

LZHS JAZZ ENSEMBLES 2009-2010 SYLLABUS

“DON'T TAKE THE EASY WAY OUT”

Mr. Thompson

Welcome to the Jazz Program. As always, I am very excited about what we have in store for us this year. There are a couple new things this year, most notably the addition of “Jazz Conception” as a textbook this year. It’s going to be a great addition that will allow us to really improve our style and technique.

I hope you’re prepared to get better on your instrument. While we are learning about this greatest of American art forms, we owe it to those that developed the style to learn it right. But you cannot get better at jazz without becoming a better player on your instrument. This means practicing. It takes time to improve, you cannot do this without practicing. If you want to make your practice time even more efficient, then private lessons can really help you. We are not looking for the minimum amount of effort here, we are looking for your best effort. You owe it to your classmates to give it your best. There is not another class in the school where the entire class works together for every major project. We are unique, and it’s a great thing!

Because we rely on each other so much, we need everyone at every performance. In the rare circumstance that you need to miss a performance for any reason, you must turn in a written excuse, signed by a parent, to me at least three weeks prior to the rehearsal or performance for it to even be considered an excused absence. In every situation, we will discuss the absence to determine the best solution. Not all absences with notes will be excused.

New this year: Each Student will be provided a Textbook this year called “Jazz Conception.” This book is an etude book that we will work on throughout the year, but with special emphasis during the 1st semester. The book comes with a play-a-long CD. The books are \$20 to replace if not returned at the end of the year.

Grading

Daily Rehearsal Points

You may lose points for the following reasons:

1. Lack of musical preparedness: you must practice. Every person, every note!
2. Lack of effort: disrespect, talking, chewing gum, non-positive participation
3. Lack of materials: tardy, no music, no pencil, not instrument, missing uniform parts.
4. Excused absences: while you may not lose all of your points, you may lose some points even if you are excused. Certainly, you might have conflicts, but regardless of the reason, your absence affects everyone and yourself and will be reflected in your grade. You may be eligible for make-up assignments to regain lost points. Talk to your director about this option.
5. “The TONY Rule” At the end of each rehearsal, you should put all equipment away (instruments, folders, etc.) Consistently leaving materials out will result in loss of points.

You will lose all of your points for an activity for the following reasons:

1. Unexcused absence from a rehearsal.
2. Unexcused absence from a performance.

Grading this year for band and jazz bands will be done on an adjustable points scale. Each activity will be given points to be earned or lost. A sample for one quarter is given below:

Daily rehearsals (45 days)	2pts*45	90
Jazz Performance (1 or 2)	100pts*1	100

Playing or written assignments (2)	20pts*5	100
		290 points total

Grading Scale

A+ 98-100 A 92-97 A- 90-91
 B+ 88-89 B 82-87 B- 80-81
 C+78-79 C 72-77 C- 70-71
 D+ 68-69 D 62-67 D-60-61
 F 59 and below

Additional Practice Materials

We have purchased a large group of Jamey Aebersold type CD sets by Hal Leonard. These along with our Aebersolds, CD Collection, and Fake Books are available for check out. In addition, consider either purchasing Band-In-A-Box for your own home computer or learn to use it in the Midi lab so that you can make files for your own practice. Most Computer CD players will automatically play Midi files that you save from BIAB. The program itself will even work without a Synthesizer through your own sound card.

Smart Music:

This year our school is subscribing to Smartmusic and while only Freshmen will be required to subscribe this year (\$30), it would be a GREAT ASSET to your practicing. You will hear A LOT more about this this year and I would encourage you to consider doing this.

Exams

First Semester: The first semester exam will be a performance of an etude from our "Jazz conception" books You will need to submit a recording (VERY EASY in SMART MUSIC)

Second Semester: The second semester exam will be a performance along with a play-a-long CD. Students will be required to memorize the melody and improvise over one chorus of the changes..

Performances

This is the known calendar of events. I recommend looking through the entire year for conflicts so that we can be proactive in resolving conflicts. I want to work with you to resolve these issues, and frequently we solve problems in a win/win fashion. Communication is the key. However, everyone in this group is one to a part, so your attendance is mandatory at all events.

September 23 rd :	Cheerleader Pasta Dinner: JE ONLY
Wednesday, October 14:	IMEA Jazz/Band Auditions-Niles North
Wednesday, December 2:	Winter Jazz Concert
Friday, February 5	Tentative date for "Jazz by the Lake" (hopefully at Wynstone)-combos
Saturday, Febraury 6:	New Trier Jazz Fest-JLB Only
Saturday, February 27:	Jazz in the Meadows-Both JE/JLB
Tuesday, March 2:	Jazz Concert
Thursday, May 12:	Jazz Concert

I am also wanting to do some other concerts around the area: especially in the weeks before our concerts for extra performance opportunities. We will get better the more we perform. If performing is everyone's top priority, above working jobs or other odd things, we can do this very easily and we will all enjoy the opportunities.

I look forward to a very exciting year!!