MUS 151  
Course Number  

Jazz Improvisation I - Blues  
Course title  

2  
Credits  

1 lecture/2 lab  
Hours  

Catalog description: 
An introductory level course emphasizing the use of the Mixolydian mode and the blues scale as applied to the dominant 7th family of chords. The student will explore the twelve-bar blues and related forms as vehicles for improvisation with an emphasis on swing and funk rhythms.

Prerequisites:  The ability to play an instrument and to read musical notation.

Corequisites:  None

Required texts/other materials:  
N/A  

Last revised:  Fall 2016  

Course coordinator:  Scott Hornick, Assistant Professor of Music – CM 149; (609) 570-3716; hornicks@mccc.edu
A. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Student will learn the Mixolydian mode on the roots of C, F, G, Bβ, Eβ, and D. (MCCC Core Skills B, D and F)

2. Student will learn to “run” the chords of C7, F7, G7, Bβ7, Eβ7, and D7 using arpeggios of the 7th, 9th, and 13th. (MCCC Core Skills B, D and F)

3. Student will understand the theoretical and practical relationship between the Mixolydian mode and the dominant 7th family of chords, inclusive of their extended forms of the 9th and the 13th. (MCCC Core Skills B, D and F)

4. Student will learn the minor pentatonic blues scale in the keys of C, F, G, and Bβ. (MCCC Core Skills B, D and F)

5. Student will master the 12-bar blues form in each of the aforementioned keys and demonstrate the ability to improvise with the form using the Mixolydian mode in a strict scale to chord relationship, as well as the technique of “harmonic generalization” using the blues scale. (MCCC Core Skills B, D, F and G)

6. Student master a repertoire of melodic constructs (“licks”) that make use of all of the scales and arpeggios described above (to ensure correct idiomatic usage of the jazz-blues language). (MCCC Core Skills B, D and F)

7. Student will experience the role of each instrument in a jazz ensemble setting, i.e., the rhythm section, chordal, and melodic instruments and their functional relationship. (MCCC Core Skills B, D, F and G)

8. Student will learn to tap their creative impulse as an improviser within the confines of the jazz language on the levels of rhythm, melody, and harmony. (MCCC Core Skills B, D and F)

9. Student will experience from the inside some of the subtleties, complexities, and nuances of the most artistically significant American musical art form. (MCCC Core Skills B, D, F and G)

MCCC Core Skills

Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

Goal C. Ethical Decision-Making. Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.

Goal D. Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

Goal F. Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.

Goal G. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.
B. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Prompt and regular class attendance.
2. Timely completion and practice of all study materials.
3. Two tests and a final evaluation.
4. Participation in one public performance of repertoire studied in class.

C. METHOD OF DELIVERY

Course material will be presented in a combination of lecture segments in which theoretical constructs will be presented and explicated (inclusive listening to recordings of jazz greats) and immediate practical application of concepts in a group improvisation format.

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**Academic Integrity Policy**

As stated in the student handbook, “A student will be guilty of violating academic integrity if he/she (a) knowingly represents the work of others as his/her own, (b) uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in the execution of academic work, or (c) gives fraudulent assistance to another student.” Students should read the Academic Integrity policy in the MCCC Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

*Academic Dishonesty will result in failure of this course.*

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**Accommodations**

Mercer County Community College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented differing ability or think that you may have a differing ability that is protected under the ADA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact Arlene Stinson in LB 216 {stinsona@mccc.edu} for information regarding support services.

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**Financial Aid Application Statement**

It is recommended that student complete an application for financial aid to determine eligibility for financial assistance. The application is **FREE** and available for completion beginning **October 1, 2016** for the 2017-18 academic year. Visit www.fafsa.edu.gov to complete your application. Applications should be completed **before** December 1, 2016. Students who are interested in MCCC Foundation scholarships are expected to complete an application as well.
D. TOPICAL OUTLINE

WEEK 1  The Mixolydian Mode— structure, derivation and usage; dominant 7th chord structures

ASSIGNMENT:
- Learn the Mixolydian mode on C, F, and G.
- Learn the arpeggios of C9 and C13, F9 and F13, and G9 and G13.
- Learn rhythm studies on each of the above chords.

WEEK 2  The Mixolydian Mode (continued)

ASSIGNMENT:
- Learn melodic formulas 1 through 4 on C7 and transpose to F7 and G7.
- Begin improvising slowly over the chords of C7, F7, and G7 using the scales, arpeggios, and melodic formulas.

WEEK 3  The 12-Bar Blues Form— Riff Study No. 1

ASSIGNMENT:
- Learn the chord sequence and melody of Riff Study No. 1 in C, and improvise over the chord changes, employing all the melodic devices studied so far.

WEEK 4  The Mixolydian Mode (continued)— Riff Study No. 2 in C

ASSIGNMENT:
- Learn melodic formulas 5 through 8 on C7 and transpose to F7 and G7.
- Learn melody and chord sequence to Riff Study No. 2 and improvise over the chord changes.

WEEK 5  Practice Tune— “Blue Monk” and 12-Bar Blues Solo No. 1

ASSIGNMENT:
- Learn melodic formulas 9 and 10 on C7 and transpose to F7 and G7.
- Learn chord sequence and melody of “Blue Monk” and improvise.
- Memorize 12-bar Blues Solo No. 1 and perform it over the chord changes to “Blue Monk”.

WEEK 6  Mixolydian Practice Licks

ASSIGNMENT:
- Learn practice licks 1 through 5 on C7 and 5 through 10 on F7.
- Transpose the above licks to the chord of G7.
• Review the “Blue Monk” and incorporate practice licks into improvisations.

**WEEK 7**

**The Blues Scale and Practice Licks**

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- Learn the blues scale in the keys of C and F as well as the accompanying practice licks.
- Review Riff Study No. 1 and 2, and “Blue Monk:” and begin incorporating the C blues scale into your improvisations.

**WEEK 8**

**MITERM EVALUATION**

Prepare two choruses of a composed “improvisation” to be performed over the chord sequence of “Blue Monk”. Incorporate Mixolydian-based ideas (scales, arpeggios, melodic formulas, practice licks) alongside judicious use of the blues scale in C. Also be prepared to improvise freely.

**WEEK 9**

**The Mixolydian Mode** (continued)— 12-Bar Blues in F

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- Learn the Mixolydian mode on the chord of B$^{\flat}7$.
- Prepare a practice sheet on B$^{\flat}7$ that includes scale, arpeggios of the 9$^{th}$ and 13$^{th}$, melodic formulas 1 through 10, and assortment of practice licks.
- Memorize the chord sequence for the 12-bar blues in the key of F.
- Review the blues scale in F.

**WEEK 10**

**Practice Tune**— “Bessie’s Blues” and 12-Bar Blues Solo No. 2

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- Learn the melody and chord sequence to “Bessie’s Blues” and practice improvising in the key of F using Mixolydian material and the blues scale in F.
- Memorize 12-bar blues Solo No. 2 in C and transpose to key of F.

**WEEK 11**

**Blues in F continued and 12-Bar Blues Solo No. 3**

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- Learn the melody and chord sequence to “Bessie’s Blues” and practice improvising in the key of F using Mixolydian material and the blues scale in F.
- Memorize 12-bar blues Solo No. 2 in C and transpose to key of F.

**WEEK 12**

**Practice Tune**— “Eighty-One” and the Dominant 7th Sus. 4 Chord

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- Learn “Eighty-One” and sus. 4 chord forms.
- Improvise over the chords using a freer (less idiomatic) approach to your solo.
- Review “Blue Monk” and “Bessie’s Blues”.

**WEEK 13**

**The Mixolydian Mode continued and 12-Bar Blues in B♭**

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- Learn the Mixolydian mode on the chord of E♭7.
- Prepare a practice sheet on E♭7 that includes scale, arpeggios of the 9th and 13th, melodic formulas, and practice licks.
- Learn the blues scale in B♭.
- Review “Bessie’s Blues” and “Eighty-One”.

**WEEK 14**

**Practice Tune**— “Bluesology” and 12-Bar Blues Solo No. 4

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- Learn the melody and chord sequence of “Bluesology”.
- Memorize 12-Bar Blues Solo No. 4 in B♭ and transpose to key of F.
- Improvise over the chord sequence of “Bluesology” using the appropriate Mixolydian modes, the blues scale, melodic formulas, and practice licks combined to form a cohesive musical statement.

**WEEK 15**

**Consolidate and Review**

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- Review “Bluesology”, “Eighty-One,” “Bessie’s Blues,” and “Blue Monk” in addition to all four 12-Bar Blues solos, melodic formulas, and practice licks in the three blues keys studied thus far.

**WEEK 16**

**FINAL EVALUATION**

Prepare and memorize an original 12-bar blues composition in the key of G, along with an original 12-bar solo to be performed in class during exam period. You will need to run the chord of D7 in the key of G so prepare necessary practice materials.