
Introduction to Dance

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THEA 30 (5 credits), *Introduction to Dance Technique and Theory* presents dance as a performing art. It is open to anyone interested in dance but who has little to no previous experience. Whether this is your first experience or you are returning to dance, you can think of this class as akin to learning another language, resulting in a new capacity for understanding yourself, others, and the world around us.

This course will provide you with insights into the observation and analysis of human movement and the design of movement in space and time as they combine to create an artistic experience. Movement concepts and terminology will be covered, providing us with a shared vocabulary with which we can consider human movement as dance.

The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to the aesthetic sensibilities inherent in movement, based on the notion that dance embodies a way of moving, thinking, feeling, and being in the world that is unique to this art form. By the end, you will have greater understanding of the following areas:

- √ Bartenieff Fundamentals, an approach to basic body training;
- √ Laban Movement Analysis, an approach to movement observation and analysis;
- √ elements of dance improvisation and composition;
- √ dance rehearsal process and performance;
- √ cross-cultural and historical influences on contemporary concert dance in America.

Outline. The course will be taught through four basic components:

- Body Training: Each class will begin with fundamental movement exercises designed to get you moving efficiently and expressively;
- Technique & Theory: Key concepts in dance will be explored through movement studies and written assignments with emphasis on developing skills such as core support, movement intention, and rhythmic ability;
- Improvisation: Movement exploration and exercises for creative invention;
- Performance: Perform set movement combinations and collaborate with others to dance in original works.

Meeting times. The class meets two (2) times weekly from August 1 to August 31 on Tuesdays & Thursdays at 1-4:30pm in Studios A104 & A105 in the Theater Arts Center complex.

Reading. Selected short readings and explanatory notes will be distributed.

Assignments. You are responsible for completing six assignments: 1 peer and 2 self-assessments, mid-term evaluation, historical presentation, and final performance.

Grading. Course credit will depend upon attendance and attitude (20%) plus satisfactory completion of self & peer assessments (20%), historical presentation (20%), midterm evaluation (20%) and final performance (20%).

What does passion have to do with dance? Everything. – Pina Bausch

ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance & Attitude. THEA 30 is primarily about *engaged, active participation* in the dance class. I designed the course work and assignments so that you have multiple opportunities to perform, respond to, and reflect on dance. Your grade will be affected by your attendances: absences, late arrivals, or early exits are noted (10 points). A consistent attitude, energy, focus, and openness to new ideas will be the basis for your growth and development (10 points). Total 20 points.

Self-assessments. You are required to produce two (2) self-assessments of your course expectations, learning and skill development in dance (5 points each). Self-assessment (or self-appraisal, self-evaluation) plays a central role in artistic practice. Typical self-appraisal questions – i.e., what did I learn, what risks did I take, and what will I change – reflect the highest level of assessment, *self-examination*, because they require you to judge personal strengths and weaknesses Total 10 points.

Peer-assessment. You are required to complete one (1) peer-assessment using an instructor-designed rubric. Peer-assessment uses collaborative observation and analysis to more closely resemble the way dance is performed and viewed, since most all dance practices embody communal experiences. The peer-assessment can *only* be completed as part of the midterm evaluation. Total 10 points.

Mid-term. Through studio experiences, readings and discussions, students will be expected to develop knowledge and ability in three areas: basic body training, dance as art, and relational engagement. Around mid-term, I will assess your progress along those dimensions and learning goals. This mid-term evaluation will serve as a marker for assessing your growth in the final performance. Total 20 points.

Historical project. For the historical project, students will work in small groups (up to 3 persons) to condense a brief history of a dance artist's life, work, and relationships to the artists and thinkers of the time. This assignment includes an in-class presentation that includes a biography, timeline, images and/or videos, and movement analysis of the artist's work. Total 20 points.

Final dance performance. The final performance will include a series of exercises and combinations learned plus an original solo or duet dance. These performances of understanding are opportunities to embody your knowledge about dance and demonstrate your ability to move clearly and expressively – internally motivated, kine-aesthetically aware, and intentional – in small and large groups. Total 20 points.

A final word about assignments

Do the work on time. If you do not complete the assignments on time, you will not be able to participate adequately and will gain little from the course. A pattern of incompleteness creates problems for giving you timely feedback and in final evaluation of your work. For these reasons, to get credit for your work, please remember the following rules: 1) the peer-assessment and performance exams must be completed on the scheduled date(s); 2) project assignments should be submitted electronically, and those received more than one week after the due date will not be accepted *without a compelling justification*.

ATTENDANCE

Participation. Play HARD. This course requires excellent attendance. You cannot receive an A grade after more than one unexcused absence. After three unexcused absences, I reserve the right to assign a failing grade. To consider an absence excused, you may be asked to produce proper written documentation. *Note: Please notify me when you will be absent before you miss class.*

Attending but not participating. If you are well enough to attend but cannot participate (due to injury or non-infectious illness), please notify me before class. You may receive attendance credit by watching the full class and submitting a descriptive report of the proceedings. This "observation" paper should address what you discovered by watching class. You may exercise this option only **once**.

Tardiness. Excessively (or habitually) late students may be required to observe class and will be considered absent. Early departures are allowed only in the event of emergency or prior notification.

ASSESSMENT

In this course, you will be recognized for your passion and effort. Here's how it works:

- I. Attendance and completed assignments comprise 70 percent of grade. You will receive full-credit for attending class and completing every assignment. That is, as long as you miss no more than one class and do all the work assigned, you will receive honest appraisals of your dance knowledge, ability and progress and you will receive a satisfactory performance evaluation and grade. Additionally, through *regular* attendance and *consistent* performance, you will be eligible to attain a “very good” (B) to “exceptional” (A) dance evaluation and grade.
- II. Completed final performance and manifest effort comprise 30 percent of grade. The instructor's evaluation of your final performance in this course includes the assessment of growth over the course of the semester: that is, to what extent did the dancer use ongoing feedback to demonstrate improvement in dance knowledge and ability in the final performance event (20 points).

Additionally, your sweat and hard work are worth more than ‘something’ to me. You will gain additional recognition in narrative evaluation and grading if you a) **take no shortcuts** (5 points) by showing up for every class session and b) **light the fire in your eyes** (5 points) demonstrating a passionate commitment by coming to class prepared and on-time.

100-95 = A (exceptional); 94-90 = A- (accomplished); 89-85 = B+ (strong); 84-80 = B (very good); 79-75 = B- (good, above average); 74-70 = C+ (average, satisfactory); 69-65 = C (uneven, unsatisfactory); 64-60 = C- (poor) ... don't ask.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC [Academic Integrity](#) policy, he/she/they may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of his or her college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations can result in dismissal from the university and permanent notation on one's transcript.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The Disability Resource Center reduces barriers to inclusion and full participation for students with disabilities by providing support to individually determine reasonable academic accommodations. If you have questions or concerns about exam accommodations, or any other disability-related matter, please visit the DRC's [Services and Accommodations](#) page. Religious beliefs will be accommodated according to University policy. I am available by appointment or in office hours to meet with those who have Accommodation Authorization letters. Please notify me prior to any religious holidays.

DEADLINES

Session 2 – Add until August 3rd; Drop: August 7th; Withdraw: August 20th. Neither Summer Session nor instructors drop students for non-attendance or non-payment. Students must drop themselves, resulting in full tuition reversal/refund. Withdraw posts a W for the grade and full tuition is charged (no refund).

DRESS

Dress for class in a way that does not hinder your movement or my ability to see clearly your body alignment. Leotard and tights, knit pants or other clothes that allow for full range of motion are good options. No jeans please. You may also need to adjust your hair so that you can lie comfortably on your back. Remove all wrist and neck jewelry. I prefer that we dance barefoot. You may bring to class water in a plastic bottle with a cap. You may not chew gum or eat in class. Mute your cell phone and store it away.

INJURIES AND HEALTH ISSUES

You must inform me of any recent injury or health issues that may affect the studio component of your class work. A health clearance may be requested before a return to class participation is permitted. If you will miss two or more technique classes due to injury or illness, you must provide a written statement that details your plan for treatment and timeline for your return to full class participation.

LIBRARY STATEMENT

UCSC requires active input to build its library collections. The Library adds books to its stacks on the basis of purchase recommendations that can come from any member of the campus community including students. To make requests for the purchase of library materials, please visit the Library site [here](#).

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

Day 1	Syllabus and Expectations; Bartenieff Fundamentals & Floor Barre
Day 2	Laban Movement Analysis = Space
Day 3	Laban Movement Analysis = Effort Factors; Self-assessment #1 due
Day 4	Laban Movement Analysis = Diagonals; Effort Cube
Day 5	Composition = Solo Study
Day 6	Mid-term evaluation and Peer-assessment due (in class)
Day 7	Historical Project due
Day 8	Composition = Duets; Self-assessment #2 due
Day 9	Review and Rehearse
Day 10	Final Performance

TITLE IX

The [Title IX Office](#) provides information, advice, referrals, and copies of the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment. The principal responsibility for maintaining academic freedom and openness in the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation rests upon those who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors. The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. If you have concerns, contact the Title IX office.

Selected Readings and Media:

- Albright, A.C. and Gere, D. (Eds.) (2003). *Taken by surprise: a dance improvisation reader*. Wesleyan U.
- Cherian, A. (Ed.) (2017). *Tilt Shift Pause: Dance Ecologies in India*. Columbia University Press.
- Croft, C. (Ed.) (2017). *Queer Dance*. Oxford University Press.
- Desmond, J. C. (Ed.). (1997). *Meaning in motion: New cultural studies of dance*. Duke University Press.
- García, C. (2013). *Salsa Crossings: Dancing Latinidad in Los Angeles*. Duke University Press.
- Gottschild, B. D. (1996). *Digging the Africanist presence in American performance*. Greenwood Pub.
- Grauer, R. (1993). *Dancing* [video]. A production of Thirteen/WNET. Chicago: Home Vision.
- Guest, A.H. (1983). *Your move: A new approach to the study of movement and dance*. Psychology Press.
- Hackney, P. (2002). *Making connections: Total body integration through BF*. Routledge.
- Pennebaker, D.A. and Hegedus, C. (1990). *Dance Black America* [video]. Dance Horizons.
- Reynolds, N. and McCormick, M. (2003). *No fixed points: Dance in the Twentieth Century*. Yale U Press.
- Smith-Autard, J. (2004). *Dance composition*. Routledge.