DAN 301.01: Intermediate Dance Composition

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Course Description
Through the study of improvisation, choreographic methodology/tendencies, reflection, evaluation, collaboration, research and discussion – students will develop solo and group choreography.

Required Reading
New York Times Sunday Arts Section Dance Reviews
• Students will become free members of the online version of the New York Times to continually verse her/himself with contemporary dance happenings and reviews thereof. Discussion will take place weekly on NYT topics.

Supplementary readings as assigned by the instructor

Objectives
1. To explore improvisation and authentic movement as vehicles through which students come to understand and learn to invent new, unexpected and personal movement vocabulary.
2. To explore contemporary creative processes through reading, practical exercises and observation and thereby uncover one’s preferred approach to choreographing.
3. To further familiarize students with contemporary choreographers and creative processes thereof.
4. To prepare students to work collaboratively with choreographers in the professional setting.
5. To further develop an understanding of the importance of intent within one’s choreography.
6. To continue delivering and receiving feedback and criticism in a way that is constructive.

Methodology
An intermediate level discussion and laboratory based class designed for upper class students; the following will enable course objectives to be met: completion of assigned readings, participation in discussion, improvisation and choreographic studies, self – peer – teacher evaluation, and archiving creative process and product in both journal and video format throughout the semester.

Content
Schedule of readings, improvisations, studies and the arrangement of content will be determined as the course progresses and according to the student’s development and needs. Choreographic projects include:
   I. Solo: Everything I’ve Ever Wanted To Do Onstage
   II. Group: Everything I’ve Ever Wanted To Do Onstage But I Have To Compromise
   III. Director of Group: Sourcing From My Dancers To Discover What I Want To Do Onstage Or An Alternative Performance Space (Final)

Course Requirements:
1. Studio Work: Improvisation, Studies: (40%) Each student will participate in improvisational structures and present choreographic studies as assigned.

2. Discussion and Critique: (20%) Directed improvisations and choreographic studies will be discussed, reflected upon and evaluated during weekly classes. Students are expected to take extensive notes and must thoughtfully construct their feedback and be able to justify their critique.
3. **Journal:** (5%) In this journal, students are expected to record ideas for choreography, responses to improvisational/choreographic/class experiences, feedback, criticism, notes for improvement, questions as well as topics that arise through discussion and assigned readings. Students are expected to bring the journal to each class session. This journal will be shared with peers during the group collaborative assignment. A complete journal will be submitted for grade at the final meeting Monday December 10th at 1.10 pm. Be consistent.

4. **Videotape:** (5%) Students are required to have a videotape available for improvisational process sessions as well as choreographic showings throughout the semester. The videotape, as a tool, enables students to archive their work and reflect upon and learn from past studies. Students are expected to bring the videotape to each class session, otherwise, studies will not be recorded. Students will need to share a separate video for the collaborative group project.

5. **Final Showing:** (20%) **Final Study: Monday December 10th 1.10-3.10pm PARTV 005:** The goal of the final composition project is to provide an opportunity for the choreographer to exhibit her/his choreographic growth over a period of three months and the establishment of her/his choreographic voice at this time. Secondarily, this project provides the chance for the choreographer to share a thoroughly developed and mature work (that is designed with sound/costume and other production elements of choice) to the community as this final meeting is open to the public. It will be the class’ responsibility to design posters and advertise this event.

6. **Creative Process and Choreographic Criticism Essay:** (10%) To learn more about the creative and choreographic process, students are required to read provided supplementary materials that discuss various dance making approaches. This, in conjunction with the peer dialogue and intensive work completed throughout the semester should lead students to better understand her/his approach to the creative process. In this essay, students are required to write a personal manifesto, explaining one’s current preferred way in which to create dance. Students are free to develop their own questions to help articulate this highly intuitive process, but may refer to the following for guidance: *From what sources do you draw inspiration? How do you typically begin your process? How do you use improvisation in your process? How do you source material from your dancers? What traits do you look for in dancers? Are you interested in a particular movement style? Why? Do you enjoy sourcing from others? Why, why not? Do you notice specific ways that you use the movement elements (body, space, time and energy)? Do you fall into restrictive patterns? Do you choreograph to music? Why? Who has influenced the way you work? How? What has been most difficult for you in the creative process? Why do you feel compelled to choreograph? Is there something specific you want your choreography to say to the public?* Once this information is compiled, write a 5-page essay: typed, 12pt. font, 1 inch margins, proofread and stapled. Due Friday Oct. 19th.

Attendance Policy* Two absences are permitted for the term. After two absences, student’s grade will drop one-third letter grade (B -> B-, B- -> C+).

**Academic Misconduct and the Student Code**
All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a 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/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321.

**Drama/Dance Policy**
All Drama/Dance students must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the Department of Drama/Dance Handbook. The Handbook is available online at http://www.sfa.umt.edu/drama/index.html.