

DCE 101 INTRODUCTION TO DANCE
COURSE SYLLABUS
FALL 2009
TUESDAY/THURSDAY 11:00-12:15

Faculty: Shawn Bowman-Hicks, MFA
Office: 220 F HHP
Credits: 3
Prerequisites: None
Materials: no text, but
funds for 2 dance concerts
& a notebook

email: sbhicks@uncg.edu
Office hours: before class
or by appointment
Location: SRC/Aerobics Room

“As we work in class as community we will strive toward honoring, assisting, encouraging, and evaluating each other.” - SBH

For Whom Planned: General university students seeking a studio experience course in dance that fulfills General Education Core (GEC) requirements in the Fine Arts.

Course Description: Introduction to the basic concepts and principles of modern/postmodern dance through studio experiences, selected readings, discussions, concert attendance and writing. The class will move, view various dance forms, explore creative movement invention, incorporate various mediums from individual’s interest (e.g. science, literature, music, photography, etc.), and collaborate. Are you open for an adventure? An encompassing component is to provide you with an experience of what it is like to be a dancer and an active participator in seeing dance.

The class will provide students with basic fundamentals of modern dance while challenging them to express themselves in a creative art form and encourage further dance experiences. Improvisation will be used to explore movement concepts as well as to generate movement phrases. Material will be presented by means of demonstration and description. Videos will be used in class, as well as assigned readings/videos via internet or Blackboard.

Course Objectives: The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to the aesthetic sensibilities inherent in modern dance, based on the notion that modern dance embodies a way of moving, thinking, feeling, and being in the world that is unique to this art form. Specific artists and schools of thought will be introduced and compared to demonstrate that there is a wide range of aesthetic points of view within the modern dance community, but that there are also basic principles that are foundational.

1. Students will develop a basic understanding of modern dance technique through studio experiences, videos, and discussion.
2. Students will develop a basic understanding of dance improvisational ideas through studio experiences, readings, and discussion.
3. Students will develop a basic understanding of the elements of dance composition through studio problems, readings, video presentations, live concerts, and discussion.
4. Students will develop a basic understanding of the dance rehearsal process and performance through the process of learning and performing a section of a dance.
5. Students will develop the ability to describe, in writing and discussions, certain aims and methods of artistic and intellectual expression in dance through their experiences in technique, improvisation, composition, and performance.
6. Students will develop the ability to demonstrate, in writing, an understanding of dance as an expression of culture in the twentieth/twenty-first century, via historical and current trends in dance.
7. Students will develop the ability to demonstrate an understanding of and sensitivity toward both Western European and African-American influences on the development of modern dance in America.
8. Students will develop the ability to demonstrate, in studio practice and discussion, the importance of dance as expression of self-understanding.
9. Students will be introduced to a basic movement vocabulary for establishing concepts that will enable the student to develop a foundation for moving, including the building of strength, stamina, and flexibility, as well the use of time, space, and dynamics in movement.
10. Students will be given opportunities for critical discussion and writing dance as an art form through observing each other, and viewing live and videoed dance works.
11. Students individual creativity will be encouraged by offering opportunities to experiment with guided movement problems that will expand their range of movement possibilities, introduce concepts of choreography, and responses.
12. Students will be provided opportunities to use individual interest in creating movement phrases.

Teaching Strategies

1. Students will be given direct studio experiences in dance technique, improvisation, composition and performance that will be directed by the instructor.
2. Students will be required to read about the history of key modern dance artists to provide a cultural and aesthetic perspective on this art form.
3. Students will be required to observe live modern dance events and videos of key figures in modern dance. They will write papers to describe, analyze and interpret the dance performances they observe. Guidelines will be provided. A list of concerts will be provided.

Evaluation Methods and Guidelines for Assignments:

1. Students will be evaluated by the instructor on their attendance and participation. How fully did they contribute to their experiential learning process? This is a participatory class: great focus, attention to detail, and moving with full energy will assure a greater success in the class.
2. Students will be evaluated by the instructor on their level of achievement. How well did they meet the craft and aesthetic demands of a beginning Modern Dancer?
3. Students will be evaluated by the instructor on the depth and the insightfulness of their written assignments. How well did they observe and record their observations of live performances and performance videos?
4. Instructor evaluations may be conducted through conferences and/or written evaluations, as well as recorded grades.

* Not every student will receive individual feedback during each class, but all students will receive individual feedback regularly throughout the course of the semester.

Course Outline:

(Four basic components/generally covering each area for 4 weeks)

Technique Class: Technique will be taught to enhance the student's understanding of movement which is very committed, that fills space, that puts more emphasis on the motion and less on the shapes, and that requires a strong rhythmic sensibility and athleticism. Ideas about how to take a class, sensitivity to injury, introductions to basic movement vocabulary for dance by establishing concepts that will enable the student to develop a foundation for moving, including the building of strength, stamina, and

flexibility, as well the use of time, space, and dynamics in movement. Students will be asked to write about and discuss their experiences to develop their descriptive skills.

Improvisation: This technique will be taught to place the students in close interaction so they learn to work together and have the opportunity to know one another fairly well. It will also be taught to introduce principles of trust, support, weight, flow, and ease in movement. Students will be asked to write about and discuss their experiences to demonstrate the importance of dance as an expression of self-understanding.

Movement Invention and Abstraction: This segment will introduce students to improvisational ideas which lead to movement invention, and to compositional techniques which can be used to form set material from improvisation. Performance videos will be used to demonstrate Western European and African-American influences on the development of modern dance. Students will be asked to write about these videos to demonstrate their understanding of the culture perspectives embedded in the art form.

Repertory/Performance: During this segment students will rehearse and perform a section of a dance work.

Class Requirements and Grading: (Huge deal/really read)

1. Attendance and Participation: Two absences are allowed; more will affect the students grade. After the second absence your grade can be lowered by 1/3. Excessive tardiness will result in a lower grade. After a 4th tardy your grade will be lower by 1/3 (An A becomes an A-, etc.) If this seems petty it is because issues of attendance have become issues in grading. Alas, there is some grace worked into these policies. You have two "free" absences, choose wisely. If you think you are over the 2 class limit, you need to be in touch with me. If a student is injured or sick, but well enough to attend, he/she may watch class and this will count as having attended. Since much of the learning is experiential, full participation is expected during each class meeting. Students are expected to participate fully in at least 80% of the class meetings in order to receive a passing grade. Attendance and active participation will count as 50% of the final grade. There will be a scheduled showings of material. These are required and cannot be rearranged. We will decide as a class what day(s) are best based upon major events etc. Total points: 50

2 - Papers: Two papers will be assigned based on attending two dance concerts. A schedule of UNCG Dance Concert and area shows will be provided in class. Students may not substitute a concert that is not on this list without the instructor's permission. These papers are worth 10 points each. Others writings to be included will be a mini-autobiography and

reflections. ***You do not have to purchase a text for this course, but you do need to secure funds for at least 2 dance concerts. approximately \$10-25.**

3 - Performance: A student's overall improvement and performance in class will be assessed by the instructor. The two formal projects are worth 25 points.

Attendance: 20

Participation: 30 (Fully participating and engaged, working fully with an open attitude, contributing to in-class explorations and dialogue, written reflections, and overall improvement)

Mini-Autobiography: 5

Concert attendance and review: 10

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Repertory: 10

Group Choreography Project: 15

Other information and various disclaimers:

***It is the responsibility of each individual to inquire of the instructor or other students concerning any missed assignments, handouts, deadlines, or other information missed while absent. Also, I am here to help you. If you are not clear about something in class or just need to work out some problem...come and discuss it with me.**

Proper Attire/Class Etiquette:

Leotard and tights, biker shorts, tanks, cotton/lycra pants. Hair should not interfere with your movement. No chewing gum, large jewelry, or excessive baggy clothing. CELL PHONES OFF.

Safety and Emergency Procedures:

Participation in any movement activity involves some risks. Therefore, when dancing, please be aware of others in the space and listen to your body! If you are hurting or not feeling well in class, please let me know. Also, if you have any other 'issues' you think I need to know, please tell me. Do not render care to an injured student without the consent of the instructor.

*Office hours: Before class or by appointment. Please **do not** call the dance office. If you have a problem, or need to make me aware of an absence, please inform me via email, during office hours, after class, or upon your return.

*In my dance classes I sometimes use touch to make corrections on alignment, etc. An example would be for me to touch the back of your neck to encourage you to lengthen your spine. If you do not want to be touched, let me know. I will honor your request, and make a note of it, but please understand if I inadvertently do touch you.

Drop Policy: Students who withdraw from this course without academic penalty must do so by the University withdrawal deadline, with the exception of students who must withdraw late due to injury or illness.

Academic Honor Code: Students are expected to adhere to the UNCG Academic Honor Code as described in the student handbook. Students will abide by the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy for this class. Policy at: studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity.

UNCG Performances:

September 26: Alumni Concert

Oct. 1-3: Cryrus Art Production

October 30-31: Dances from France

November 6-7: NC Dance Festival (Aycock Auditorum)

December 4-5: Departmental Concert

(*All shows in the Dance Theatre/HHP/Walker St. Check site for details:

www.uncg.edu/dce) Box office: 334.4849

Other area concerts:

November? : University of NC School of the Arts

<http://www.uncsa.edu/performances>

November 19-22: Alban Elved Dance Company/Salem College/free

<http://www.albanelved.com>

November? : Wake Forest Dance Company

<http://www.wfu.edu/theatre/season.htm>

I think I have covered everything...welcome. I want you to be aware that as an artist and teacher my goal is to encourage you, and also to occasionally try different things in order to evolve myself. Please feel open to discuss anything with me...that is one of the reasons I am here. All my best...Shawn

