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DANC 100A.01: Introduction to Modern Dance

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University of Montana, School of Theatre & Dance
Fall 2022: Introduction to Modern Dance 3 credits
70169 – DANC 100A T/Th 11:00-12:20pm PARTV 005

Instructor: **Heidi Jones Eggert**
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Phone: 406-243-2072
Office: PARTV 194
Office hours: Tues and Wed 12:30-2:00pm

“Dance is the hidden language of the soul.” – Martha Graham

Course Description

In this entry-level class to Contemporary Modern Dance, space, time and energy will be explored as elements of movement. There will be an underlying emphasis on alignment, strength, flexibility and kinesiology sound movement patterns. **In order to better understand and appreciate Modern Dance**, participants will not only have opportunities to experience, practice and perform modern dance, but to also play the roles of dance critics and historians, improvisational artists, choreographers and teachers.

Objectives

- To describe Modern Dance as a form of expression
- To increase awareness and confidence in the moving body by application of dance warm up, improvisation, technique and phrase work
- To find artistry in each body by recognizing natural musicality: breath, weight, gravity, momentum
- To create and develop unique movement sequences, collaboratively organizing that material into a dance
- To critically evaluate and objectively discuss dance performance (including technique and expression)
- To defend a broad appreciation of dance

Course Content

As an **emerging dancer** it is expected that by the completion of this course the student will be able to recognize and perform, to the best of their ability, the below mentioned elements of contemporary modern dance:

- Demonstration of Line and Form
- Dynamic Alignment
- Effective Body Patterning
- Spatial Awareness
- Rhythmic Accuracy
- Initiation and Follow-Through
- Strength, Flexibility and Endurance
- Professionalism, Etiquette and Performance Ability

Class Structure

Class begins promptly at **11:00am**. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late will not be permitted to take class (for safety purposes and etiquette practices), and will instead observe and take notes. Class will end at **12:20am**. Students are required to remain in class until its conclusion with the closing circle. Consistent tardiness or early departure from class will result in the lowering of one's grade.

To **avoid injury**, please come to class prepared to move at the start of class. (If you know you need extra time/space to stay safe, arrive early, but not before the previous class has exited.) Please notify the instructor of any current or past injury that may affect your full performance in class.

Should a student **observe class**, it is expected that the student engages by watching the class and dutifully apply what is being taught and discussed to her/his own improvement in class. This **observation should result in a set of notes** that will be submitted to the instructor at the conclusion of the class observed. While observing class, students are required to be mindful and quiet as to not detract

from the teaching and performance efficacy of the teacher, classmates and accompanist. More than one observation will equal an absence, unless there is prior discussion with the instructor. *see “Expectations” for more on participation/attendance.

Your **dance attire** should not restrict or hide your movement. Take into account that there is potential for any part of the body to be in contact with the floor, at any given time; and for safety, keep the body warm from the beginning until the end of class = bring extra clothing. Movement will be experienced with bare feet. It is *highly* recommended that dancers own and bring kneepads to class. These can be ordered on line at: www.contactquarterly.com. **Please, no street shoes in the dance studios.**

Physical contact and touch are customary teaching methods to correct alignment and suggest new patterns of movement. Always seeking consent first, the teacher and fellow students *may* facilitate this. If you have any concerns with this style of teaching/learning please let the instructor know, as she will find alternative methods.

Expectations: Attendance, Participation, and Grading Policy

Casual **in class assignments** in spontaneous composition and performance will take place on a semi-regular basis. These may be individual or in small groups. Class time will be dedicated to group choreography assignments. Please be respectful of your peers and recognize the importance of your consistent contribution. Demonstrated effort towards collaboration and positive critical feedback will be reflected in your daily participation grade.

Attendance is important in any field, but vital in the field of dance. Learning to dance requires that your body do it. You won’t gain in flexibility, and strength, or in your ability to pick up movement or generate your own movement by hearing about what happened from a classmate, watching a film, or reading about it in a book. In other words, there is no way to make up the material you miss.

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE IN EVERY CLASS. However, knowing that unpredictable circumstances can arise, students are granted two permissible absences. Any absences thereafter will result in the grade lowering by one-third of a letter for each additional absence. All of this is subject to exemption in the case of extenuating circumstances and clear communication from the student.

Observations: Students are allowed **two observations** per semester. Each observation after the allotted two will be counted as an absence. *Please refer to the **Observation Policy** posted on Moodle for what is expected when you observe a class.

Students who arrive late or have to leave early, may be asked to observe the entire class time. Only partial credit for the day will be issued when a student is late or leaves early.

*Please refer to the Dance Program **Injury Policy** posted on Moodle

Grading: Dance is different from many other fields in that a student’s work is not as quantifiable as it is in some other subjects, such as history or math. For this reason, grading is not assigned a point breakdown. To earn an “A” a student must:

- Consistently reach above and beyond average participation
- Demonstrate proficiency in the areas listed within the “Course Content” of this syllabus at least 65% of the time in class.
- Have an energetic, attentive and inquisitive attitude
- Progress over the semester
- And of course, fulfill all attendance, critique, journal and self-assessment requirements.

Students may receive an “incomplete” (I) only if there are exceptional circumstances, which have been discussed with the instructor.

*Please refer to the Dance Program **Technique Criteria Guidelines** posted on Moodle.

You will receive an “F” if your absences and lack of critiques add up (or subtract) to an “F.” Your grade will be lowered by one-third of a point for each critique you do not hand in (e.g., if you start with a B, your grade will drop to a B-, then C+ and you will receive a “C+”). Students may receive an “incomplete” (I) only if there are exceptional circumstances, *that have been discussed at length with the instructor.*

Performance Attendance & Response Assignments

Students are required to attend **three performance events** during the fall term. (plus *strongly encouraged* to attend dance and theatre events at large; in Missoula, and beyond.)

Attendance is required at the following:

- **Dance on Location** – Saturday, Oct 8 at 2pm – meet at the Mansfield Library entrance/courtyard
 - Free! Live outdoor tour of dances around campus
- **Dance Underground** – Dec 2 @ 7:30pm, Dec 3 @ 2:00pm and 7:30pm
 - Tickets \$5-10, performance in PARTV Open Space

Plus one of the follow (student's choice):

- **Bare Bait Dance's Missoula Roadshow** – September 9, 10, 11
 - Free! 3 amazing locations! Each day a different venue <https://barebaitdance.org/roadshow2022>
- **Bare Bait Dance's Guest Performance Residency: RED** – October 28 - 30
 - Westside Theatre <https://barebaitdance.org/red> \$22 student ticket
- **Bare Bait Dance's Hello Winter!** – November 26 – December 4
 - Westside Theatre <https://barebaitdance.org/hello-winter> \$22 student ticket
 - Also available streaming beginning Dec 5. \$10 ticket

Attendance is recommended at the following:

- Dance Production **Auditions**: Thurs. Sept 1 at 6pm in PARTV 005 – everyone welcome!
- UM School of Theatre & Dance additional Mainstage/Studio Series shows – live! <https://www.umt.edu/theatre-dance/season/default.php>
 - *Cabaret* (October 13-16 and 20-23)
 - *The Call of the Wild* (November 10, 12, 13, 17-20)
- Montana Repertory Theatre productions: www.montanarep.com
- ... and more as details become available ...

The instructor will provide detailed guidelines for written critique(s), and other response projects. Students will need to give specific examples in their writing, so it is recommended that they take notes either during or immediately following each event. **The student's grade will be lowered by one third of a letter grade for each assignment that is not submitted.**

Odds and Ends

- Additional assignments *may* be scheduled throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor.
- **We will not meet during finals week.**
- If at any point you feel further discussion would aid your development, please schedule a meeting with the instructor.
- If you are sick or injured, please talk to the instructor as soon possible before class. This includes any pre-existing conditions/injuries that should be shared.
- If you get injured during class, get the instructor's attention immediately!
- Restrooms / locker rooms are located down the hall, on the left.
- **Lockers** are available for any student. Individuals concerned about theft should check out a locker for their shoes and other belongings. The School of Theatre and Dance recommends that students do not leave personal belongings unattended in the dressing rooms, hallways, dance studios, or theatres as thefts frequently occur. **Lockers may be checked out through the School: details TBA.**
- It is recommended that you bring a water bottle to class.
- **NO** food or drinks (except water in closed bottles) are permitted in the dance studios or theatres.
- **NO STREET SHOES, FOOD, DRINK, CELL PHONES OR SMART WATCHES** ALLOWED IN DANCE STUDIOS AT ANY TIME. The only shoes that are permitted in the studios are those that have been purchased for the exclusive use of dance in dance studios (with the exclusion of tap shoes, hard-shoe clogs and flamenco shoes. These must **never** be worn on the Marley floors).

STATEMENT OF EMPOWERMENT

The School of Theatre and Dance recognizes that art can provoke; therefore, during the course of this class or class-related activities, participants are empowered to remove themselves should they feel a threat to their well-being.

WELLNESS STATEMENT

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, and cross-cultural challenges can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in the university setting. For helpful resources, please contact the Curry Health Center Counseling department at 406-243-4711 or schedule an online appointment through the CHC Health Portal: <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/>. For a crisis or for after-hours care, you can contact the emergency rooms at St. Patrick Hospital or Community Medical Center; the National Suicide Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255; or the Crisis Text Line: text MT to 741-741.

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 www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php.

All syllabi for Theatre & Dance courses imply the understanding:

Theatre and Dance students must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the School of Theatre and Dance Student Handbook. The Handbook is available online at <https://www.umt.edu/theatre-dance/handbook.php>

There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre and 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.

From UM President Seth Bodnar:

The wide availability of safe, effective vaccines to combat COVID-19 means that we are able to continue full in-person learning again this semester. The Office of the President urges every member of the UM Family to get vaccinated (and receive a booster shot) if you haven't done so already. Vaccination provides the best means of protecting yourself – and others in our UM Family – from the risk of COVID-19.

Please visit <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/corona-virus.php> for the latest health/safety information, as well as campus communications and plans about the global health pandemic.

From the EO/AA Office:

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equality (ODE). "Reasonable" means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. For more information, please consult <https://www.umt.edu/disability/default.php>.