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DANC 191.03: Special Topics - Swing

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University of Montana

Theatre & Dance

Special Topics: Swing - DANC 191 – 03

Swing Class Syllabus:

Place: Martha Jane's Uptown Dance (MJUP), 1008 Burlington Suite D, Missoula MT 59801

Instructor: Martha Jane Newby (email: marthajanedance@yahoo.com) 406 640 3262

Overview: An introduction to the various forms of Swing dance. This can include rodeo swing, single, double and triple rhythms in Eastern Swing, sometimes West Coast Swing and even some Lindy Hop – the original "jitterbug". In addition we will touch on two-step and polka. Students will be introduced to the basics of frame, lead and follow techniques, dance posture, floor craft and safety.

Objective: Learn the basics of Swing 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 or in suede bottom shoes. Be prepared to dance with every student in class and do all you can to help them feel like dancers. Each student becomes a text 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 old 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 and carry hand sanitizer.

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. In the swing classes you are also allowed one make up. This means that if you have to not participate for more than three classes you may attend one of the classes held another night. THIS MAY ONLY HAPPEN ONCE! Again, please use it wisely. The make up has to happen within the week either prior or after the class missed. If you know ahead of time that you might miss your class you could do your one makeup either on one of the three other classes prior to the class you must miss or one of the three other classes after the class you miss. By your next class it is too late to make up the class you have missed. 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.

Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code

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://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.

All Theatre & Dance students must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the School of Theatre & Dance *Student Handbook*. The *Handbook* is available online at <http://www.umt.edu/theatredance/about/handbook>.

There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre & Dance classes as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class, shop time, or rehearsal with caution. Always be mindful of your personal safety and the safety of others. Students participating in class/shop/rehearsal/performance do so at their own risk.

Due to safety considerations, at **no** point during a student's time spent in class or serving on a production (in any capacity) should non-enrolled persons be guests of that student **without my consent**. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student's grade.

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 \$65.00 payment to the first class as is stated in the catalogue and **remember that you only have until Monday, January 30, 2012 to request a refund directly from the instructor.**

Semester Schedule:

Week 1-3

Orientation, explanation of various dance terms, a bit of history of swing, lead and follow connection, basic patterns collect fees as well as going over UM policies and rules of class. The basic triple step, single step and rodeo swing (cowboy jerk,) first solo and then with partners, will be introduced as well as one handed swing turns.

Weeks 4-6:

Other swing will be introduced, two handed turns introduced and more floor craft practice/ drills as well as more integration of two-step and swing..

Weeks 7-10

By now students should be well on their way to feeling comfortable on any swing floor. More complicated combinations and cross hand sequences will be added as well as more time doing triple step.

Weeks 11-15:

At this point we start having minor contests concerning use of rhythm etc. Music will be played challenging you to determine which form of swing best fits the music and you will try to dance straight through for at least an hour not worrying about reviewing but treating it as though you were at a dance. We'll be doing review, clarification and beginning to create your own sequences.

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 so you feel more confident when you return and get more out of the next class. 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!

Date _____

Class & Day _____

Spring Semester classes:

Rules which apply to all University of Montana classes with Martha Jane's Uptown Dance

Attendance:

Attendance/Grading: Social dance classes meet for a total of 30 hours each semester. **Credit is given for class participation as well as attending two practice dances and one performance event put on by the dance department and submitting a one page response/review of the performance.** Students must participate for all but 4 class hours to get credit. There are no excused absences. This includes documented medical illness or injury, family emergency, sleeping in, missing class to study for a test, or you stayed out too late the night before. We have also made these absences available so if you have UM related, or any other serious conflicts, you have some hours to miss. **USE YOUR 4 HOURS AS YOU SEE FIT.** In these classes you may miss 2 days and have one "sit out", which means if you are still too sick to participate you may sit and watch one time and take notes which you will turn in at the end of class. This is how the six hours that you do not have to participate is broken down. Arriving late or leaving class early will count as an absence. Missing 7 or more hours will result in a grade of NCR. A grade of NCR is not calculated into your GPA, however you will not receive the two credits for the class. As with any other class, you must arrange to learn what you missed from another student, and try to catch up. If you experience a significant event (for example, a documented extended illness, major injury, the death of an immediate family member, or documented proof of UM conflicts) you may submit a written petition to find alternate ways to complete the class. In the event you enrolled after the first week we will allow one makeup class. Anyone not ready to dance when the bell rings will do ten pushups. If you are not in class dancing by 20 minutes after the hour the first time will be a warning, the following times will be counted as absences. **Footwear will be limited to suede bottom soft heeled shoes (Such as Jazz or Ballet shoes) or socks.** Make sure you come to class prepared.

Fees: You must pay the outside agency \$65.00 the first day of class. Anyone arriving without payment will be sent to get it before admittance. In regular community classes locally the same amount of instruction would cost upwards of \$300.00 making these classes a bargain. In major cities, for an equally qualified instructor it would be upwards of \$800.00. **If you decide you do not wish to take the class you must contact the class instructor directly by Monday, Jan 30, 2012 to receive a refund.** Class numbers are pooled together so if one class is short and there are extra's in another class, the short class will still be held. So everyone has time to find other classes if necessary, we need to know how many paid students we have within the week. This is for the sake of everyone in all classes.

I the undersigned understand all the rules on the reverse and declare that I am physically fit and able to participate in this class. I further acknowledge that I am aware that such activities as this class could result in any sort of injury including paralysis or even death and agree to not hold liable Swing Ballroom and Latin, Martha Jane's Uptown Dance, Ballroom, Latin, Swing and More LLC or any of the representatives of said company or agencies or facilities involved.

Requirements to pass include:

Weekly class notes kept in notebook _____

Students must attend all but two classes and participate in all but three. This translates into students being allowed two absences and one sit out. These absences are for school related things which require mandatory attendance of student, serious illness, break downs, family emergency etc. If student uses absences for other things they will still pass as long as they do not exceed the maximum absences for any reason. _____

A sit out is not a study hall. During a sit out student will focus on class and take notes that will be turned in at end of class. _____

Suede soled, soft heeled shoes are required by week 3 _____

First tardy of over five minutes late is a warning, second is a ½ absence and if over 20 minutes late it is always ½ of an absence. If over 55 minutes late it is a full class absence. Less than five minutes late students make up with pushups _____

Write one midterm of 150 words on what you most need to improve, what you can do to help that happen and what you think would help your dancing skills to have more of in the class, and email to instructor the week of midterm. The primary focus of this paper needs to be on what you can do to help yourself improve. _____

Two studio dances must be attended for two hours during which time students must dance with at least eight different people for one song each, three of whom they have never danced with before. Registered students will get an admission discount. These will be held approximately every other Saturday beginning Jan 28.

Street shoes must be removed inside door _____

Attend one dance performance sponsored by the dance department and write a 250-300 word response (one page) to be emailed to instructor within 48 hours of performance _____

If a class is missed students must find another student to catch them up before class

Read the syllabus that will be emailed carefully _____

Facebook friend the instructor to be joined into the private group class page and commit to looking for and reading updates weekly _____

In order to get a refund for the class I must request it directly from the instructor by Monday January 30, 2011 so we have a total count for all classes so in the event a class needs to be cancelled the students can still find other classes for the credit _____

I _____ have read, understand, and agree to all of the above.