

# The Dance Experience

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## *COURSE DESCRIPTION*

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**THEA 31c (2 credits)**, *The Dance Experience* introduces dance as a universal activity and unique art form. It is open to anyone interested in dance. This course focuses on learning in, through, and about dance in the context of history, social customs, and culture. Together, we will dance, look at dance works, and read about dance.

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to the aesthetic sensibilities inherent in moving through space and time with intention. The course is 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. The course objectives are to

- ✓ Know fundamentals and basic approaches to movement training;
- ✓ Understand core dance concepts such as the use of action, effort, shape, space, time;
- ✓ Develop basic dance skills through technique, improvisation, and composition;
- ✓ Learn about artistic-theatrical, traditional, and social-recreational dance forms;
- ✓ Appreciate historical traditions and cross-cultural influences on contemporary dance.

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## **Requirements**

- Consistent attendance. Your prompt arrival and full completion of all class sessions.
- Open attitude. A demonstrated willingness to learn and try new ideas and forms.
- Manifest effort. Assignments handed in on time (nothing will be accepted after final day of instruction).

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## **Outline.** The class will include:

- Body training: Each class will begin with basic exercises designed to get you moving efficiently and expressively;
- Dancing: Key ideas and historical trends will be explored through dancing different forms – from ritual to social to theatrical dance – along with movement studies that emphasize skills such as core support, movement intention, and rhythmic ability;
- Dance making: Movement exploration, improvisation, and composition of dance for performance.

**Meeting times.** Tuesdays & Thursdays 6-8pm in the Experimental Theater, Theater Arts Center.

**Readings and Viewings.** Selected readings and dance film viewings may be distributed in class.

**Assignments.** You are responsible for completing four (4) assignments: self-assessment, cultural project, personal dance composition, and final dance performance.

**Grading.** Course credit will depend upon attendance, attitude, and manifest effort (30%), plus satisfactory completion of self-assessment (10%), personal dance composition (10%), cultural project (20%), and final performance (30%).

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

## ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance & Attitude. Play HARD. This course requires *engaged, active participation*. Your grade will be affected by your attendance: absences, late arrivals, or early exits are noted. A consistent good attitude, energy, focus, and openness to new ideas will be the basis for your final evaluation.

Self-assessment. You are required to produce one (1) self-assessment of your expectations, learning and skill development in dance. Self-assessment (or self-appraisal, self-evaluation) plays a central role in artistic practice because it requires you to judge personal strengths and weaknesses.

Cultural Project. For the cultural project, students will describe a contemporary cultural dance practice. Using audio/visual materials, you will describe the origin, development and current state of the form. This assignment requires a (no more than) five (5) minute *dancelogue*: an audio report on, and interpretation of, the meaning and importance of dance in contemporary life.

Personal dance composition. You are expected to create and show a personal dance composition. This dance can be composed and performed with others or as a solo.

Final dance performance. The final performance will include a dance learned over the course of the session as well as personal dance compositions. This performance is an opportunity to embody your knowledge about dance and demonstrate your ability to move clearly and expressively.

*Failure to participate in the final dance performance will result an incomplete in the course.*

## ATTENDANCE

Absences. This course requires excellent attendance. If you have more than 1 unexcused absences, you cannot receive an A grade. After 3 unexcused absences, I reserve the right to assign a failing grade.

Attending but not participating. If you are well enough to attend but cannot participate (due to injury or non-infectious illness), please notify the instructor before class. You may receive attendance credit by watching the full 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 from class are allowed only in the event of emergency or the instructor has been notified prior to the class session.

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

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

- I. Attendance, participation, and completed assignments comprise 90 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 (1) class and do all the work assigned, you will receive an excellent grade (A-).
- II. Manifest effort (10 percent). Your sweat and hard work are worth more than 'something' to me. You will gain additional recognition in grading if you a) **take no shortcuts** by completing every assignment on time and b) **light the fire in your eyes** demonstrating a passionate commitment by coming to every class prepared and on time.

*100-91 = A (superior); 90 = A- (excellent); 89-85 = B+ (strong); 84-80 = B (very good);  
79-75 = B- (above average); 74-70 = C+ (average); 69-65 = C (uneven); 64-60 = C- (poor)  
... don't ask.*

## 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. **You are expected to dance barefoot.** You may bring water to class, but it must be in a plastic bottle with cap. No gum or eating in class. Turn off your cell phone:)

## INJURIES AND HEALTH ISSUES: NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

Students are advised not to participate in class with an illness or injury. You must inform me of any recent injury or health issues that may affect your class work. A written health clearance may be requested before a return to class participation is permitted. Please supply your own ice for a pre-existing injury.

## ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS AND RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Students who require special physical or cognitive accommodations must contact the office handling special needs within the first two weeks of the beginning of classes: support resources like [Disabilities Resource Center](#) and [Learning Support Services](#) and [CAPS \(Counseling and Psychological Services\)](#) are open and active all summer. Religious beliefs will be accommodated according to University policy as long as sufficient notification is given to the instructor.

## IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION

ADD deadline	DROP deadline (full refund)	WITHDRAW deadline (no refund)
Session 1 - June 23	Session 1 - June 27	Session 1 - July 8

NOTE: *If you cannot attend this course, YOU MUST DROP YOURSELF. Instructors do not drop students in summer session.*

## SCHEDULE

Day 1, 6/21	Syllabus and Expectations Lesson on Place; Lecture on Origins; Ritual dance	
Day 2, 6/23	Lesson on Pathway; Lecture on Traditional forms; Secular dance	
Day 3, 6/28	Lesson on Relationship; Lecture on Court and Contra; Folk dance √ Self-assessment due	
Day 4, 6/30	Lesson on Direction; Lecture on 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Artistic; Ballet dance	
Day 5, 7/5	Lesson on Rhythm/Speed; Lecture on 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Social; Ballroom dance	
Day 6, 7/7	Lesson on Size/Level; Lecture on 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Theatrical; Jazz dance	
Day 7, 7/12	Lesson on Shape; Lecture on 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Artistic; Modern dance	
Day 8, 7/14	Lesson on Composition; Lecture on Contemporary Artistic; Dance-making	
Day 9, 7/19	Review & Rehearse	
Day 10, 7/21	Final Performance	√ Personal Composition due √ Cultural project due Friday, July 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 5pm

### Selected Readings

- Cooper Albright, A. and Gere, D. (eds.) (2003). *Taken by surprise: a dance improvisation reader*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara (2006). *Dancing in the streets: A history of collective joy*. New York: Holt.
- McNeill, William H. (1995). *Keeping together in time: Dance and drill in human history*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Garfinkel, Yosef (2003). *Dancing at the dawn of agriculture*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Hackney, P. (2002). *Making connections: Total body integration through Bartenieff Fundamentals*. London, England: Routledge.
- Reynolds, N. and McCormick, M. (2003). *No fixed points: Dance in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

### A few nearby places to take dance class

*International Academy of Dance*, 320 Encinal Street (near Costco), Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831.438.7548; [www.iadance.com](http://www.iadance.com))

*Motion Pacific at Motion at the Mill*, 131 Front Street Suite E, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831.457.1616; [www.motionpacific.com](http://www.motionpacific.com))

*Palomar Ballroom*, 1344 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831.426.1221; [www.palomarballroom.com](http://www.palomarballroom.com))

*Tannery World Dance & Cultural Center*, 1060 River Street #111, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831.227.6770; [tanneryworlddance.com](http://tanneryworlddance.com))

*The 418 Project*, 418 Front Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831.466.9770; [the418project.com](http://the418project.com))