

## Eastern Oregon University Course Syllabus

**Number of Course:**

MUS 320

**Name of Course:**

Improvisation

**Catalog Description:**

Study of concepts and skills related to the art of improvisation, with emphasis on chord changes in a jazz context. May be repeated for credit.

**Credit Hours:**

2

**Required Texts or Suggested Materials:**

Link to the EOU Bookstore: [Eastern Oregon University Bookstore \(opens in new tab\)](#)

**Prerequisites:**

MUS 111

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of jazz theory in terms of forms (blues, rhythm changes), harmonic progressions (ii-V-I's, circle of fifths), and scale/chord relationships (Dorian/minor, etc.).
- Demonstrate scales, arpeggios, patterns and phrases derived from the jazz vocabulary.
- Demonstrate an ability to hear, repeat, and respond to phrases from the vocabulary of jazz.
- Transcribe a solo or portion of a solo by a master improviser. The transcription must be written by hand.
- Memorize and perform at least two jazz compositions from the standard repertoire.
- Listen to examples of jazz improvisation as recommended in the book or assigned by the instructor, and write about them in a way which demonstrates an understanding of their improvisation techniques.

**Course Requirements:**

- Attend and participate in class improvisation exercises
- Complete a transcription of a solo or a portion thereof
- Perform two memorized jazz compositions
- Complete a journal of assigned listening exercises, using recorded examples from the text

**Grading Policies:**

- Attendance and Late Work Policy:
  - According to the EOU Student Handbook: "Students are expected to be on time and be in attendance for all class and laboratory sessions for each of their courses. It is assumed that academic gains are reduced by missing class meetings; and a student's final grade in a course may reflect attendance."

- An absence at the time of a test or quiz will result in a "0" for that day's work. Students will only be allowed to make up tests given on days of excused absences.
- For every unexcused absence, four points will be deducted (until the maximum 20 points are reached).
- Examples of "excused" absences are legitimate illnesses, emergencies, and official school athletic or field trips when I have been personally notified in advance. You must state a specific reason for your absence.
- If you are ill enough to miss this class, you are ill enough to miss other instructors' classes, rehearsals, and evening performances. Do not expect to be "excused" from this class if you are picking and choosing which classes/performances/rehearsals you are attending.
- It is your responsibility to contact me using either my EOU phone number and voice mail or my EOU email address.
- I reserve all right to final determination of what is or is not an "excused" absence.

**Means of Assessment:**

- 20%: Attendance and participation: Learning Outcomes #2, 3, and 5.
- 40%: Midterm and final: Learning Outcome #1, 2, and 5
- 20%: Transcription: Learning Outcome #4
- 20%: Journal: Learning Outcome #6

**Brief Outline of Course:**

This course will be conducted as a lab or workshop format, requiring the active participation of each person in the improvisational exercises. Bring your instrument (vocalists are expected to participate vocally, but also should have an alternate instrument such as keyboard).

**General Education Category and Outcomes:**

NA

**University Writing Requirement Outcomes:**

NA

**Writing Center Statement:**

The EOU Writing Center provides a place — physical or virtual — where every EOU student can find an interested, responsive reader. Writing tutorials are free of charge for EOU undergraduate and graduate students and are available for writing at any course level and for writing resumes, job letters, and graduate applications. For drop-in hours or to schedule in-person, synchronous online, or asynchronous online tutoring, please visit the EOU Writing Center: [Writing Center – Eastern Oregon University \(opens in new tab\)](#).

**Classroom Decorum:**

NA

**Academic Misconduct Policy:**

Eastern Oregon University places a high value upon the integrity of its student scholars. Any student found responsible for an act of academic misconduct (including but not limited to cheating, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication, facilitation, plagiarism or tampering) may be

subject to having his or her grade reduced in the course in question, being placed on probation or suspended from the University, or a combination of these.

**Accommodations/Students with Disabilities Policy:**

Any student who feels they may need accommodation for any type of disability must contact the Disability Services Office in Loso Hall, Room 233. Phone: 541-962-3081.

**Disclaimer:**

This standard syllabus provides only general information on the course. For those enrolled in the course a detailed syllabus will be provided by the Instructor at the beginning of the term. Please keep in mind that not all courses are offered every year.

**Syllabus Prepared By:**

**Date:**

Edited 03/24/2026