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DANC 345.01: Teaching Dance to People with Disabilities

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University of Montana, School of Theatre & Dance
Spring 2014: Teaching Dance to People with Disabilities 1 credit
32000 – DANC 345 - 01 M 6:20-7:40 pm PAR/TV 035

Instructor: **Heidi Jones Eggert**
Email: heidi.eggert@umontana.edu

Office: PAR/TV 186
Office hours: [Mon & Wed 11:00-12:00](#)
[Thurs 1:00-2:00](#)

To touch to move to inspire- this is the true gift of dance. ~Aubrey Lynch

Course Objective

To introduce students to the role of dance in the lives of people with disabilities.

Overview

This is an introduction to teaching creative movement, dance and creative arts to special populations. The term "special populations" refers to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments, or who have physical, mental, emotional, or learning disabilities. This course involves seminars, independent work and on-going dance sessions with people with disabilities through the New Visions Dance Program. New Visions is a public dance class for people with disabilities, sponsored by VSA Montana – The State Organization on Arts and Disability.

All students in this class

- are active movers in the weekly mixed-ability class
- serve as role models and assistants
- participate in class discussions and evaluations
- help with clients (greet clients when they arrive, distribute name tags, remove shoes and coats, escort to bathroom if needed)
- will learn about adaptation techniques through direct instruction, example, hands-on trial and error
- are expected to work independently & participate to the fullest extent possible.

Text

Suggested: Inclusive Creative Movement and Dance by Karen Kaufmann, 2006, Human Kinetics
Supplemental readings may be assigned.

Semester Schedule

[Jan 27 – Feb 3](#) Intro seminar, preliminary research, discussion, preparation
[Feb 10 – April 28](#) New Visions Dance Class – 10 sessions
(Please arrive to 035 by 6:20, dance class with clients 6:30-7:15, class discussion 7:15-7:40)
[May 5](#) Wrap-up session and Final Projects

Course Requirements

1. Attendance is mandatory

This class meets only once a week and your commitment is of the utmost importance. One absence will not affect your grade. Two or more absences will lower your grade by 1/2 a letter grade per absence. Arriving late or leaving early, without prior discussion, is considered an absence.

2. Investigate the Field of Dance and Disabilities

- Learn about VSA – International Organization on Arts and Disability
- Do general research in the field of dance and disabilities (resources, disabilities and the arts, classes, organizations, etc).
- Research and review at least three integrated dance companies (or relevant organizations you discovered through your research). Link/Upload your favorites to Moodle and be prepared to share and discuss in class and online. * [See Class Calendar](#)

3. **Keep a Journal**

Throughout the semester keep a journal of your experiences relating to this course [* See Class Calendar](#).

This may involve notes from observation, participation and your general impressions from New Visions or additional research. Be specific, personal and in-depth. Consider these questions:

What is being learned?

What are your impressions of "what works" and what doesn't work? Why?

Where are the participants physically? Emotionally? Intellectually?

What are the interpersonal dynamics of the class?

What do you think the participants need more/less of?

How would you describe your rapport with participants?

What changes do you notice from week to week?

What area(s) do you want to know more about?

4. **Plan, Teach, Evaluate Two/Three Mini-Lessons** – or service learning [* See Class Calendar](#)

Once you get to know the class you will be asked to plan, teach and evaluate 2 mini-lessons taught to our group.

Your movement material may be designed around these parts of the class:

- 1) warm-up
 - 2) creative movement exploration
 - 3) cardiovascular movement, across the floor.
 - 4) choreography
- Draw from your own experiences and consult any and all resources you wish. Either develop your own movement ideas or adapt ideas found in suggested readings.
 - Step 1. Submit your first draft of your **lesson plans** to the instructor and receive written or verbal feedback. Develop the lesson further, as needed.
 - Step 2. **Teach** the lesson. Participate in discussion after you teach. Listen to feedback from peers and share your immediate impressions of how the lesson went.
 - Step 3. Write a **self-evaluation** of how it worked. Be honest. How would you improve next time? Turn in: Your 2 lesson plans and 2 self-evaluations.

4.b **Group Lesson – collaboratively Plan and Teach a more extensive lesson, plus individual Evaluation**

5. **Outside of class plus Performances**

Learn more about **VSA Montana** by participating in ONE of the following events:

- Observing/participating in **VSA Choir Practice** at Big Sky High School
[Thurs, Jan 30](#) or [Thurs, April 24](#)
- Perform in VSA Cabaret [Sunday, May 18](#) , plus dress rehearsal May 17
- OR... some yet to be determined VSA community event

6. **Final Project** [* See Class Calendar](#)

Mull over the experiences you've had this semester. What questions, curiosities, interests have been sparked? What would you like to learn more about? Choose a topic that interests you and research the subject. Present this information (~10 minutes, with visual aids/group participation) to our class. Turn in a short (typed) research paper describing your topic, your research methodologies, and your results.

This might be:

- **a conventional research study** i.e. What is mental retardation? What is the life span & orthopedic progression of a person with cerebral palsy? What laws exist to protect people with disabilities? What ADA regulations exist for accessibility in public places?
- **a social question** i.e. What is the current debate about sexuality and childbearing for people with disabilities? What kinds of issues do married couples face if they both have a disability? What kinds of prejudices does a person with a disability face?
- **an artistic question** how can I express my own perceptions about one of the clients through a poem, a painting, a dance, a story? In what ways am I disabled in my own life?

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.

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.