

Course Syllabus: Jazz Musicians and Singers
Winter 2022 LLC
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Class 1 -- January 12: Thelonius Sphere Monk (1917-1982) Piano

Hour 1: Welcome, introductions, organization of the course **Mark and Ruth**

Hour 2: Monk! **Presenter: Ruth Guyer**

“You had to see Monk to hear his music properly. The most important instrument in the group—whatever the format—was his body. He didn’t play the piano really. His body was his instrument and the piano was just a means of getting the sound out of his body ... if you blotted out everything except his body you would think he was playing the drums, foot going up and down on the hi-hat, arms reaching ...”

Watch

- Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser (1988)

Read

- “Jazz: The Loneliest Monk.” *Time Magazine*, 1964 (PDF)
- “Monk.” Whitney Balliett, *Goodbyes and Other Messages*. (PDF)

Class 2 -- January 19: Mary Lou Williams (1910-1981) Piano

“Anything you are shows up in your music – jazz is whatever you are, playing yourself, being yourself, letting your thoughts come through.”

Hour 1 **Presenter: Jessi Rowe**

Watch

- The Lady Who Swings the Band (2015) *and/or*
- The Legacy of Mary Lou Williams: <https://www.pbs.org/video/university-place-the-legacy-of-mary-lou-williams-ep-492/>

Read

- “Out Here Again.” Whitney Balliett, *American Musicians: 56 Portraits in Jazz* (PDF)
- Obituary: <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/05/30/obituaries/mary-lou-williams-a-jazz-great-dies.html>

Hour 2 suggestions **Presenter: Sheila Brush**

- The Girls in the Band (video)
- Duke Ellington and his orchestra
- Café Society
- Charlie Parker

- Jazz at Carnegie Hall
- Jazz at the White House
- A Great Day in Harlem (historic photograph)

Class 3 -- January 26: Miles Davis (1926-1991) Trumpet

"It takes a long time to play like yourself."

Hour 1

Presenter: Philip Weinstein

Watch

- The Miles Davis Story (2001)

Read

- "Miles (Alone) Ahead." Nat Hentoff, *Jazz is* (PDF)
- Obituary: <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0525.html>

Hour 2 suggestions

Presenter: Sandra Gandsman

- Miles as a painter
- Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, others whose careers were jump started by Miles
- Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and Bebop
- Gil Evans, arranger
- Heroin addiction
- The trumpet family: trumpet, cornet, mellophone, flugelhorn

Class 4 -- February 2: John Coltrane (1926-1967) Saxophone

"I start in the middle of a sentence and move both ways at once."

Hour 1

Presenter: Martha Cussler

Watch

- Chasing Trane (2017)

Read

- "Express Trane." Nat Hentoff, *Jazz is*. (PDF)
- Obituary: <https://www.johncoltrane.com/biography>

Hour 2 suggestions

Presenter: Mark Guyer

- A Love Supreme
- Alice Coltrane
- Ravi Coltrane, Oran Coltrane
- The Saxophone family: soprano, tenor, alto, baritone, bass

Class 5 -- February 9: Marian McPartland (1918-2013) Piano

“Swinging is like being on a tightrope or a roller coaster. It’s like walking in space. It’s like a souffle: it rises and rises ... It’s hard to say what goes on in your head when you’re swinging ... I see different keys in colors—the key of D is daffodil yellow, B major is maroon...”

Hour 1

Presenter: Frank Schaberg

Watch

- In Good Time: The Piano Jazz of Marian McPartland (2011)

Read

- “The Key of D is Daffodil Yellow.” Whitney Balliett, *American Musicians: 56 Portraits in Jazz* (PDF)
- Obituary: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/aug/21/marian-mcpartland>

Hour 2 suggestions

Presenter: Monica Schaberg

- Hickory House, Café Carlisle
- Jimmy McPartland
- Synesthesia
- The Girls in the Band (video)
- A Great Day in Harlem

Class 6 -- February 16: Billie Holiday (1915-1959) Singer

“Mom and Pop were just a couple of kids when they got married. He was eighteen, she was sixteen, and I was three.”

Hour 1

Presenter: Ellen Ober

Watch

- The US versus Billie Holiday (2021) [biopic] *and/or*
- Billie (2020) [documentary]

Read

- “Lady Day.” Nat Hentoff, *Jazz is* (PDF)

Hour 2 suggestions

**Presenter: Ruth Guyer (Strange Fruit)
Mark Guyer (heroin and jazz)**

- Strange Fruit
- Lester Young
- Other artists hounded by the US government
- Jazz and drugs
- Where is the truth in the many films about Billie?

Class 7-- February 23: Bill Evans (1929-1980) Piano

"It bugs me when people try to analyze jazz as an intellectual theorem. It's not. It's a feeling."

Hour 1

Presenter: Dick Brush

Watch

- Time Remembered (2017)

Read

- "Jazz Lightning Strikes Twice." <https://www.steinway.com/news/features/bill-evans>
- Obituary: <https://www.nytimes.com/1980/09/17/archives/bill-evans-jazz-pianist-praised-for-lyricism-and-structure-dies-in.html?searchResultPosition=1>

Hour 2 suggestions

Presenter: Stuart Einhorn

- Jim Hall
- Scott LeFaro and Paul Motian
- Conversation with Marian McPartland <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZDy3MQni78>
- Piano's part in jazz
- Musicians influenced by Bill Evans
- Drug use by jazz artists
- Newport Jazz Festival

Class 8 -- March 2: Sarah Vaughn (1924-1990) Singer

"I am not a special person. I am a regular person who does special things."

Hour 1

Presenter: Carole Marshall

Watch

- Sarah Vaughn, The Divine One: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZkFQ3vc-Qc>

Read

- "Giants." Whitney Balliett, *Goodbyes and Other Messages* (PDF)
- Obituary: <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/04/05/obituaries/sarah-vaughan-divine-one-of-jazz-singing-is-dead-at-66.html>

Hour 2 suggestions

- Ella Fitzgerald
- Billie Eckstine
- The Apollo Theater
- Café Society
- Newport Jazz Festival
- Singers influenced by Sarah Vaughan

OR (because the Guyers could not agree!!!!)

Class 8 -- March 2: Esperanza Spalding (born 1984) Bass and singer

“The juiciest music makes me so happy, music that I need on that deserted island when I’m stranded for the rest of my life ...”

Hour 1

Presenter: Carolyn/Dave Wood

Watch

- Esperanza Spalding interview with Todd Zwillich on the TakeAway:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eThYLcX1PLU>

Read

- “Esperanza Spalding is the 21st Century Jazz Genius.”
<https://www.npr.org/2018/08/28/638896807/esperanza-spalding-is-the-21st-centurys-jazz-genius>

Hour 2 suggestions

- The Girls in the Band (video)
- Ron Carter
- Charles Mingus
- Teaching jazz: Berklee College of Music
- Jazz from Brazil
- Other contemporary jazz musicians

Additional suggestions for hour 2 presentations

Well-known jazz clubs: Café Society, Village Vanguard, Birdland, Five Spot, Minton’s Playhouse, Hickory House, Ronnie Scott’s (London), Blackhawk (San Francisco), others

Jazz in other settings: Carnegie Hall, The Apollo Theater, Lincoln Center, others

Jazz festivals: Newport (Rhode Island!!), Monterey (California), Montreux (Switzerland), Montreal (Canada), others

Sidemen for specific bandleaders

Cabaret cards

Playing jazz and touring in the Jim Crow South

Iconic albums/compositions

Genius and jazz

Drugs and jazz

Iconic photographs: A Great Day in Harlem (there is a movie)

2008 Universal fire

Expatriate jazz artists

West-coast jazz artists

Jazz record companies and labels

Notable jazz critics: Nat Hentoff, Leonard Feather, Whitney Balliett, others.

**Some options for watching the films
(You may be able to find others)**

Week	Film	YouTube	Prime Video	Hulu	Public Library	other
1	Straight, No Chaser		√ (\$2.99)		√	
2	The Lady Who Swings the Band					Kanopy
	The Girls in the Band				√	Kanopy
3	The Miles Davis Story		√ (\$4.99)		√	
4	Chasing Trane			√	√	
5	In Good Time: The Piano Jazz of Marian McPartland					Vimeo (\$5.99)
6	Billie			√	√	
	The U.S. vs Billie Holiday			√		
7	Time Remembered		√			
8	Sarah Vaughan: The Divine One	√				
8	Esperanza Spalding interview on The TakeAway	√				
	A Great Day in Harlem	√			√	