



MUS 132/337  
Jazz Piano

**Course Syllabus:** Spring, 2026

## Instructor Information

Instructor:	Mike Springer
Classroom Location:	Online
Office Location:	Online
Office Hours:	by appointment
Office Phone:	972-977-2937
University E-mail:	Mike.Springer@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication:	Email
Communication Response Time:	24 hours

## Course Information

### Course Description

Provides piano majors or students with intermediate to advanced piano skills training in jazz piano skills, including comping, basic improvisation, reading lead sheets, jazz theory, and jazz piano history.

### Student Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate understand of most important events and figures in jazz history.
2. Demonstrate understanding of the jazz pianist as a solo player and in jazz ensembles.
3. Learn and perform accurately at least two ensemble pieces, with the student pianist playing lead.
4. Learn the stylistic rudiments of the ballad and blues styles, with improvisation.
5. Demonstrate understanding of lead sheet realization.

### Required Textbook

All students must purchase "The Real Book" sixth edition, published by Hal Leonard. This book can be obtained through local music stores, online music stores, or Amazon.

All students must purchase the APP "iRealPro" which is available for both Apple and Android platforms.

# Course Requirements

## Instructional Methods

Instruction will be given in the form of online lessons (½ hour weekly). A Zoom link will be provided for the lessons.

## Assessments:

By the second week of the semester, all students must have purchased copies of their music and the iReal Pro app.

**Required Practice:** Students are required to practice daily. Suggested practice routine is 30-60 minutes per day at least five days per week.

**Midterm Project:** All students will be required to write a brief paper for their midterm project. The paper should include a brief history of jazz, and should focus on at least two important pianists in jazz history, along with the importance of their role in shaping and/or changing jazz style. The paper should be between two and five double-spaced typed pages in length. The due date for this project is no later than March 15, 2024. Papers received after this date will have 10 points deducted from the overall grade for each day the paper is late.

Research topics and jazz piano legends to consider for your research:

1. Ragtime
2. The “swing” era
3. Blues
4. Bop
5. New Orleans
6. Some of the great jazz pianists in history:
  1. Art Tatum
  2. Thelonius Monk
  3. Chick Corea
  4. Bill Evans
  5. Herbie Hancock
  6. Oscar Peterson
  7. Bud Powell
  8. Keith Jarrett
  9. Erroll Garner
  10. Scott Joplin
  11. Dave Brubeck

Please keep in mind that this is only a fraction of the great topics available to you! I'm open to any other significant contributor, style, or topic. We will be discussing this project during the fourth lesson of the semester.

## Assessments

### Grading

Weekly lesson preparation: 60%

Midterm project: 20%

Final Jury: 20%

A=100-90 B=89-80 C= 79-70 D= 69-60 F=59 and below

## Course and University Procedures / Policies

### Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance

### Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all required classes and events. Only 1 absence will be allowed; after that, each absence will result in the deduction of 10 points from your semester grade. I reserve the right to drop a student from the course after four absences. Repeated lateness (after two) for class will also be penalized by lowering your final grade by 5 points for each tardy. Medical excuses and university-sponsored trips are acceptable reasons for missing class. If you do not have your materials during your lesson, that lesson will count as an absence.

Students are expected to be hard-working and forthright, and are expected to come prepared to their lesson. Lack of preparation is no excuse for rescheduling lessons. Lessons may only be rescheduled in case of illness, school event, or if I am unavailable for a scheduled lesson.

### Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures: [Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

### Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability

requiring an accommodation, contact the Office of Student Disability Services at 903-886-5150, 903-886—5835; email [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu); online at [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#); or in-person in Room 162 of the Velma K. Waters Library.

### Tenets of Common Behavior

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See current Student Guidebook);

### Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf> and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.