

Fundamentals of Modern Dance II

Course Description:

This is a beginning/ intermediate level modern dance class with a focus on fundamental movement principles and technical skills. This class will offer a variety of styles with an emphasis on kinesthetic and spacial awareness. Integrated into the coursework will be improvisation, composition, and analysis.

Course Objectives: (The things to accomplish!...that I will grade...)

By the end of the semester, students should be able to identify and execute the movements and principles listed on the study guide. You should be able to identify how these movements feel, how these movements appear to the eye, and how these movements may be utilized choreographically. Students should have a strong kinesthetic understanding of their unique anatomy. Students will be able to analyze creatively and technically dance choreography as well as be able compose their own short work.

Course Goals: (The things to improve on!...that I will not grade...)

Throughout the semester you can expect to increase flexibility and mobility as well as improving in your physical abilities and developing strength. As the semester progresses you should be able to memorize longer and more complex movement combinations.

Course Materials/ Dress Code:

1. You must come to class prepared to move without any clothing or hair obstructing your range of motion. Athletic wear is required and shoes are not permitted (except in the case of medical necessity, in which case the shoes must not be worn outside of the classroom). I recommend bare feet but socks are acceptable, however ensure that your foot choice will keep you from slipping. You may choose to wear leggings or yoga/dance/running pants or shorts, knee-pads, and a tank-top or t-shirt. I recommend bringing layers for your comfort so that you can cover or expose the body as needed based on temperature and the daily movement rigor.

****Please dress for your personal comfort. The instructor will make all necessary accommodations for religious attire and any individual needs. The above is a guideline. Please see the instructor with any concerns.****

3. Bring a notebook to each class to take notes and record thoughts and combinations as needed.
4. Consider the cost of attendance at two performances into your budget for books and materials for this course.

GRADING:
50% Active Class participation
10 % Homework Assignments
10% Performance Responses
10% Midterm Assignment
20% Final Exam

A-, A, A+ (90%-100%)	B-, B, B+ (80%-89%)	C-, C, C+ (70%-79%)	D+ and below (under 69%)
Exceptional coursework. Student exhibits mastery of the movement principles, demonstrating exceptional growth.	Acceptable coursework. Student exhibits understanding of the movement principles and demonstrates growth.	Developing coursework. Student exhibits an emerging understanding of the movement principles and demonstrates some growth.	Marginal coursework. Student exhibits limited understanding of the movement principles, demonstrates little to no growth, and has not met standards for passing the course.
Student was present at nearly every class and stayed fully engaged each class with mind and body.	Student was present at many classes and stayed mostly engaged with mind and body.	Student was present at most classes, but attendance could have been improved and/or student regularly struggled to stay engaged in class.	Student was regularly absent and / or disengaged from the class on a regular basis.
Student has clear insights about their own kinesphere.	Student has an understanding of their own kinesphere	Student has a rudimentary understanding of their own kinesphere.	Student has not gained a satisfactory understanding of their own kinesphere.
Student has developed an abundant vocabulary with which to analyze and discuss dance, and is able to interpret dance insightfully.	Student has developed a satisfactory vocabulary with which to analyze and discuss dance, and is able to interpret dances.	Student has not fully engaged with the vocabulary from the course in order to analyze and discuss dance, and interpretations are inconsistent.	Student has developed little vocabulary from the coursework and performance analyses are weak and underdeveloped.
Student is able to apply the coursework creatively, creating specific and robust choreography for the final exam.	Student is able to apply the coursework creatively, creating acceptable choreography for the final exam.	Student inconsistently applies the coursework, creating choreography for the final exam which leaves room for further development.	Student does not apply the coursework, creating choreography for the final exam which is unclear, underdeveloped, and / or fails to address the prompt.

Active Participation:

Show Up
(200 points)

Showing up means: physically arriving in class but also arriving prepared to start at the beginning of class time. You should be alert and stay active for the entire class.

Active participation means:

- watching your colleagues when you are not dancing
- repeating movements and exercises until they feel comfortable
- practicing on the side of the classroom if appropriate
- being respectful of the instructor and other students by being quiet
- making eye contact with the instructor and showing comprehension, or asking questions
- being supportive of other students in class by applauding after other students dance
- refraining from using any negative language or body language
- thanking the instructor and other students after class by applauding the work of all in the room
- It is customary to thank your instructor after each class. It is also customary, in modern dance, to pound on the floor or whistle if you are absolutely inspired. While talking out of turn is disrespectful, showing appreciation for the instructor and fellow dancers is encouraged.

****Please note, as this is an experiential class the instructor may from time to time offer hands-on adjustment of the students. Please inform the instructor if you have any aversion or objection to this kind of correction. ****

Showing up also means knowing when not to show up. If you are running a fever or feeling very worn out do not come to class and make yourself worse, or make your colleagues sick. Knowing when to take a break is part of being able to participate fully. Ensure you are making yourself and your body a priority.

Absence Policy:

- 2 unexcused absences no questions asked. Just let me know you're missing so I don't worry.
- 1 self-signed health-related excused absence
- All other health or University related absences will be excused: bring me a note from your doctor, advisor, etc.
- Alert the instructor of all absences.

Homework Assignments

Apply Classroom Terms
(60 points)

There will be 4 "homework assignments" throughout the semester. Each is worth 15 points. You will be assessed on demonstrating understanding of the assigned vocabulary, and your application to the assignment.

Assignment 1: Define

In 4-6 typed paragraphs, discuss the movements we have discussed in class: curve (under and over), momentum, suspension, fall, recover

1. Briefly define each movement
2. Discuss how each movement feels in your body.
3. Discuss which movements feel most comfortable and which feel least comfortable.

Try to talk a little about your anatomy and your body to support your statements.

Assignment 2: Create

Create a visual creative response that symbolizes to you initiation points. This can be a picture, a collage, photographs you have taken, a simple model, a sculpture...the sky is the limit.

Write me a quick paragraph (handwritten or typed) explaining your visual response.

You may photograph your picture or scan it and submit it online or turn it in in-person. You are being graded on comprehension, creativity, and articulating your work.

Assignment 3 - Explore

Pick a video to watch. In 2-3 paragraphs tell me where you see bound and flow movement. Be sure to define each term for me! Describe in your own words how the dancer is moving so I can visualize.

(All are the same length- pick something that sounds exciting!! If you want to do more than one I'll give you 5 points extra credit for the second one!)

Ohad Naharin's DecaDance: Naharin is the founder of Gaga movement style and Batsheva Dance Company whom inspires Avshalom Pollack. He is one of the most important contemporary choreographers. Just watch the first 30 minutes.

https://youtu.be/Bk-odQ-23_4

William Forsythe's One Flat Thing, Reproduced: Another famous famous choreographer: William Forsythe makes dances about shapes. This dance features dancers moving on, under, and around tables.
<https://vimeo.com/36687068>

Maurice Bejart's Bolero: Set to Ravel's score, this choreographed dance builds slowly. It is repetitive, building, sexy, and wild. It is a famous famous dance piece

<https://youtu.be/SsSALaDJuN4>

Assignment 4 - Analyze

You will be assigned a partner in the classroom. Take turns watching one another for the classes of 4/17 and 4/19. After class, write a note to your partner telling them how their body is connecting to texture and dynamic and where they should focus more energy. Be sure your words are helpful and kind. Ask questions to encourage your partner's growth. For example: "did you know that when you sequence from your head to your tail your neck does not move separately from your thoracic region? Maybe you have a stiff neck! Can you get a massage or try and relax your shoulders to help?" Be HELPFUL! You will be assessed on your specificity.

Performance Responses (2)

Connect to Work Onstage

(50 points)

Each performance review should be 1-2 typed pages. Ensure your name is on each page of the assignment. Your performance review should address the following questions:

1. What did you SEE? (use explicit terms from the class. Describe clearly how the dancers move.)
2. What did you FEEL and what in the dancing made you feel that way (technically)? Always use examples of what you saw.
3. What did you LIKE and what did you DISLIKE and WHY?
4. What was the choreographer TRYING TO DO in your estimation? There are not right or wrong answers here, just your imagination.
5. What ELEMENTS beyond the choreography contributed to or detracted from the choreography? (lighting, music, space, costumes, etc.)

Midterm Assignment

Understand Your Body

(50 Points)

Each student will turn in a written assessment exploring their successes in the class so far, as well as noting any areas they need or desire further growth. Students will be graded on insightful understanding of their own bodies, as well as demonstrating a clear understanding of the skills that have been asked of them thus far.

1. What have I been most successful at in this class?
2. What have I been least successful at in this class? What do I need to do to improve on my least successful area?
3. What has been most exciting for me in this class and why?
4. What have I enjoyed least and why?
5. How has my body and/or my relationship to my body changed throughout the semester thus far?

Final Exam

Compose My Own Dance

(120 points)

Students will be assigned three movement vocabulary terms from the course and three movements. You will make a two-three minute dance which showcases each of these movement principles and movements. I am looking for you to interpret these movements creatively. For example if you get the word spiral how many different ways can you spiral? Your dance should be cohesive with a beginning, middle, and clear ending. Think of the trajectory of the dance and how it flows. What is the effect on the audience?

Final Assessment

Put it all together

(60 points)

This is a final reflection on the semester. Be clear, be specific, and be honest. Knowing your experience can help me more fully understand you! and can also help me be a better teacher.

1. What has inspired you this semester in Modern Dance?
2. What has been a real drag in Modern Dance?
3. What was the experience of creating your own dance? How was the performance component?
4. Will you continue to dance now that the semester is over?
5. Did you accomplish what you wanted to accomplish in Modern Dance this semester?
6. Has anything been disappointing to you?

Film and Video:

You will be filmed twice in this class: once the second week of class and once the final class. This is to help the instructor reflect upon growth and to share with you your successes. These videos will not be shared publicly. If you have a religious or personal objection to being filmed, please speak to the instructor and accommodations will be made.

Peer Interactions:

You will always address your peers with respect and courtesy. Since many of us are beginners, dancing in front of and with others can be nerve wracking. Be supportive of one another and be positive. This will ensure all of us have a great experience.

Health and Safety:

Your health and safety are of vital importance to me, your instructor, and should be top priority for your self.

-Space: Each classroom will have no less than 100 sq. feet per student. You must keep your eyes open during class and give each student adequate room to dance, as well as controlling your movement so that it does not dangerously connect with someone else's. If you feel you need more space, alert the instructor and I will split the class into groups so that you can fully explore your movement safely and comfortably.

-Working Equipment: Each class will have a musician or in the absence of live music there will be music played from the stereo. Don't run into the drums :) The floor is sprung and covered with marley. This is for the safety of your feet and joints. Be respectful of the floor.

-Injury: This is a movement based class. If you have any injuries, chronic pain, or joint insecurities I need to know so that I can help you modify class for your safety. If you experience an injury in class you must alert me immediately so I can assist you with your immediate needs. If you injure yourself throughout the semester and cannot participate you may complete an observation assignment during class time. You may always participate if it is safe to do so within your modified ability range. But, in short, if injured we gotta talk.

-Physical Health: Please utilize the University's health center <http://www.health.umd.edu/> if you are unwell.

-Mental Health: Your mental well-being is as important as your physical well-being. If you are feeling overwhelmed, depressed, or are having thoughts of hurting yourself or others, please see the counseling center. <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/>.

-Campus Danger: Ensure you are signed up for the campus safety alerts. <https://alert.umd.edu/> If class is canceled for safety reasons (weather-related or otherwise) you will be alerted by the school and I will also communicate with you via ELMS.

-Other Needed Support: If there are other resources you need and do not know where to find them, let me know and I can help.

-Communication:

Instructor communications will be made through ELMS. It is your responsibility to maintain an up to date email address. I will return all emails within 48 hours. If I do not, please email again in case it was not received.

Important Dates:

1/26: Classes Begin

BEGIN UNIT 1: Suspension, Momentum, Fall, Recover, Levels

2/14: Homework Assignment 1 Due

BEGIN UNIT 2: linear, curve, spiral, initiation points

3/7: Homework Assignment 2 Due

BEGIN UNIT 3: distal and core, head and tail, heel and tail

3/9: NO CLASS

3/21-3/23: SPRING BREAK!!

4/4 :

BEGIN UNIT 4: released, contract, bound and flow, movement quality

4/11: Homework Assignment 3 Due

4/13:

BEGIN UNIT 5: sequencing, isolation

4/24: Homework Assignment 4 Due

BEGIN UNIT 6: speed, force, dynamic, texture

5/8 and 5/10 IN CLASS PRESENTATIONS! MAJOR SCHEDULED GRADING EVENT!

Semester Vocabulary

Principles (big picture)	Movements (the pieces of the puzzle)
suspension	X- Roll
momentum	C- curve
fall and recovery	backward or forward roll
level	heel rocks
homolateral and contralateral	contraction
linear	leg swings (on floor and vertical)
curve (overcurve and undercurve)	plié (bend)
spiral	tendu (point)
initiation points	dégagé (point and escape the floor)
movement pathways	battement (to beat the air)
distal and core	drop swings
head and tail connection	drag step
heel and gluteus connection	triplette
released	prance
bound and flow	run
improvisation	stag leap
movement quality	stag jump
speed	assemble (put together in the air)
force	sissonne (a dude's name!)
dynamic	cartwheel
texture	pony
sequencing	fouetté (flip)
isolation	inversion
lateral	cartwheel
rhythm, musicality, timing	turn
site specific	swishies

INTAKE FORM:

(I will send you an online link to fill out)

This will help me get to know you so I can better meet your unique needs as a student!

What is your prior experience dancing or moving (sports, working out, etc)?

Do you know about any modern dance choreographers? (No is an acceptable answer.)

How do you learn best? For example do you learn visually, do you play Mozart when you study, or do you take a walk with your flashcards?

Do you have any injuries or outstanding health issues I should know about?

Do you have any fears or intimidations about this class?

Is there anything else I should know about you that will help me teach you?