combination of excused and unexcused absences totaling 5 will result in a failing grade. Since you may end up with a bunch of legitimate absences, i.e. road gigs, or illness, etc., it behooves you to not use *any* up on frivolity. You have to come to class at the beginning of class. If you're 10 minutes late, I mark it "L", 30 minutes, I mark it as an absence. Two "L"s equal an absence - you can do the rest of the math.

2. Homework

There is usually a homework assignment, to be done alone (as opposed to jointly with another student) due the following class. These assignments are an integral part of the learning process, as they afford me the opportunity to see how you are grasping the material and to make whatever adjustments are necessary. The assignments are graded (A through F). If an assignment is late, the grade is dropped a notch for each week of lateness. If you miss a class you are still responsible for the homework assignment the following week. You can get it on-line at the class course link at canvas.newschool.edu or from another student in the class. Summary notes for many of the classes will be accessible through that same link the week following the class and thereafter throughout the semester. **Students are required to make a copy of all homeworks and keep all returned homeworks in a folder designated for that purpose for the remainder of the semester.**

3. Requirements

Do the homework, show up in class, participate in class and take the final.

4. Grading

There is a final which is a 2-hour in-class exam covering all the material from the semester. If anyone has a known learning disability that warrants extended-time testing, please do the necessary paperwork to get approval for it and let me know in advance so that I can make

arrangements for it. Roughly speaking, homework is the biggest consideration. It accounts for 65% of the grade, the final 25% and class participation and attendance 10%. There may also be a rare in-class quiz factored into the grade to make sure you're reasonably on top of things. Attendance is a factor only in the negative sense. You're *expected* to show up. Not showing up affects your grade negatively.

5. Help outside of class

I am always reachable by e-mail if you have any questions about the material. You can also call me at the above number 7 days a week until 10:00pm. Obviously, I'm not available all the time, but, barring extenuating circumstances, I will get back to you. This is not an empty gesture on my part. Please feel free to take advantage of it.

6. Cel phone usage is not allowed in class (this includes checking, sending and receiving text messages). Unless there's an extenuating circumstance where you need to be reachable and it is mentioned before class, you'll have to turn the suckers off when you come to class. There is a break approximately halfway through class and if it gets really bad, you can deal with wi-fi withdrawal during that break. If you need to take class notes on a laptop, you are free to do so, but this does not include surfing. That should be done at the beach or at Starbuck's. If I see someone using their cel phone in class, I will ask that person to leave and will mark him or her absent for the class. I will also lower their final grade a notch for each infraction, so please spare yourself (and me) that indignity.

Course Overview

Review of materials from 1B:

- a) scales related to the melodic minor scale (or modes of the melodic minor scale)
- b) 5-note voicings (4-note over bass root)
- c) Secondary dominant and diminished chords
- d) combinations of chord extensions such as b9-#11, 9-b13, etc.)

New Material:

Extension of harmonic principles

- a) Additional seventh chords (dim. $\Delta 7$, $\Delta 7\#5$, $\Delta 7b5$, etc.)
- b) Inversions, polychordal harmony
- c) various approaches to reharmonization:
 - 1) vertical chord substitutions such as the tritone sub, diatonic sub
 - 2) linear reharmonization, i.e. working backwards from target points, using secondary dominant motions, chromaticism, parallel harmony, etc.
 - 3) reharmonization using only the melody as a guide
- d) alternatives to fifth cycle-base harmonic progressions
(i.e. John Coltrane, Chick Corea, Wayne Shorter et al)

Scales

- a) half-whole and whole-half diminished
- b) major and minor pentatonics

Voicings

- a) 4 and 5-note pentatonic voicings and their uses
- b) ambiguous tonal voicings and their uses

Tonal melodic improvisation

- a) more in-depth analysis of the relationship between melodic lines and traditional changes
- b) the melodic use of tonality in the absence of changes

Applications

- a) writing chordal accompaniments for standards with descending and ascending bass lines, incorporating diminished chords and non-root inversions
- b) reharmonizing a tune, first using simple devices such as tritone substitutions and ultimately using only the melody and musicality as a guide
- c) taking one chorus of a standard and composing an "improvised" line with voiced chordal accompaniment and walking bass line
- d) analyzing tonal jazz solos more complexly, with respect to the full range of harmonic scalar material
- e) taking a series of randomly selected pitches, then harmonically and rhythmically arranging them into an original composition to be played in class.
- f) writing and performing an original composition without using any specific notes.