

**UMBC UGC Change in Existing Course: MUSC 306 – Improvisation Ensemble**

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Proposed Effective Date: Fall 2021

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**COURSE INFORMATION:** (please provide all information in the "current" column, and only the information changing in the "proposed" column)

change		current	proposed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Number(s)	MUSC 306	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Formal Title	Improvisation Ensemble	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transcript Title (≤30c)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recommended Course Preparation	MUSC 190 or MUSC 193 or MUSC 194 or prior experience playing in an ensemble	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prerequisite <small>NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.</small>	(blank)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	# of Credits <u>Must adhere to the UMBC Credit Hour Policy</u>	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeatable?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Max. Total Credits	20.00	10.00 <small>Max. Total Credits: This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail	<input type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

**CURRENT CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

The study of recent improvisation practices from graphic scores, to group composition, to coexisting hybrid strategies to free improvisation to intuitive music. Attention also will be given to experimental jazz as a model for further improvisational exploration. Students in the class will be strongly encouraged to develop their own musical voices and invent new ways to improvise. This course is a laboratory for the exploration of the individual musical soul. This course is repeatable for credit for a maximum of 20 credits. An audition with the ensemble director is required. MUSC 306 cannot be taken concurrently with MUSC 358.

**PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

The study of recent improvisation practices from graphic scores, to group composition, to coexisting hybrid strategies to free improvisation to intuitive music. Attention also will be given to experimental jazz as a model for further improvisational exploration. Students in the class will be strongly encouraged to develop their own musical voices and invent new ways to improvise. This course is a laboratory for the exploration of the individual musical soul. This course is repeatable for credit for a maximum of 10 credits. An audition with the ensemble director is required. MUSC 306 cannot be taken concurrently with MUSC 358.

**RATIONALE FOR CHANGE:**

See attached pages above for rationale for change.

## **RATIONALE FOR CHANGE:**

### **Proposal:**

The Department of Music proposes that the number of credits for musical ensembles be reduced from 2 to 1.

### **Why do we propose this change?**

1. To reduce the credit load of our majors, who have some of the highest numbers of required credits in the university. For example, the required music major credits are approximately three times as many as the required psychology major credits.
2. This reduction will give students more flexibility in how they fulfill their University-required Upper Level (UL) credits, allowing for more choice in their degrees.

### **How does this change line up with UMBC's peer institutions?**

UMBC's peer institutions of UMD College Park, Towson University, and UMASS Amherst all offer their ensembles for one credit. In reducing our credits to 1/ensemble, we would be falling in line with the standards set out by these and many other music schools across the country. Offering ensembles for two credits, which we currently do, is higher than most music departments in the country, as confirmed by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), our disciplinary accrediting organization.

Our degree credit requirements are currently higher than those at UMD College Park and Towson, in large part due to the discrepancy in ensemble credit. For example, the degree in Music Education requires 101 credits within the major at College Park, 102 at Towson, and 113-115 at UMBC. For a Music Performance major, the number of required credits within the major is 71-84 at UMD College Park, 83-86 at Towson, and 89-92 at UMBC. Reducing the ensemble credit load at UMBC will bring these numbers down to be more comparable to those of our peer institutions. For example, with the proposed change, our Music Education major would be lowered by six credits, and our Music Performance major would be lowered by eight credits.

### **How will this change benefit our majors?**

Giving students room to take more ensembles or electives gives them a sense of ownership over their degrees. At the most recent Provost's Teaching and Learning Symposium, the keynote speaker highlighted the importance of the feeling of ownership in student success. The most recent College Music Association report noted similar findings.

The credit load of our majors is too high to give students any flexibility in their degree programs. Many run into credit overloads when they attempt to take more than the required music classes. This change would give students more choice and allow for greater breadth of experience, which in turn will prepare them better for their careers after graduation.

We also want students to be able to take more ensembles for credit if they choose. Currently, students are frustrated that their credit caps for each semester cannot handle more ensemble experience.

More breadth of performing experience will provide a broader base of experience and will allow our students to be more marketable upon graduation, as well as give them more opportunities for creative cross-pollination of artistic ideas.

Ensembles represent upper level credits, and this change may result in some majors needing to take additional UL credits. These students could choose to fill their UL requirements with additional ensembles or with classes either within the music department or in other departments, again adding more breadth to the major.

### **What would be the impact of this change on our minors?**

The credit load for the music minor is 18-21 depending on the length of the required private lessons in an instrument or voice; with this change, it would be 15-19. The standard for a Minor at UMBC is 18 credits, and we will require at least 18 credits for the Music Minor. Having fewer specified credits would give students more room to explore music electives. A drop in three specified credits could be made up in an additional academic course, more ensembles, or more lessons.

**Implementation**

As we intend to implement this change in Fall 2021, students and department advisors will have one year of advanced notice for planning purposes. Current students will need to make sure they meet their upper level graduation requirements in a timely manner, and departmental advisors will work with these individuals to support their progress to graduation. By giving at least one year of advanced notice, students, in conjunction with our departmental advisors, will be able to plan their final semesters accordingly.