

Community High School Intermediate Jazz (Jazz II) Introduction, Policies, and Syllabus

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Dear Students,

Welcome to the Community High Jazz Program. I am so glad to have you with us for this exciting year. We are extremely fortunate to have this special setting to collectively explore jazz! Our jazz program is unique because it specializes in the study of small group playing and improvisation. This class is designed to help you lay strong foundations in these domains. I hope you will enjoy taking an active role in growing as an artist and will benefit from the learning process, the guest artists we host, the upcoming performance opportunities, and the camaraderie of our close-knit group of students.

Personal musical growth is the main goal for each student. This means not only acquiring the musical tools necessary for advanced performance, but also the development of an ever-deepening musical and artistic soul. The objective is to challenge concrete and abstract aspects of each student's musicianship. We are here to help you find what you want to say on your instrument, and we want you to build your technical strength in order to do so. This comes from discipline – the discipline of hard study, daily practice, fundamentals, rehearsals, performances, and intense listening. It is a rigorous path, but full of rewards.

Good luck. I look forward to working with you!

Jack

General Course Description:

All students will be held to high standards and are expected to make significant musical growth. This course will have assignments, units of study, and performances. There will also be frequent written, verbal, and playing evaluations.

The following areas represent a broad list of the subject areas that will be studied:

- Jazz Styles
- Jazz Improvisation
- History and Social Studies
- Instrument-Specific Roles
- Reading (Pitch and Rhythm Training)
- Critical Listening/Transcribing
- Music Theory (Scales, Chords, Intervals, Rhythms, Harmonic Analysis, etc...)
- Jazz Repertoire
- Vocabulary for Improv
- Ear Training
- Technical Studies
- Expressive Devices
- Performance Preparation

Forms of study will often encompass many of these concepts simultaneously, while other studies will be narrower in focus. Students will use their instruments, voices, keyboards, and percussion as vehicles for study.

Grading:

Assessments:

Approximately 50% of the grading will be based on the successful demonstration of specific skills studied, and will be assessed through tests, quizzes, and performances. Assignment/Test Grids will be distributed containing clear assignments and due dates for the assessments. Grading musical performance can be tricky, so the test formats and expectations are clearly outlined in advance in the Assignment/Test Grids. These charts will provide long-term goals and should be used to guide daily practice.

Test Make-Up Policy:

Students missing a test must arrange a make-up test date upon returning to school. I will work with the student to find a make-up date, but it is up to the student to seek me out to get the process started and finished. **However, a make-up test will only be granted if the student's absence is excused in PowerSchool. Unexcused absences on test days will result in a grade of "0." Missed tests not made up by a student will result in a "0" after a few weeks but can still be made up before Final Exam Week if arranged by the student. No make up exams will be given for regular semester exams after the start of Finals Week.** Final Exam Week is for Final Exams and Final Exam make-ups only. Students should not ask for (or expect) extensions on tests or assignments because of heavy involvement in extra-curricular activities, such as sports, theater, or clubs. Such extensions will not be granted, so plan ahead.

For Split-Enrolled Students and Families:

The attendance call-in systems are not shared between the schools, so if a student is ever going to miss a CHS class, a parent needs to call the CHS attendance office (at 994-2021) in order for the absence or tardy to be excused. This has to be done in addition to the call made to one's main school.

The Winter Concert and The End of the Year Blowout at The Ark:

Performing in the Winter Concert for Semester 1 (or The End of the Year Blowout at The Ark for Semester 2) is required of all students. 200 of the Final Exam's 500 points are earned by performing in each concert. However, a student may be withheld from performing in the final concerts due to a lack of preparation or poor attendance, particularly in the weeks leading up to the show. In these rare cases, the student will be given alternative ways to earn up to 200 points to make up for the missed performance.

Participation:

The other approximate 50% of a student's semester grade will be based on personal musical growth and daily participation. This puts a lot of weight on growing as an artist and instrumentalist. It is understood that not all students walk into the class with the same skills, experiences, or talents, but it is expected that everyone advances significantly.

Practice logs:

Students are expected to practice at home at least six days a week, for at least 30-40 minutes each day. Focused, private practice outside of class time is critical! A Google Form will be shared with all students with a practice log. Students are required to log their practice hours each week of the semester on this Google Form. There are other reflection questions about setting goals, meeting goals, and effective practice that must be answered each week. All responses by students, which are only viewable by the teacher, will be timestamped by Google Docs.

Participation Policies:

- Students are expected to show up on time, quickly get their instruments together, and warm up at the beginning of class.
- Students must have their own pen and pencil each day.
- All music books issued should be brought to class each day.**
- Students are required to bring their own CHS Jazz Folder to each class, which will be issued at the start of the semester.** This folder should always contain a pencil, all textbooks issued, all handouts, and all sheet music given. These materials should be well-organized within the folder, and all of these items need to be brought to class every day. **Impromptu Materials Checks will take place for 50 point grades from time-to-time throughout the semester. Students need to be ready for these every day.**
- Bassists and guitarists must bring their own patch cord each day (and take it with them when class is over).
- Drummers need to bring their own sticks and brushes each day (vibes mallets are optional, but helpful!). Drummers should bring sticks and brushes in a drum stick bag that can hang on the floor tom while playing.
- Students need to be supportive of all classmates
- No food or drinks (except bottled water) are allowed in the classroom.
- Wearing sunglasses and playing video games are prohibited.
- Cell phone use in class is prohibited unless directed by the teacher for educational purposes.

Guest Artists:

CHS Jazz has a 'Guest Artist Series,' where world-class musicians are brought in to speak, demonstrate, critique student ensembles, and answer questions. Guests, many of whom have won Grammys and Downbeat Polls, recorded dozens or hundreds of albums and continue to tour the world, are compensated by the CHS Jazz Boosters. It is a privilege to have these masters enter Community High to work with Community students, and these sessions are highly educational and inspiring. Admission is free. **Therefore, students are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend these sessions.** This includes making prior arrangements with athletics coaches, private teachers, or club directors in order to be excused from such practices or rehearsals. Students are not expected to miss a game or other major event for the guest artist sessions. Every effort is made to choose logical and accessible times for the sessions, but sometimes CHS is at the mercy of the touring schedule of the artists. **Extra credit is offered for those who attend and sign the attendance sheet.** E-mails will be sent to students and families announcing Guest Artist Series appearances, and flyers will be posted at CHS.

Private Teachers:

It is recommended that all students take private lessons with a highly qualified expert on his or her instrument. Ann Arbor is full of wonderful teachers. There is no replacement for this kind of one-on-one attention. If a family is having a difficult time affording lessons, let me know and I can help seek out affordable options or scholarships that are in the area. In some cases, our upperclassmen offer help to younger students.

Letters of Recommendation for Seniors:

I am posting a sign-up for letters of recommendation requests in the jazz room. Any student wishing to request a letter for college applications must sign up on this list. This list will be taken down at the end of the day on Thursday, October 1. After this deadline, I will not agree to write letters of recommendation for college acceptance. For those who do sign up, I will get to work writing the letters after October 1 and will keep them on file. Students can bring me forms and envelopes to be filled out later in the year when necessary. Please indicate on the sign-up form if you have an early acceptance deadline.