
Applied Jazz Theory Course Syllabus

Introduction to Basic Music Theory and Basic Rhythmic Concepts

This unit is an introductory segment to the theoretical foundations of western tonality. In this unit, students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Correctly identify the usage and functions of staves, clefs, and basic traditional musical notation.
- Correctly construct chromatic and major scales.
- Correctly determine key signatures and identify key signature relationships.
- Interpret, read and write basic rhythmic concepts in given tempi.
- Interpret, read and write basic melodic concepts in given tempi and key signatures.
- Accurately identify and transcribe intervals, rhythmic patterns and simple melodies.

The Introductory unit is in place to insure that all students are given an opportunity to establish firm grasp of basic theoretical concepts before moving forward to more advanced skills and applications.

Unit I: Pentatonic Scales, Structure and Applications

Unit I explores fundamental Major and minor Pentatonic Scale Structure and applications. In Unit I students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Correctly identify and interpret chord symbols.
- Distinguish the difference between Major and minor chords both visually and aurally.
- Correctly apply the appropriate pentatonic scale to the indicated chord.
- Accurately identify and transcribe intervals, harmonies, rhythmic patterns and simple melodies through dictation exercises.

The theoretical concepts explored in **Unit I** are designed to match the performance requirements of the **Jazz Instrumentalist Accreditation Program**. Students who successfully complete **Unit I** should be able to demonstrate the ability to apply these concepts to improvisation skills through performance on their individual instruments. These basic improvisational skills match all of the audition requirements for the first level of achievement (*Proficient*) in the **Jazz IAP**.

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Unit II: Modal Scales and Diatonic Harmony

Unit II explores fundamental Diatonic Harmony, modal Scale Structure, applications and Basic Harmonic Analysis. In Unit II students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Correctly identify and interpret chord symbols.
- Analyze harmonic progressions relative to given key signatures.
- Correctly identify the differences between Major and minor chords both visually and aurally.
- Correctly apply the appropriate modal scales and arpeggios to the indicated chords.
- Accurately identify and transcribe intervals, harmonies, rhythmic patterns and simple melodies through dictation exercises.

The theoretical concepts explored in **Unit II** are designed to match the performance requirements of the **Jazz Instrumentalist Accreditation Program**. Students who successfully complete **Unit II** should be able to demonstrate the ability to apply these concepts to improvisation skills through performance on their individual instruments. These basic improvisational skills match all of the audition requirements for the second level of achievement (*Commendable*) in the **Jazz IAP**.

Unit III: Blues Scales, Structure, Form and Applications

Unit III explores fundamental Blues Harmony, Blues Scale Structure and applications and Basic Blues Harmonic Analysis. In Unit III students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Correctly identify and interpret Blues chord symbols and Basic Blues Harmony.
- Analyze harmonic progressions relative to given key signatures.
- Correctly identify Blues Harmonic and Melodic elements both visually and aurally.
- Correctly apply the appropriate pentatonic, modal and blues scales and arpeggios to the indicated chords.
- Accurately identify and transcribe intervals, harmonies, rhythmic patterns and melodies through dictation exercises.

The theoretical concepts explored in **Unit III** are designed to match the performance requirements of the **Jazz Instrumentalist Accreditation Program**. Students who successfully complete **Unit III** should be able to demonstrate the ability to apply these concepts to improvisation skills through performance on their individual instruments. These basic improvisational skills match all of the audition requirements for the third level of achievement (*Distinguished*) in the **Jazz IAP**.

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Unit IV: Advanced Harmony, Structure, Form and Applications

Unit IV explores Advanced Harmonic concepts, Blues Scale Structure and Advanced Harmonic Analysis. In Unit IV students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Correctly identify and interpret Major, minor, Augmented and diminished chord symbols.
- Correctly analyze complex harmonic progressions relative to given key signatures.
- Correctly apply the appropriate pentatonic, modal, blues and diminished scales and arpeggios to the indicated chords.
- Accurately identify and transcribe intervals, harmonies, rhythmic patterns and melodies through dictation exercises.

The theoretical concepts explored in **Unit IV** are designed to match the performance requirements of the **Jazz Instrumentalist Accreditation Program**. Students who successfully complete **Unit IV** should be able to demonstrate the ability to apply these concepts to improvisation skills through performance on their individual instruments. These basic improvisational skills match all of the audition requirements for the fourth and highest level of achievement (*Accomplished*) in the **Jazz IAP**.

Unit V: Basic Arranging and Orchestration

Unit V explores Advanced Harmonic concepts, writing and arranging for traditional transposing jazz instruments as well as for drum kit. In Unit V students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Correctly transpose melodic material into the key and playable range of traditional jazz instruments.
- Correctly write and arrange notation for drum kit.
- Correctly apply the appropriate pentatonic, modal, blues and diminished scales and arpeggios to the indicated chords.
- Accurately identify and transcribe intervals, harmonies, rhythmic patterns and melodies through dictation exercises.
- Arrange an existing composition for traditional jazz instruments.
- Compose an original work for traditional jazz instruments.

Unit V consists of projects with specific requirements established to afford jazz theory students the experience of arranging and composing original material for a small jazz combo as well as a large jazz ensemble.