EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION
MUSIC
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Music Department
FA / MUSI 4032 3.0 SECTION A
CONTEMPORARY MUSICIANSHIP & IMPROV.
FALL 2020 / WINTER 2021

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Designed to integrate musicianship training with work in composition and improvisation. Development of the skills, strategies and sensibilities required to have fluency in spontaneous solo and ensemble music making, and the development and refining of one’s own musical voice are among the main course objectives. Admission is by audition in September. Continuation of FA/MUSI 3032 6.00. Prerequisite: FA/MUSI 3032 6.00 or permission of the Instructor, by audition. Open to non-majors. Prerequisite: FA/MUSI 3032 6.00 or permission of Instructor, by audition. 

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INSTRUCTOR(S)

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brubeck, Matt</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / Y</td>
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SPECIAL FEATURES

MUSI 1032, 2032, 3032, 4032: Contemporary Musicianship and Improvisation

F/W 2020-21

1. Special Features
Expanded Course Description

This studio course is designed to integrate musicianship training with work in improvisation. Development of the skills, strategies, and sensibilities required to achieve fluency in spontaneous solo and ensemble music-making (e.g. “free” or “open” improvisation) and the refining of one’s own musical voice are among the main goals. The concepts/exercises presented in this course embrace a broad range of improvisational strategies and practices, as well as a more compositional orientation to improvisation. Contemporary Musicianship and Improvisation emphasizes experiential education. While theoretical concepts are examined, most learning takes place by “doing”. Through participation in classroom activities and working on take-home assignments, students will gain insights into their personal creative process. Students will also have the opportunity to consolidate these activities into a creative project, such as a composition and/or recording. The classroom environment is designed to be relaxed and non-competitive, so that students are free to experiment, take risks, make “mistakes”, and share in the mutual support necessary for creative undertaking.
Location

For the 2020-2021 academic year, this course depends on remote teaching and learning via the eClass platform (formerly known as Moodle). At the time of this writing, there are no in-class interactions or activities scheduled on campus. Students are expected to participate in class through videoconferencing (e.g. ZOOM). Class meetings may be recorded.

Technical Requirements for MUSI X032 in 2020-2021

eClass, Zoom, and (possibly) collaborative audio formats will be platforms through which students will interact with the course materials, the Course Director, as well as with one another. In order to engage fully with the class, students are expected to have access to the following:

- A stable, high-speed internet connection (ethernet is better than WiFi, if available)
- Personal email address and the ability to receive and submit digital files (e.g. written assignments, compositions, recordings etc.)
- A computer or smart device with webcam, microphone, headphones/ear buds (for videoconferencing)
- An audio and/or video recording device (e.g. computer/phone/tablet)
- Computer notation software or manuscript paper
- A printer or a computer/tablet screen large enough to display musical notation
- Ability to scan/photograph and upload handwritten documents to your instructor if necessary

Organization of the Course

All classes are synchronous and will be held “live” via Zoom on Thursdays from 11:30am – 12:50pm (Toronto Time Zone). Students will need to log into the MUSI X032 eClass site using their Passport York authentication. Then click on the Zoom Meetings icon, where the link for each weekly meeting will be found.

2. Topics and Concepts

Below is a partial list of what may be explored in this course:

- Compositional exercises and structures for improvisation
- Non-traditional notation and instructional/graphic scores
- Short readings
- Improvisation with text and spoken word
- Improvisational conducting
- Collaborative work with artists from in other disciplines (e.g. dance/film)
- Recording projects

3. Learning Outcomes with Examples

The ability to improvise is a valuable transferable skill that can be applied to diverse musical genres as students pursue their careers. Important learning outcomes include:

- To gain basic competence in a variety of traditional and contemporary improvisation techniques
- To achieve competence in real-time recognition of intervals, chords, rhythms, meters etc.
- To explore strategies for melodic transformation e.g. embellishment, sequencing etc.
-To develop an understanding of the hierarchal and dynamic relationship between meter and rhythm.
-To gain facility in notating one’s ideas to form a composition.
-To increase musical attention, concentration, and memory.
-To interact creatively with other musicians by improvising “in the moment”

4. Graded Assessment

The final grade for the course will be based on the following items weighted as indicated:

- Participation (weekly preparation, active engagement in class activities) 40%
- Individual performance tests 20%
- Take home assignments 30%
- Final Project 10%
- Total 100%

Important Note

Any student with a letter of accommodation from York U’s Student Accessibility Services must submit the letter to their tutor within the first 2 weeks of class. Retroactive accommodations are not usually permitted.

Participation

Engaged participation is vital for success in the course. Tardiness and absenteeism are not tolerated in the real world (“the show must go on”) and are therefore strongly discouraged in performance training. In this way, students can develop the work ethic of the professional musical community. Students are permitted two unexcused absences per year for unpredictable life events. After two unexcused absences, each additional unexcused absence will result in a 5-point deduction from the student’s Participation mark. Late arrivals or early departures (10 minutes grace) are disruptive to the class and will negatively affect the Participation mark.

Assignment Submission/Lateness Penalty

Proper academic performance depends on students following assignment directions, completing their work, and submitting it on time. Accordingly, the assignments required for this course must be received on the due date. Late assignments will be penalized one-half letter grade per day (e.g. from a B+ down to a B) for each day past the due date (including weekends). Strictness in this regard is not meant to be punitive but is intended to encourage students to keep pace with the class as a whole, as well as receive timely feedback. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be considered by the Course Instructor and should be discussed in advance of the due date.

Missed Performance Tests

Students with a valid reason for missing a test, such as illness, personal difficulties, etc., may request accommodation from the Course Instructor in advance. Arrangements for make-up tests are made on a case-by-case basis.

REMINDER

Last date to drop a full year (Y) course without receiving a grade is:

February 5, 2021
5. Additional Information

Communication

- The MUSI X032 eClass site and your personal email will be the primary means of communication. In eClass you will find the course schedule, assignments, announcements, forums and a portal for uploading assignments and sharing collaborative work. Students are also expected to check their primary email regularly. To facilitate timely communication, please make sure that your preferred email address matches your email address in your eClass profile. Remember, the Course Director cannot change your eClass profile email. Only you can do that. Additionally, if you change your primary email address, please provide the Course Director your new preferred email address ASAP via an email sent to: mattbru@yorku.ca. Students with questions/concerns about MUSI X032 should email the Course Director.

- If you are unable to participate in a regular class meeting for any reason, please inform the Course Director in advance, or as soon as possible, by email. Excused absences are typically based on the following circumstances: 1) Serious illness 2) Non-movable appt., 3) family tragedy and so forth. Such absences will be excused, provided they are either arranged in advance with the Course Director, or communicated via email when they occur.

Improvisation Soirées

Soirées are informal concerts of spontaneous music making that are usually held four times per year on the York campus. They are inclusive, participatory gatherings that are open to the community and provide an opportunity for MUSI X032 students to perform with other students and/or their tutors. Unfortunately, due to health restrictions related to COVID 19, improvisations soirées are not scheduled for the 2020-2021 academic year. If soirées are scheduled at a later date, students will be informed.

Academic Policies / Information

The Senate Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee (ASCP) provides a Student Information Sheet that includes:
- York’s Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures / Academic Integrity Web site
- Access/Disability
- Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants
- Religious Observance Accommodation
- Student Code of Conduct

Additional information:
- Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
- Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy

The Senate Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy stipulates that (a) the grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and that, (b) under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for ‘full year’ courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course without receiving a grade.

- Important University Sessional Dates (you will find classes and exams start/end dates, reading/cocurricular week, add/drop deadlines, holidays, University closings and more)
- Manage my Academic record
• "20% Rule"

No examinations or tests collectively worth more than 20% of the final grade in a course will be given during the final 14 calendar days of classes in a term. The exceptions to the rule are classes which regularly meet Friday evenings or on Saturday and/or Sunday at any time, and courses offered in the compressed summer terms.

Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University’s course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

Moodle @ York University