

DANCE 2275A (2015)
INTRODUCTION TO MODERN DANCE TECHNIQUE

Barb Sarma
Room 17, Alumni Hall
661-2111, ext. 88396 / bsarma2@uwo.ca
Office hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A conceptual approach to the development of movement skills used in dance. Application of theoretical knowledge will assist the student in understanding and appreciating Modern Dance as both an art form and physical activity. Half course, 6 hours lecture/lab.

Please Note:

Students lacking previous dance experience should have a strong background in other forms of movement skill development. Instruction will assume previous movement knowledge, skill, and kinesthetic learning.

The following applies to all courses: You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites, and that you have not taken an anti-requisite course. Lack of a prerequisite or the completion of an anti-requisite cannot be used as a basis for appeal. If you are found to be ineligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. This decision cannot be appealed.

COURSE CONTENT

1. Body placement and control (alignment, posture, strength, balance, centering mechanisms).
2. Body movement, axial (flexion, extension, hyper-extension, rotation).
3. Body movement, locomotor (vertical and horizontal planes).
4. Exploration of movement range; focus; dynamics; and qualities or release of energy (swinging, sustained, suspended, vibratory, percussive, collapse).
5. Rhythmical approaches to dance (meter, accent).
6. Exploration of spatial design and shape.
7. Explanation of written materials concerning technical and creative development of the dancer.

NATURE OF THE COURSE

This course is designed to introduce and examine concepts associated with basic elements of modern dance techniques through directed and creative movement experience. Course content will include creative work and techniques of the professionals the instructor has studied with. This course will also include the analysis and application of kinesiological, physiological, rhythmic and aesthetic aspects of human movements.

Dance is a physical activity that exists in time and space. Students can best discover and begin to understand the elements affecting movement when isolated and explained within an environment of movement. They learn through the process of developing movement skills that allow their bodies to become creative, expressive instruments.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

1. To develop in the components of physical fitness and to understand the difference between them.
2. To experience and to practice various movement patterns and to learn to respond to the instructions and terms applied to them.
3. To learn, practice and perfect warm-ups.
4. To learn to recognize various basic rhythm patterns and practice moving to these rhythms.
5. To develop an awareness of dynamics in movement and the differences between them.
6. To familiarize the students with the elements of time, space, motion and shape and show how they are used in relation to dance.
7. To develop an understanding of the creative process and establish an environment for creative activity.
8. To recognize and demonstrate movement from dance vocabulary.
9. To understand dance vocabulary and concepts, and how they apply to skill acquisition.

COURSE FORMAT

This course will generally follow the traditional format of a technique course where each class is broken down into four parts: 1) standing warm-ups; 2) floor warm-ups; 3) floor progressions; 4) specific movement patterns and/or movement exploration. Theoretical components such as movement analysis, anatomical analysis, rhythmical analysis and performance aspects are taught in the context of the technical skills being learned or mastered by the students. On few occasions will the theory and technique be presented separately. It is impossible to be specific as to the day to day content or progress of each class. The backgrounds of the students, their ability to master the technical skills presented and the ability of the instructor to present the technical problems in a manner in which the students can understand and transfer into movement will always make every technique class slightly unique.

The **Study and Vocabulary Word List** will be used to create a personal text for this course.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The library contains a variety of books on dance technique that students will find useful in expanding the understanding of modern dance and dance training. These are a few examples:

Minton, Sandra. *Dance Mind and Body*. Human Kinetics. 2003.

Scheff, Helene, Marty Sprague, and Susan McGreevy-Nichols. *Experiencing Dance*. Human Kinetics. 2005.

Schrader, Constance A. *A Sense of Dance*. Human Kinetics. 2005.

Sherbon, Elizabeth. *On The Count of One*. 3rd ed. California, Mayfield Pub. Co.

Vincent, L.M. *The Dancer's Book of Health*. New York, Andrews & McMeel, Inc. 1978.

VIEWING DANCE / EXPANDING MUSICAL & RHYTHMIC AWARENESS

It is recommended that students take advantage of attending live dance performances and watching T.V. or films that feature dance. These outside activities will provide an opportunity for discussion about different dance techniques and approaches. Students will also recognize similar dance movements to those taught in class.

Students are encouraged to broaden the genres of music they listen to in order to challenge their comfort and expand their awareness of musical resources that can be used with dance.

EVALUATION

40% - DAILY CLASS WORK and TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENT. The ability to master and perform dance movements presented in class and/or assigned.

Attendance is mandatory. You may have 3 unexcused absences. Classes missed may be made up in other technique classes by arrangement with the instructor.

20% - WRITTEN EXAM. This exam covers materials from reading assignments, handouts, as well as information presented in class. It may include identification of specific dance movements demonstrated for the student.

40% - GROUP/INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENT PROJECT - Specific details to be set out by instructor.
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (how does dance fit in with.....)
SELF EVALUATION ASSIGNMENT

The specifics for the above will be set and broken down into detail by the instructor, who needs a little time to assess the unique abilities and needs of the class members.

Technical Evaluation by Instructor

The beginning of the course will be spent establishing and making realistic assessments of each students technical skill based on:

- physical abilities and limitations
- previous training and related experience

As the course progresses students will be evaluated on:

- improvement based on each students previous training and experience
- basic skills that all students should be able to master during the course

Floor work

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| - centre control (lift in centre) | - flexibility |
| - carriage of the arms | - relaxation of shoulders |
| - leg extensions | - sensitivity to movement - expression beyond 'exercises' |
| - body awareness | - focus |
| - concentration | - memory (self contained or relies on others) |

Standing (centre & barre)

- standing alignment
- pliés: turnout, leg alignment, foot work, centre control, balance
- battements (tendues, degage, grande, développé): full body alignment, leg technique, foot extension and flexion, parallel & turnout, control and lift in centre, placement, directions (devant, à la seconde, derriere)
- ronde de jambe: full body alignment, leg alignment, placement, leg extension, foot extension, direction and positions.
- upper body: lift in torso, relaxed shoulders, correct port de bras, control of arms and hands in positions and movements, head placement, focus

Adagio & Allegro (centre work)

- ability to maintain technique including: foot work, leaps, centre control, alignment, arms, head
- rhythmic sensitivity
- memory (self contained or relying on others)
- concentration
- focus
- expression
- direction changes
- balance and control

Floor patterns (traveling)

- ability to maintain technique including: foot work, leaps, centre control, alignment, arms, head
- rhythmic sensitivity
- memory (self contained or relying on others)
- concentration
- focus
- expression
- direction changes
- balance and control

COURSE TIMETABLE

Weeks of September 14th, 21st, and 28th (first 3 weeks of class)

Begin to set basic warm-ups and introduce material associated with floor progressions.

Monday, October 5th (4th week of class)

Self Evaluation - based on previous experience and initial exposure to the course, the student will begin to identify perceived strengths and weaknesses.

Monday, October 12th Thanksgiving Day (No Class)

Thursday, October 29th & Friday, October 30th Fall Study Break (No Class)

Monday, November 16th (tenth week of class)

Written Exam

(twelfth week of class) Completion of written assignments

Presentation of Completed Movement Projects and Final Technical Evaluation - The day that the student is to present the finished movement project will be set in advance.

Friday, December 4th / Monday, December 7th / Wednesday, December 9th (last day of class)

(Details and dates for movement projects will be set as soon as the Instructor is able to access the various levels of skills and background experience the students bring with them to the course. This will permit the Instructor to design projects that are challenging and meaningful yet realistic in terms of expected skill acquisition.)

DRESS FOR CLASS

Women	- ankle length tights (footless or stirrup); leotard (any colour or cut) or unitard.
Men	- tights (men's weight footless or stirrup) or form fitting gymnastic or jogging pants: leotard or T-shirt.
All	- no shoes but turning thongs or socks can be used when working on turning skills. - hair <u>must</u> be tied back out of the way of the face and neck. - jewelry is not appropriate if it is loose or distracts you during class. You may be asked to remove it! - warm-up suits, pants or shirts can be used over your normal dance clothes, but you should be prepared to remove them.

“University Policy on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Office Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). “*Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.*”

University Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: As of May 2008, the University has a new policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness, which states that “*in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student’s overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean’s office.*” Students with special learning needs or circumstances are asked to inform the instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be made. This policy can be found at <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

“Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.”

University Code of Student Conduct: “*The University seeks to provide an environment of free and creative inquiry within which critical thinking, humane values, and practical skills are cultivated and sustained.*” The University Code of Student Conduct can be found at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf>

Instructor’s policy on attendance and late assignments: If you are unable to attend a class, please make every effort to let the instructor know in advance by email (preferably). Full attendance at all classes is expected and medical documentation is required unless you have the instructor’s permission to be absent. Unexplained absences will result in a reduction in your participation grade. Students with medical documentation or an acceptable excuse for an absence will not be penalized. Late written assignments will only be accepted and graded if permission has been granted by the instructor in advance of the deadline.