

COURSE OVERVIEW

- **MUSI 3630 – History of Jazz**
- **This course satisfies 3 semester hours in Core Area C: Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics.**
- **There are no pre-requisites for this course. No previous experience in music or with music technology is expected or required. It is not necessary to read music, play an instrument, or have experience with Jazz music or performance to do well in this course.**

- **General Description**

This class will examine Jazz from its origins in early 20th century New Orleans to the multiplicity of styles in the present-day. Special attention will be given to pivotal figures in the history of Jazz such as Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Ornette Coleman. Throughout the course, the history and development of the Jazz language will be connected to the historical, social, and economic contexts in which it developed. The majority of class time will be spent listening to, analyzing, and discussing a wide variety of recorded Jazz performances as well as specific ideas and concepts presented in the documentary miniseries Jazz directed by Ken Burns. Outside of class you will be attending live Jazz performances, listening to recordings and reading about the artists that brought this music to life. The overarching course goal is to help you increase your understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of this great American art form, as well as developing listening skills and your ability to communicate clearly and intelligently about music.

SYLLABUS

DATE: Fall 2026 (August 24 to December 17)

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: MUSI 3630 – History of Jazz

CREDITS & HOURS: 3 credit hours with humanities attribute

COURSE TYPE: Remote Asynchronous

INSTRUCTOR:

- Dr. Frank Clark – fclark@music.gatech.edu
 - West Village – Room 273 – (404) 894-8964
 - Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EDT with scheduled appointment

PROCEDURES: The class is structured around five modules which address the basics of listening to Jazz, understanding major styles, examining key figures in the development of the Jazz language, and exploring connections to the historical, social, and economic environments in which Jazz developed. Each module is comprised of a multiple lessons and a short quiz. Modules 2–5 also include an exam.

PREREQUISITE: There are no prerequisites for this fifteen-week course.

GENERAL OVERVIEW: Through a combination of lecture, reading, guided listening, discussion, and attending live performances, the development, history, and cultural context of Jazz will be explored.

EXPECTATIONS:

1. No previous experience in music is expected or required. It is not necessary to read music, play an instrument, or have experience with music technology of any kind to do well in this course.
2. Quizzes and Exams: there are quizzes at the end of each of the five overarching modules. There are four exams: one at the end of modules 2–5. The written exams are not cumulative and cover the lecture and listening materials presented in the lessons.
3. There is no required textbook, but free online lectures and resources will be utilized.
4. Participation in class discussions is strongly recommended.

COURSE GOALS: By the end of this course, you will learn to:

1. Develop improved critical and analytic listening skills.
2. Acquire an ability to identify and discuss stylistic trends in Jazz through recognition of musical characteristics and performance practices.
3. Understand how, where, and why Jazz developed as it has.
4. Possess an awareness of the important innovators throughout Jazz history and know why they are considered as such.
5. Recognize and discuss the musical styles and cultural practices that influenced the evolution of Jazz.
6. Identify Jazz styles studied in the course and articulate the distinctive characteristics from each well-defined period of Jazz.
7. Have an increased awareness and understanding of the history of Jazz in terms of its place in the American cultural, political, economic and social fabric.
8. Be aware of issues of race and discrimination in America as they relate to Jazz music, musicians and their evolution.
9. Understand how the evolution of recording technology and radio broadcasts impacted Jazz and its development.
10. Listen to unknown examples – similar to those studied in the course – and based on the musical elements and stylistic characteristics, make conclusions about its historical context, possible artist, approximate date, and genre.
11. Utilize important terms and concepts in discussions about representative Jazz styles as portrayed through live performance and recordings.
12. Compare and contrast Jazz styles considered throughout the semester and relate their style characteristics to aspects of cultural history.

IMPACTS: This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

- This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:
 - How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?

- Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:
 - Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.
- Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:
 - Ethical Reasoning
 - Information Literacy
 - Intercultural Competence

REQUIRED TEXT: None

RECOMMENDED TEXTS FOR DEPTH AND EXPLORATION:

- Deveaux, Scott, and Giddens, Gary (2015). *Jazz*, Second Edition, W.W. Norton & Company, ISBN 9780393937063.
- Tanner, Paul O.W., and Megill, David W. (2013). *Jazz*, Twelfth Edition, McGraw-Hill, ISBN 9780078025112.
- Ward, Geoffrey C., and Burns, Ken (2000) *Jazz: A History of America's Music*, Third Edition, Alfred A. Knopf, ISBN 9780679765394.

COMPUTER SKILLS USED: Word processing, e-mail, file management, Internet research and file downloading, and digital audio usage.

TECHNOLOGY/SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS:

- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)
- Laptop or desktop computer with video camera capability
- Adobe Acrobat PDF reader (free download; see <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>)
- Microsoft Word and PowerPoint
- MP3 and/or FLAC/ALAC audio playback
- Not required, but recommended: Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz in FLAC at <https://archive.org/details/Smithsonian-Collection-of-Classic-Jazz-lossless>

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

1. Lecture (recorded)
2. Online Discussion
3. Structured Listening
4. Selected Reference Readings

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

The following evaluative tools will be utilized in measuring progress towards obtaining the class objectives:

Concert Report 1	15%
Concert Report 2	15%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	15%
Exam 3	15%
Exam 4	15%
Quizzes (5)	<u>10%</u>
TOTAL	100%

All Quizzes, and Exams, and Concert reports will be graded by points. The final grade for the course will be determined by dividing the total points earned by the number of points possible for each of the categories listed in Method of Evaluation. These numbers will be converted into a grade according to the following scale: A=100-90%, B=89-80%, C=79-70%, D= 69-60%, F= 59% and below.

LATE WORK:

As concepts and projects in this class build on each other, it is imperative that all reading and listening assignments as well as Concert Reports be completed on time. Concert Reports will lose one full letter grade for each day they are late or if they are returned for resubmission. For example, if a Concert Report is due on Monday and it is not turned in until Wednesday, then a grade of B would be lowered to a D. The only way to avoid this penalty is to obtain an extension in writing (or by e-mail) from the instructor in advance of the assignment deadline. Please note that Quizzes and Exams are due by the date listed in Canvas. Naturally, allowances can and will be made for documented illnesses, religious reasons, and family emergencies. Quizzes, Exams, and Concert Reports cannot be made up unless there is a valid, documented excuse.

EXTRA CREDIT POLICY:

There is an abundance of Extra Credit available in this course. The MUSI 3630 Individual Grade Calculator should be used to determine how Extra Credit can positively impact your final grade. Please note that NO EXTRA CREDIT WILL BE COUNTED TOWARDS THE FINAL GRADE unless the following criteria are met:

1. The two Concert Reports are submitted earning an average grade of 70 or above.
2. All four Exams are taken earning an average grade of 65 or above.
3. All five Quizzes are completed earning an average grade of 70 or above.

TIMING POLICY:

- The Modules and lessons follow a logical sequence.
- Quizzes, Exams, and Concert Reports should be completed by their due dates.
- Exams must be completed during the time allotted.
- You will have access to the course content for the scheduled duration of the course.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- This is a fully online course. Thus, no attendance in the traditional sense is taken.
- It is strongly recommended that you log in on a regular basis to stay up to date on content and complete assigned Quizzes, Exams, and Concert Reports.
 - There are many Announcements in Canvas throughout the course. It is important to review them as they contain critical course and content information.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students must do their own work on assignments, assessments, and projects, unless collaboration is previously specified. Students caught cheating will receive zero credit for that assignment/quiz/test and may be subject to further sanctions through the Office of Student Integrity. Students are expected to abide by the Georgia Tech Honor Code and avoid any instances of academic misconduct, including but not limited to:

1. Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or oral information in the preparation of a paper or for an exam.
2. Substitution of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another individual or individuals.

3. False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the student.

The Georgia Tech Honor Code and be reviewed at: <http://osi.gatech.edu/content/honor-code> and <https://osi.gatech.edu/honor-advisory-council> provides information about the Honor Advisory Council.

PLAGIARISM POLICY:

Plagiarism is considered a serious offense. You are not allowed to copy and paste or submit materials created or published by others, as if you created the materials. All materials submitted and posted must be your own or be properly cited and/or referenced. For more on citation and plagiarism, please refer to: <https://libguides.library.gatech.edu/c.php?g=1237583&p=9056595>.

STATEMENT REGARDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable accommodation. The Office of Disability Services will certify a disability and advise faculty members of reasonable accommodations. The web site for a student seeking accommodation is: <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>. The specific page to submit an accommodation request is: <https://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/students/getting-started>.

COMMUNICATION:

It is expected that we should ask questions, answer our fellow learners' questions when possible, and participate on the course discussions, opinion polls, and survey forums. Often, discussions with fellow students are the sources of key pieces of learning. It is also important to remember that communication with the instructor and/or teaching assistants is encouraged – this can be via e-mail and Microsoft Teams (<https://oit.gatech.edu/email>), Zoom (<https://gatech.zoom.us/>), in person during office hours, or by special arrangement. In short, there are a host of ways to communicate with other students, your teaching assistant(s), and/or your instructor. Please take advantage of the opportunity to connect to others as it will dramatically enhance your experience and connection to the course material.

NETIQUETTE:

1. Netiquette refers to etiquette that is used when communicating on the Internet. Review the [Core Rules of Netiquette](#). When you are communicating via email, discussion forums or synchronously (real-time), please use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar consistent with the academic environment and scholarship¹.
2. For online sessions, it is recommended that you keep the video on, the audio muted, and “signal” that you would like to speak.

GRIEVANCES AND CONCERNS:

Students who have grievances or concerns may refer to the Georgia Tech Academic Policy (<https://provost.gatech.edu/reporting-units/advocacy/academic-grievance-policy>) for information and reporting details. Additionally, if you need formal assistance, please contact [Dr. Kyla Ross](mailto:kyla.ross@gatech.edu) at kyla.ross@gatech.edu. Dr. Ross serves as the Assistant Vice Provost for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution.

¹ Conner, P. (2006-2014). Ground Rules for Online Discussions, Retrieved 4/21/2014 from <http://teaching.colostate.edu/tips/tip.cfm?tipid=128>

STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION:

The School of Music community of faculty, staff, and students aspires to create and nurture an environment that is supportive of all backgrounds where different views and ideas are respected and encouraged. In all our pursuits, we commit to justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion with regard to race, national origin, language, age, sexual orientation, gender, religion, and ability. Moreover, we will encourage intellectual inquiry and respectful exchange that cements our dedication to these principles.

DIGITAL LEARNING DAYS, MODIFIED CAMPUS OPERATIONS, AND EMERGENCIES:

The following policies are intended to address the most common reasons for interruptions of campus operations. Please recognize that certain scenarios (e.g., natural disaster) may not allow for digital instruction. The information below concerns regularly scheduled class meetings. Since all lectures and assignments for this course are in Canvas, they are not typically impacted by weather events or modified operations. Regardless of the reason(s) for a potential digital learning day, always check Canvas for the most recent details and updates.

- Weather – In the event of a weather-related event impacting campus, information regarding plans for a digital learning day will be posted in Canvas. If conditions permit, digital learning will be held via Teams or Zoom, otherwise class will be cancelled.
- Short-term Modified Campus Operations – Should it become necessary for the Institute to modify campus operations for one-to-two days, information regarding plans for a digital learning day will be posted in Canvas. If conditions permit, digital learning will be held via Teams or Zoom, otherwise class will be cancelled.
- Long-term or Recurring Modified Campus Operations – If it is necessary for the Institute to modify campus operations for the equivalent of three or more days, information regarding plans for digital learning days will be posted in Canvas. Digital learning will be held via Teams or Zoom until campus has returned to normal operations for classes.
- Emergency – In extreme cases, such as an emergency – a serious situation with inherent risk that requires immediate action – modified operations can include the cancellation or temporary suspension of all in-person and digital instruction. In such a case, be sure to check Canvas for details and updates. Also verify the current status of the situation through the [GTENS Emergency Notification System](#) and should it be necessary, call (404) 894-2500 for immediate assistance.

LAST, BUT NOT LEAST:

Try to approach the course with a sense of discovery and make a conscious decision to enjoy the material and have fun. The study of Music Technology provides terminologies, frameworks, and systems to clearly and correctly understand and create music – music that you already know or that is already inside you. If you positively engage the material on its own terms, you may well discover that this is just the beginning of a long and rewarding journey. In fact, the more you learn, the more you may want to learn.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Modules 1–4 (August 24 – September 2, 2026)

Major Theme: Beginnings to 1907 & Early Jazz (1907–1917)

- Module 1: Course Overview & Musical Basics
 - Lesson 1 – Structure and Organization of the Course
 - Ken Burns Jazz
 - Concert Reports
 - Exam Structure & Strategy

- How to Approach Listening
 - Practice Online Exam
- Lesson 2 – Defining Jazz
- Lesson 3 – Musical Elements
 - Terminology and Fundamentals
- Lesson 4 – Instruments
- Module 2: Origins
 - Lesson 1 – Folk Music, Blues, Minstrelsy
 - Lesson 2 – Dance Music, Brass Bands, Ragtime
 - Lesson 3 – New Orleans
- Module 3: Context I
 - Lesson 1 – Ken Burns Jazz Episode 1: Gumbo
 - Lesson 2 – Ken Burns Jazz Episode 2: The Gift
- Module 4: Guided Listening I
 - Lesson 1 – The Beginnings of Jazz
 - Lesson 2 – New Orleans
- Quiz 1

Modules 5–7 (September 3 – 20, 2026)

Major Theme: The Jazz Age (1917–1929)

- Module 5: A New Art
 - Lesson 1 – Louis Armstrong
 - Lesson 2 – The Great Migration and Chicago
 - Lesson 3 – New York and the Birth of Swing – Parts 1 and 2
 - Lesson 4 – Kansas City
 - Lesson 5 – Urban Blues
- Module 6: Context II
 - Lesson 1 – Ken Burns Jazz Episode 3: Our Language and Episode 4 – The True Welcome
- Module 7: Guided Listening II
 - Lesson 1 – Urban Blues, Early Jazz Classics, and the Birth of Swing
- Quiz 2
- Exam 1

Modules 8–11 (September 21 – October 11, 2026)

Major Theme: Hard Times to Good Times & Swing (1929–1939)

- Module 8: From Jazz to Swing
 - Lesson 1 – The Swing Era: 1935 – 1945
 - Lesson 2 – Big Band Special Focus
- Module 9: Soloists and Singers
 - Lesson 1 – The Great Jazz Vocalists
 - Lesson 2 – Women in Jazz
- Module 10: Context III
 - Lesson 1 – Ken Burns Jazz Episode 5: Swing, Pure Pleasure and Episode 6: Swing, the Velocity of Celebration
- Module 11: Guided Listening III
 - Lesson 1 – Swing Classics
- Quiz 3
- Exam 2

Modules 12–14 (October 12 – November 1, 2026)

Major Theme: Swing to Bebop to the Avant-garde (1940–1950)

- Module 12: Change
 - Lesson 1 – Bebop – Parts 1 and 2
 - Lesson 2 – Hard Bop – Parts 1 and 2
 - Lesson 3 – Cool Jazz – Parts 1 and 2
- Module 13: Context IV
 - Lesson 1 – Ken Burns Jazz Episode 7: Dedicated to Chaos and Episode 8: Risk
- Module 14: Guided Listening IV
 - Lesson 1 – Bebop, Hard Bop, Cool, and West Coast
- Quiz 4
- Exam 3
- Concert Report 1

Modules 15–17 (November 2 – December 8, 2026)

Major Theme: Jazz-Rock, Fusion, and Beyond (1950–Present)

- Module 15: New Directions
 - Lesson 1 – Free Jazz – Parts 1 and 2
 - Lesson 2 – Fusion – Parts 1 and 2
 - Lesson 3 – The Future of Jazz
- Module 16: Context V
 - Lesson 1 – Ken Burns Jazz Episode 9: The Adventure and Episode 10: A Masterpiece by Midnight
- Module 17: Guided Listening V
 - Lesson 1 – Free Jazz and Fusion
- Quiz 5
- Exam 4
- Concert Report 2
- Extra Credit Assignment (not required)