



Course Number:	MUSI 3139	Instructor:	Dr. Roberts
Course Title:	Jazz Methods	Office:	FAC 2216 or 2213
Semester:	Fall 2026	Email:	sroberts@uttyler.edu
Time/Location:	TTh 8:00-9:50 am FAC 1221	Phone:	903-566-7388
Office Hours:	M @ 10; Tu @ 4; F @ 9 or by appointment		

Course Description

This course prepares future music educators to successfully teach, direct, and develop jazz programs in secondary school settings. Students will explore jazz history, style, pedagogy, improvisation, rhythm section and wind-section pedagogy, rehearsal techniques, literature selection, and program development. Emphasis will be placed on practical application through listening, performance, teaching demonstrations, rehearsal labs, and hands-on experiences designed to develop the skills necessary to lead a school jazz ensemble.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Describe the historical development of jazz** and identify significant eras, musicians, ensembles, recordings, and stylistic developments.
2. **Recognize and demonstrate essential jazz styles and performance practices**, including swing, blues, ballad, rock/funk, shuffle, bossa nova, samba, and other commonly encountered styles.
3. **Evaluate and apply jazz pedagogical approaches and resources** appropriate for beginning and developing jazz students and ensembles.
4. **Teach beginning jazz improvisation** using developmentally appropriate strategies including chord tones, scales, patterns, blues vocabulary, call-and-response, transcription, and guided listening.
5. **Demonstrate functional jazz musicianship** sufficient to model and teach foundational concepts on a primary instrument.
6. **Demonstrate functional rhythm-section knowledge**, including basic piano voicings, drumset grooves, and the roles of piano, guitar, bass, and drums within a jazz ensemble.
7. **Diagnose and address common jazz performance problems** involving style, articulation, rhythm, balance, blend, improvisation, and ensemble interaction.
8. **Plan and lead an effective jazz ensemble rehearsal**, including count-offs, conducting and cueing, guided listening, warm-ups, style development, improvisation, literature rehearsal, and feedback.
9. **Select appropriate jazz ensemble literature and instructional materials** based on student ability, instrumentation, educational objectives, and program needs.



10. **Develop strategies for building and sustaining a successful school jazz program**, including recruitment, scheduling, budgeting, programming, festivals, professional organizations, and advocacy

Require Text

Steinel, Mike. *Essential Elements for Jazz Ensemble: A Comprehensive Jazz Ensemble Curriculum*. Hal Leonard.

Students should purchase the edition appropriate for their primary instrument.

Additional readings, excerpts, recordings, scores, and instructional resources will be provided through Canvas throughout the semester.

Additional Resources

The following texts and resources may be referenced throughout the semester:

- Dunscomb/Hill, *Jazz Pedagogy*
- Lawn, *The Jazz Ensemble Director's Manual*
- Coker, *The Teaching of Jazz*
- Coker, *Complete Method for Improvisation*
- Coker, *Jazz Keyboard*
- Coker, *Elements of the Jazz Language*
- Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy*
- Henry, *The Jazz Ensemble*
- Levine, *The Jazz Theory Book*
- Haerle, *Jazz Piano Voicing Skills*
- Von Kleist, *A Cool Approach to Jazz Theory*
- Yoes, *Diving into Jazz Band with Confidence and Joy*

Students are not expected to purchase all of these resources. Relevant excerpts and materials will be made available through Canvas when appropriate.

Required Materials

Students should have regular access to:

- Their primary melodic instrument
- A piano or keyboard
- A device or paper for taking notes and accessing course materials
- Canvas
- YouTube and other assigned listening resources
- Headphones or earbuds for individual listening assignments

Bring your primary instrument to class unless instructed otherwise.



Course Philosophy

Jazz is an aural tradition. Learning to teach jazz therefore requires more than reading about jazz pedagogy. Throughout this course, students will **listen, play, improvise, analyze, demonstrate, rehearse, and teach.**

Students are not expected to enter the course as accomplished jazz musicians. They are expected to actively engage in developing enough functional jazz musicianship to effectively model concepts, diagnose problems, communicate with students, and teach foundational jazz skills.

The standard for applied skills in this course is therefore **functional teaching competency rather than professional-level jazz performance.**

Mistakes are an expected and valuable part of the learning process. Preparation, participation, experimentation, reflection, and growth are essential.

Attendance and Professional Participation

Because Jazz Methods meets only once each week, regular attendance and active participation are essential to success in the course. Each class meeting represents a significant portion of the semester's instruction and will include hands-on activities, performance, listening, discussion, and teaching experiences that cannot always be replicated outside of class.

Attendance and professional participation constitute 10% of the final course grade.

Students are expected to:

- Attend every class meeting.
- Arrive on time and remain for the entire class period.
- Bring required instruments and materials.
- Complete assigned preparation before class.
- Participate actively in playing, listening, discussion, rehearsal, and teaching activities.
- Demonstrate professional and respectful engagement with classmates and course activities.

Absences

Unexcused absences will result in a deduction from the Attendance and Professional Participation grade.

Absences due to documented illness, emergency, required University activity, or other circumstances recognized by University policy may be considered excused.

For illness or emergency, documentation should be provided within one week of the absence. For anticipated University-sponsored activities, students should notify the instructor as early as possible and, whenever feasible, at least one week in advance.



Students are responsible for communicating with the instructor regarding an absence and for obtaining any materials, announcements, or assignments missed during class.

An excused absence does not automatically exempt a student from completing course requirements.

Because many activities in Jazz Methods are experiential and collaborative, some in-class activities cannot be recreated outside of the regularly scheduled class meeting. When appropriate, the instructor will determine whether an alternative assignment or activity may be completed for an excused absence.

Students who accumulate multiple absences should meet with the instructor to discuss their progress and ability to successfully complete the course

Tardiness

Students are expected to be present and ready to begin class at **8:00 a.m.**

Late arrival or early departure may result in a deduction from the Attendance and Professional Participation grade.

Students arriving more than **10 minutes late** or leaving more than **10 minutes early** without prior approval will be considered absent for that class meeting.

Repeated tardiness may also be treated as an absence.

Due Dates and Make-up Work

Assignments are due on the dates indicated in Canvas and/or the course schedule.

Late work resulting from an unexcused absence will not be accepted unless otherwise specified by the instructor.

For an excused absence, assignments due on the date of the absence should be submitted as soon as reasonably possible and no later than the following class meeting unless other arrangements have been approved.

Missed quizzes, assessments, or proficiency demonstrations must be completed within one week of the absence unless an alternative deadline has been approved by the instructor.

Whenever possible, students who know they will miss class should communicate with the instructor **before the absence.**



Regardless of the reason for an absence, students remain responsible for staying current with course materials and completing course requirements.

AI Statement

During some class assignments, we may leverage AI tools to support your learning, allow you to explore how AI tools can be used, and/or better understand their benefits and limitations. Learning how to use AI is an emerging skill, and we will work through the limitations of these evolving systems together. However, AI will be limited to assignments where AI is a critical component of the learning activity. I will always indicate when and where the use of AI tools for this course is appropriate.

Assessment & Grading

Course grades will be determined according to the following categories:

Category	Percentage
Attendance & Professional Participation	10%
Quizzes & Listening Assessments	15%
Jazz Education Assignments	20%
Applied Jazz Teaching Skills	20%
Final Jazz Educator Practicum	35%
Total	100%

Quizzes and Listening Assessments — 15%

Jazz educators must be able to recognize, describe, and communicate what they hear. They also need a functional understanding of the musical vocabulary necessary to explain jazz to their students. Assessments in this course will therefore emphasize **listening and practical application rather than memorization alone**.

Students will complete two primary assessments during the semester.

1. Jazz Listening Assessment

Students will demonstrate familiarity with significant jazz musicians, ensembles, recordings, historical periods, and commonly encountered jazz styles.

The assessment may ask students to:

- Identify significant musicians and ensembles from assigned listening.
- Recognize broad historical periods or stylistic characteristics.
- Identify common styles and grooves, including swing, ballad, blues, shuffle, bossa nova, samba, rock, and funk.
- Describe what they hear using appropriate musical terminology.
- Identify characteristics that they could use when teaching the style to an ensemble.



Students should begin listening to assigned playlists early in the semester and return to them regularly. The goal is not simply to memorize recordings, but to develop a working familiarity with the sounds, musicians, styles, and recordings that every jazz educator should know.

2. Jazz Fundamentals Assessment

Students will demonstrate a functional understanding of foundational jazz theory and pedagogy necessary for teaching beginning jazz students.

Topics may include:

- Common chord symbols and chord construction
- Chord tones and guide tones
- Basic chord-scale relationships
- Blues harmony and form
- Foundational improvisational vocabulary
- Jazz articulation and style
- Basic rhythm-section concepts

Questions will emphasize **application to teaching whenever possible**. Students may be asked not only to identify or explain a concept, but also to describe how they would introduce or teach that concept to a beginning jazz student.

The goal of this assessment is not advanced jazz theory mastery. Students should demonstrate enough understanding to accurately explain, model, and teach foundational jazz concepts.

Jazz Education Assignments — 20%

Jazz Pedagogy Resource Comparison

Students will examine and compare jazz method books and pedagogical approaches discussed during the course.

The comparison should consider:

- Intended student population
- Skill level
- Organization and sequence
- Presentation and accessibility
- Approach to improvisation
- Approach to rhythm and style
- Ensemble pedagogy
- Strengths and limitations
- Appropriate educational applications



Students should ultimately be able to explain **which resources they would choose for their own students and why.**

Jazz Director Interview and Reflection

Each student will interview a practicing jazz educator.

Students will develop thoughtful questions addressing topics such as teaching philosophy, rehearsal strategies, improvisation, literature selection, recruitment, scheduling, budgeting, festivals, program development, and challenges encountered in jazz education.

Following the interview, students will submit a written reflection addressing:

- What did you learn?
- What surprised you?
- What ideas would you incorporate into your own teaching?
- Were there approaches with which you disagreed?
- How did the interview influence your developing philosophy of jazz education?

Applied Jazz Teaching Skills – 20%

Future jazz educators need enough functional musicianship to **model, explain, diagnose, and teach** foundational jazz concepts. Applied Jazz Teaching Skills are therefore assessed according to their usefulness in the music classroom rather than according to professional jazz-performance standards.

The goal is not simply to demonstrate that you can perform a skill. You should also be able to explain **how and why you would teach that skill to a student.**

1. Improvisation & Jazz Vocabulary — 5%

Students will demonstrate foundational improvisational skills on their primary instrument through blues and other accessible chord progressions.

Students should demonstrate the ability to use and explain concepts such as:

- Chord tones
- Major and minor pentatonic vocabulary
- Blues vocabulary
- Basic chord-scale relationships
- Simple melodic patterns
- Call-and-response
- Repetition and development
- Listening and imitation

Students will encounter additional jazz vocabulary, including bebop, Dorian, Mixolydian, and diminished sounds, throughout the semester. The emphasis of the proficiency, however, will be on the



student's ability to **apply and teach foundational improvisational concepts**, rather than memorization of every scale in every key.

2. Functional Jazz Piano — 5%

Students will demonstrate basic functional jazz piano skills using shell voicings.

Students should be able to:

- Identify roots, 3rds, and 7ths of common chord types.
- Construct basic shell voicings.
- Demonstrate simple voice leading.
- Comp through a blues progression and/or another accessible progression.
- Explain these concepts to a beginning jazz student.

The goal is not to develop students into jazz pianists. The goal is to develop enough keyboard fluency to demonstrate harmony and communicate effectively with rhythm-section students.

3. Rhythm Section & Grooves — 5%

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the roles of piano, guitar, bass, and drums within a jazz rhythm section.

Students will experience and demonstrate foundational drumset patterns and common grooves and will learn to identify and address common problems involving time, balance, interaction, equipment, and style.

Students should be able to communicate effectively with rhythm-section players even when the rhythm-section instrument is not their primary instrument.

4. Style, Articulation & Modeling — 5%

Students will demonstrate the ability to recognize, explain, and model foundational jazz style.

Skills may include:

- Swing feel
- Jazz articulation
- Phrasing
- Accents
- Note length
- Ghosted notes
- Common stylistic effects
- Count-offs
- Establishing tempo and groove

Students will also demonstrate the ability to use recordings and modeling as tools for teaching style.



Final Jazz Educator Practicum — 35%

The culminating experience of Jazz Methods will require students to apply the concepts developed throughout the semester in an authentic teaching environment.

Jazz Ensemble Rehearsal Plan

Students will develop a comprehensive rehearsal plan throughout the semester.

The plan should incorporate:

- Rehearsal objectives
- Guided listening
- Warm-up activities
- Jazz scales and/or patterns
- Style and articulation
- Improvisation
- Rehearsal of appropriate literature
- Anticipated problems and teaching strategies
- Assessment and feedback

Draft components will be developed and discussed throughout the semester before submission of the final plan.

Leading a Jazz Ensemble Rehearsal

Students will lead a rehearsal or portion of a rehearsal with a UT Tyler Jazz Ensemble.

Students will be expected to demonstrate appropriate:

- Preparation
- Count-offs
- Tempo establishment
- Conducting and cueing
- Verbal communication
- Identification and diagnosis of ensemble problems
- Rehearsal pacing
- Style instruction
- Feedback
- Application of concepts studied throughout the semester

Post-Rehearsal Reflection

Following the rehearsal, students will complete a reflection evaluating their teaching.



The reflection should address:

- What worked?
- What did not work as expected?
- Did the ensemble improve?
- What did you hear during the rehearsal?
- What did you miss while standing in front of the ensemble?
- What would you do differently if you taught the rehearsal again?
- What areas of jazz pedagogy do you need to continue developing?

Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Below 60%

A grade of C or better is required where applicable to degree requirements

Course Schedule

The following schedule is tentative and subject to change based on the needs and progress of the class. Specific readings, assignments, assessments, activities, and due dates will be posted in Canvas.

Week	Topic
Week 1	Introduction to Jazz Education; Jazz History and Listening
Week 2	Jazz History, Styles, and Performance Practices
Week 3	Jazz Pedagogy and Teaching Resource
Week 4	Teaching Jazz Style and Articulation
Week 5	Teaching Improvisation
Week 6	Jazz Theory and Improvisation
Week 7	Teaching and Rehearsing the Rhythm Section
Week 8	Rhythm Section: Piano and Guitar
Week 9	Rhythm Section: Bass and Drums
Week 10	Jazz Ensemble Pedagogy and Rehearsal Techniques
Week 11	Jazz Ensemble Pedagogy and Rehearsal Techniques
Week 12	Literature Selection and Rehearsal Planning
Week 13	Student Teaching and Rehearsal Lab
Week 14	Building and Managing a Jazz Program
Final	Jazz Educator Practicum



The following information is provided within the Syllabus Module related to Student Resources and University Policies and Information.

Student Resources:

Faculty can update student resources to provide additional supports appropriate for each course.

Resources to assist you in the course

- [UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resource \(SAR\) Office](#) (provides needed accommodations to students with document needs related to access and learning)
- [UT Tyler Writing Center](#)
- [The Mathematics Learning Center](#)
- [UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center](#)
- [UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction](#)
- [Upswing \(24/7 online tutoring\) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas](#)
- [Robert Muntz Library](#) and [Library Liaison](#)
- [Canvas 101](#) (learn to use Canvas, proctoring, Unicheck, and other software)
- Digital Support Toolkit (for supported courses only. Students are automatically enrolled in the toolkit for supported courses)
- LIB 422 -- Computer Lab where students can take a proctored exam
- [The Career Success Center](#)
- [UT Tyler Testing Center](#)
- [Office of Research & Scholarship Design and Data Analysis Lab](#)

Resources available to UT Tyler Students

- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](#) (available to all students)
- [MySSP App](#) (24/7 access to Student Support Program counseling through phone or chat and online wellness resources available in a variety of languages)
- [Student Assistance and Advocacy Center](#)
- [Military and Veterans Success Center](#) (supports for our military-affiliated students)
- [UT Tyler Patriot Food Pantry](#)
- [UT Tyler Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)
- [UT Tyler Student Business Services](#) (pay or set up payment plans, etc.)
- [UT Tyler Registrar's Office](#)
- [Office of International Programs](#)
- [Title IX Reporting](#)
- [Patriots Engage](#) (available to all students. Get engaged at UT Tyler.)

University Policies and Information

Class

Students may withdraw (drop) from this course using the [Withdrawal Portal](#). Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop



Service Center (STE 230) or email enroll@uttyler.edu to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully [read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions](#) on using the [Withdrawal portal](#)..

Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services for additional guidance.

CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the [Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule](#). **CAUTION #2:** All international students must check with the [Office of International Programs](#) before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms. **CAUTION #3:** All UT Tyler Athletes must check with the Athletic Academic Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. **CAUTION #4:** All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with the [Military and Veterans Success Center](#).

* Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. *Refer to the About This Course section of the UT Tyler Syllabus Module for specific information on appropriate use of AI in your course(s).*

Final Exam Policy

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the Dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members must maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

Incomplete Grade Policy



If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in place of a grade *only when **all of the following conditions are met***: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all coursework or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor, and (c) the student presents these reasons before the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average.

The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to meet all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.

Grade Appeal Policy

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the [Registrar's Form Library](#).

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill



out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.uttyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email saroffice@uttyler.edu, or call 903.566.7079."

Military Affiliated Students

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The [Military and Veterans Success Center \(MVSC\)](#) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Students on an F-1 Visa

To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following:

- Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times.
- Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course.
- Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.

Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the [Student Conduct and Discipline policy](#) in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

FERPA UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in [University Policy 5.2.3](#). The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for University Events or Activities](#) as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Religious Holidays

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog](#).

**Absence for Pregnant Students**

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports.

Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and also complete the [Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form](#).

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>.