

MU 322.2 Improvisation

Fall 2009

Class meetings: Tuesday and Thursday 1:10 – 2:00 PM

Foy Concert Hall

Professor Joy Hirokawa

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Office Hours: M – Th 10:30 – 11:30 or by appointment

Goals: The goal of the Improvisation class is to enable student musicians an opportunity to escape from the printed page through an exploration of improvisation. Students will experience improvisation through rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and structural activities, as well as through movement, observation, listening, discussion and creative exercises.

Books: The Inner Game of Music by Barry Green. New York: Doubleday, 1986. ISBN 0-385-23126-1

Materials: As assigned in class. Comfortable clothing for movement and playing drums is recommended.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to uphold the standards of academic honesty, as they are spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students are required to be familiar with copyright issues as well as the college policy on plagiarism.

Grading: Grading will be determined as follows:

50% Classroom attendance and participation

50% Classroom evaluations, reflections, listening assignments and papers.

Expectations and Requirements:

- **Prompt attendance** for each class.
- **Assignments** must be turned in on time. On time means at the beginning of the class on the due date, or the time indicated for electronic submission. The instructor will indicate in class if an assignment is to be submitted in hard copy format or electronically. Late assignments will be dropped to the next fraction of a grade for each day late (A- becomes B+, etc.) All written assignments should be word processed in Times New Roman font, 12 point, double-spaced with 1" margins, unless otherwise indicated. Length of written assignments will be indicated with each assignment. Points may be deducted for not observing formatting instructions.
- **Assignments** to be submitted **electronically** will be submitted via Blackboard. All students are expected to register for this class on Blackboard by the second week of class.
- **The Written Word** – Every student needs to be articulate and be able to clearly express themselves in any number of situations. Correct grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and spelling will be an important aspect in the grading of any written work you submit, as will any citations related to research.
- **Electronic protocol** – Cell phones must be disabled during class. Texting in class is unacceptable. While email is an absolutely fabulous tool, and a direct means of communication, it can also be pretty overwhelming when that inbox is continually full, and can be downright annoying if the questions asked in the email could have been answered by simply re-reading the information already given to the students! **BEFORE** you email me with a question, please review all your notes and papers to see if you can find the information on your own, or ask a classmate. Please do **NOT** email me with questions about an assignment the night before the assignment is due. Your question will not be answered and you will be flogged (figuratively) in class. On the other hand, I welcome considered questions and dialogue, and of course if you are at all confused about

something, please ask. Remember that my door is (almost) always open (Office 305), so don't be shy.

- **Disclaimer!** – This syllabus should be considered a flexible document. As the semester unfolds, revisions may occur.

Major Assignments:

- Several projects presented in class will be evaluated by your peers. These evaluations will become part of your classroom evaluation grade.
- Two papers on **The Inner Game of Music**.
- Final Reflection paper.
- Several written responses to recordings and/or on-line videos.
- Your individual participation and contribution to the class will be the critical weight in your grade.

Major Topics:

Rhythmic Improvisation/Drumming
Found Sounds
Vocal Improvisation
Instrumental Improvisation
Historical applications of Improvisation
Contemporary Music and Improvisation
Contemporary Music and Notation