DANC 191.01: Special Topics - Salsa

Martha Jane Newby
University of Montana - Missoula

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University of Montana  
DANC 191.01  
Salsa Class Syllabus:  

Place: Martha Jane's Uptown Dance  
Instructor: Martha Jane (email: marthajanedance@yahoo.com)

Overview: An introduction to the various rhythms of Salsa dance. This can include separate rhythms done in New York, in ballroom studios, in Cuba and in most other places. Students will be introduced to the basics of frame, lead and follow techniques, dance posture, floor craft and safety.

Objective: Learn the basics of Salsa dancing and acquire the skills necessary to participate at a dance safely and courteously, as well as to become more in demand as a dance partner. The main objective is to be able to dance to at least 80% of anything played at a partner dance musically, safely and courteously.

Have fun and develop an increased appreciation for partner dancing.

Requirements: come to every class prepared to dance wearing CLEAN comfortable clothing and dancing in socks, barefoot or in suede bottom shoes. Good oral hygiene is also appreciated by all your partners. Be prepared to dance with every student in class and do all you can to help them feel like dancers. Each student becomes a test for every other student. Exercise good hygiene as you will be dancing with everyone else in close proximity and the odors presented by unfriendly bacteria collecting to odd sweat are most unappreciated by your dance partners and your instructor. Avoid all perfumes and colognes. Many people are allergic. Do what you can to minimize you breath announcing what you've just eaten as well. Avoid all altering substances prior to class. Believe me, even if it makes you feel like you are dancing better, it will not make your dance partners feel that way and is most unfair to the others dancing with you. If anyone is interested in sources for shoes, contact the instructor.

Recommendations: Wash your hands before and after class to avoid spreading/contracting unfriendly germs.

Attendance/ Grading: Each student is allowed to not participate for six class hours. In these classes that means that you can totally miss 2 classes (classes are two hours each) and have one sit out (sit and observe one class). Please save your absences for the end of the semester. Things, including injury, accidents, deaths in the family and other unforeseen things will come up. If you have chosen to use your absences for unnecessary things and something comes up that you can not attend the class you will fail so please save them for the end of the semester. It is also very unfair to all the other students to have to dance with someone who is sick because that person has used their non-participation hours. Classes will start on time. If you are even two minutes late the first time is a warning, the second time is an absence. If your car pool or whatever lets you down, you are still tardy so make very careful arrangements. In addition you will need to attend two dances/practices where you dance with at least eight different people, and dance for at least two hours each time, (two of the eight people have to be people you have never danced with before) and one dance performance sponsored by the dance department for which you will write a one page response.

Safety:

Let the instructor know if you have any preexisting injuries or if you are pregnant. Immediately report any in-class injuries to the instructor. Listen to your body and go at your own pace.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at http://www.umt.edu/AS/APSA/index.cfm/page/1321.

Fee:

Swing Latin and Ballroom does not receive any funding from the University. Your funds are used for facility rental and instructor fees among other costs. Considering that when I have taught the same amount of hours in Atlanta or Chicago student fees have exceeded $800, this price is a bargain. Even locally that amount of instructional time is over $200. The price is greatly discounted to be accessible to students. Please remember to bring your payment to the first class as is stated in the catalogue and remember that you only have one week from the day classes begin to request a refund.
Class meets off campus at Martha Jane’s Uptown Dance, 1008 Burlington Suite D. Fee $65 payable to Martha Jane’s Uptown Dance at the first class.

**Weeks 1-3** We will be working on listening to the music, forward and back basic, side basic, back and back basic, side tog side, side cross side and Cuban basic as well as navigating the floor. Half the class will be doing steps in place while the other half travels around them and then trade. In addition we will begin both the leaders and followers left and right turns as well as cross body lead and out of the way. There will be much emphasis on turning safely and thinking about hands, shoulders and elbows. Surprisingly, this is enough to navigate most dance floors well. This is also the period we try to establish good connection which is the heart of lead and follow.

**Weeks 4-6** We begin more complicated moves such as back spot turns, Adios, Enchufe. Lots of drills on L and R traveling turns. Drills on manners of getting into shake/cross hand hold, Loops over the followers head, back hand switch and loops over the leaders head, trading places and figure eight. Contests begin to see what couples are dancing most rhythmically.

**Weeks 7-9** Push spin, Loop and Traveling turn, Vacilala, Back spot turn into trade places, Figure eight into wrap and turn, figure eight into trade places into push spin, We’ll be working on combing what you have learned in different ways as well as Cuban basic, Cuban basic turning. Doble Enchufe, Adios into Doble Enchufe.

**Weeks 10-12** By now if you have not been practicing you’ll start getting a bit lost. If you have been this well come more easily as you should already have a strong command of the move, connection and principles already presented. This section we will be adding sombrero, elbow behind, endless two hand traveling turn, back wraps and....

**Weeks 13-15** Hopefully by now you are plenty good enough to have fun at any Salsa dance. The majority of Salsa dancers know very little beyond what you learned the first few weeks. May classes are unable to get to this point owning everything that has been introduced. What we do from here depends on how well the class has done. We will certainly be practicing combining things we have already been doing in differently ways. It’s time to celebrate what you have learned!

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

The age old lesson that we get out what we put in certainly applies here. DO PRACTICE BY YOURSELVES - This is the number one way to get better quickly. It means that when you are in class you can put your focus onto learning how to partner instead of trying to remember a pattern at the same time. Recalling what we did for not more than 10 minutes per day will make a huge difference. Review the syllabus and try to recall the moves. Drill the technique as well.

We’ve get getting some great questions. Keep asking questions! We’re trying to give you the chance to learn as much as possible in one semester. We move pretty fast. If in the end you are only able to use or retain ½ of what we learn you will still be far better than the good majority on any swing floor. Still, if you feel lost or have questions – ASK, ASK, ASK! If you have missed, I can not spend the class catching you up at the expense of the students who have been attending. Find another student who will work with you too.

Just as in any other class, IF YOU MUST MISS A CLASS GET ANOTHER STUDENT TO SHOW YOU WHAT YOU MISSED not only will you feel more confident when you return and get more out of the next class but it will be more fun for the students you rotate in with as well. It is a rare opportunity to get to dance study dance with the same group for so many hours and enables all to learn at a more advanced rate. Take advantage of it and Have Fun Dancing!
Hello Upcoming Dancer!

Some students have been confused about the location and fee.

Following is both the fee and location information as well as requirements to earn your two class credits:

Classes are held at 1008 Burlington Suite D. This is just west of the intersection of Mount and Stephens and the back of the building can be seen from that intersection with a sign "Martha Jane's Uptown Dance".

You must bring your fee of $65 to the first class or you will be sent to get it. (There are two ATM machines near by). The University does not contribute any funds to these classes for leasing the space, music fees, workers comp, instructor fees or any of the other expenses. The larger classes help carry the smaller ones and we must know how many students we definitely have. If you decide you do not want to take the class you must let me know by Sept 5, 2011 to get a refund. This is not set by the University, it is set by the outside agency. On campus refund schedules do not apply to outside agencies.

This semester, for the first time, the classes are now being awarded two credits instead of one. Fortunately for you, this does not mean you have to have an additional 30 hours of class for the additional credit however, there are a few more requirements for the credit. In most dance department classes you are required to attend dance concerts. Because social dance is such an interactive art, you instead will only be required to attend one dance concert and two dance practices/dances at which you will be required to dance with at least eight different people, two of whom you must be dancing with for the first time. You will get the discounted member rate for the dances as well as a discount for the dance concerts. Dancing opportunities will happen twice monthly at the studio and dance concerts will be announced. Details will be given in class.

You are allowed to miss two classes and have one sit out per semester and still receive credit. The first class does count and I strongly recommend saving your absences for the end of the semester.

Shoes: After the first week we will be moving to the front room and you will be required to wear socks or soft heeled suede bottom shoes. i.e. Jazz shoes/ Ballet shoes I can offer a small discount on the jazz shoes ($28) which I am happy to do. I'll be taking orders the second week of class if anyone would like to get some that way. Shipping is $10 no matter how much is ordered so that would be split among all who order. If only 10 of you order shipping would only be $1 per person. Socks are fine but you will be able to practice technique better in the shoes, which causes me to highly recommend you get some suede sole jazz shoes somewhere.
The Swing classes are designed to give you the skills to dance to most anything played anywhere you go. Since country is played so much locally this will be much of the music played in class, but we will also be using other music including jump blues and big band. You will get out of class as much as you put in. If you want to stand out on the dance floor, start practicing the first week.

Look forward to seeing you!

Martha Jane