

# THE BLUE CAT BIG BAND

## Course Syllabus – MUS 100J.003

*Texas A&M University - Commerce  
Department of Music*

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### MUSIC DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The Music Department of Texas A&M University-Commerce promotes excellence in music through the rigorous study of music history, literature, theory, composition, pedagogy, and the preparation of music performance in applied study and ensembles to meet the highest standards of aesthetic expression.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

#### **Rehearsals: T/Th 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Ellison Hall (156)**

The ensemble studies jazz in its various styles through rehearsal, presentation of material, assignment and group performances. This course also places an emphasis on improvisation by educating and encouraging students in the fundamentals of style in the jazz idiom. Basic musical competence and understanding, as well as aesthetic understanding of jazz performance, is developed. This course also aims to equip future educators to address stylistic and pedagogical aspects of jazz ensemble performance. Students should be in attendance on time, with all necessary instruments and accessories, and with all required charts.

#### Course objectives:

- Exhibit accurate individual, sectional and ensemble intonation and rhythm along with fundamental and advanced instrumental techniques while performing a varied repertoire of music within the jazz idiom
- Perform expressively a varied repertoire of music representing styles and diverse cultures within the jazz idiom
- Utilize standard musical terminology to describe jazz styles intervals, music notation, chord structure, rhythm/meter, harmonic texture, form, and music symbols and terms referring to dynamics, tempo, and articulation
- Utilize problem-solving skills to identify and correct problems with jazz styles, pitch, rhythm/meter, articulation, phrasing, and dynamics within a rehearsal setting

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Due to the nature of the ensemble the absence of an individual player adversely affects the progress of the group. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to maintain full staffing of the ensemble at every rehearsal, sectional and performance. Unavoidable conflicts must be brought to the attention of the director *as soon as possible*. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence. The director, in consultation with the department chair or other university official(s) if necessary, will determine if the absence will be considered “excused.”

Each unexcused absence from rehearsals or sectionals will lower your course grade by one letter. An unexcused absence from a performance will automatically result in a failing grade.

## COURSE GRADING

The course grade will be determined by attendance, preparation (as evidenced in rehearsals/sectionals and performance exams), and professionalism. Students failing to meet these standards will be notified by the director throughout the semester as needed, and appropriate strategies for improvement will be discussed.

Whereas a *basic* understanding of improvisation is a key element of jazz performance and pedagogy, all ensemble members will be required to perform at least one solo on a concert during the semester. Activities will be assigned to students with minimal improvisation skills to help them develop an effective solo. These assignments will be factored as 10% of the final course grade.

## CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONALISM

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment (*Student Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct*.) Your behavior as a performer or audience member reflects directly on the studio, the Department of Music, and the University. You are expected to act in a professional manner while performing or attending any public event associated with the University. Unnecessary talking, rude behavior, or disruptive conduct during rehearsals/performances (this includes *between pieces and during set changes*) will not be tolerated by the faculty.

**The ability to present yourself as a professional is not magically bestowed upon you at graduation; it is a skill-set that you must develop throughout your academic career. The relationships you establish with faculty and colleagues now can significantly affect your future. *The professor reserves the right to dismiss a student from the course and/or request the reduction or revocation of a student’s scholarship award as a result of repeated or egregious unprofessional or illegal activities.***

## COMMUNICATION

Email is the most important means of communication within the ensemble and the Department of Music. You are expected to check your email daily and respond promptly when necessary. Missing important announcements, deadlines or events because you fail to check your email regularly is completely unprofessional.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library  
Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)