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DANC 300.01: Contemporary Modern Dance III

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University of Montana, School of Theatre & Dance
30668 - DANC 300 - 01: Modern III 3 credits
Spring 2016 M W F 10:10 - 11:30am PARTV 005

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Office hours: Wed 11:30-12:30
 Thurs 10:30-12:30

Instructor: **Nicole Bradley Browning**
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 Thurs 11:00-12:30

“Movement is an expression of a mind, body and spirit totality.” – Rudolf von Laban

Course Description

An intermediate/advanced level contemporary modern dance class where students demonstrate an understanding of basic classical and post modern dance techniques and develop movement qualities necessary for artistry in performance. For a dancer developing consistency and commitment towards her/his craft, this class builds in complexity regarding technical demand and creative expression. There will be an underlying emphasis on alignment and kinesiology sound movement patterns.

Objectives

- To heighten self-awareness in technique, movement dynamics and performance.
- To begin to develop personal ownership (voice) of movement.
- To invest in complex movement phrases.
- To interact with other dancers, making it a shared experience in phrase work and improvisation.
- To create and develop unique movement sequences and individually or collaboratively organize that material into greater phrase work.
- To critically evaluate and objectively discuss dance performance (including technique and expression)
- To defend a grand appreciation of dance

Course Content

As an **intermediate dancer consistently developing technique, artistry and etiquette** it is expected that by the completion of this course the student will be proficient in the below mentioned elements: (*Italicized items indicate the skill to be acquired in Level III technique, non-italicized items reflect skills that have been acquired in Levels I & II*)

- A. Demonstration of Line and Form
 - a. Students maintain an ability to move upper body without displacing the pelvis
 - b. Students excel in their understanding of rotated and parallel positions
 - c. Students are integrated in their bodies
 - d. Students have a strong sense of line and shape
 - e. *Students are able to manipulate line and form*
- B. Dynamic Alignment
 - a. Students have an understanding of sound alignment
 - b. Students excel in their ability to execute pli   (demi and grand) in parallel, first, second, third positions and demi pli   in fourth position
 - c. Students safely land from jumps
 - d. Students have an understanding of alignment in vertical and non-vertical positions
 - e. *Students understand pelvic alignment and the neutral pelvis*
 - f. *Students have clear head-tail coordination in all body patterns (core-distal, body-half, upper-lower, cross-lateral, spiral)*
 - g. *Students are able to achieve freedom from excess joint tension*

- C. Effective Body Patterning
 - a. Students are able to coordinate breath with movement
 - b. Students understand all concepts of Body Patterning:
 *Breath *Core/Distal *Head/Tail *Body Half *Upper/Lower
 *Cross lateral *Contra lateral *Spiral
 - c. Students are able to fall and recover the center of the body
 - d. Students are able to execute turns, both stationary and locomotor
 - e. *Students are proficient at isolating thigh joint in retire, extensions and battement*
 - f. *Students are able to turn off their vertical axis*
- D. Spatial Awareness
 - a. Students have an understanding of kinesphere, personal space and shared space
 - b. Students have an understanding of basic partnering skills
 - c. Students have an ability to move within space while maintaining relationship to others
 - d. Students have an ability to dance according to varied facings
 - e. Students have spatial awareness and spatial intent
 - f. *Students consistently interact with other dancers*
 - g. *Students have an ability to make dance a shared experience*
 - h. *Students have an ability to represent clear directional and spatial intent*
- E. Rhythmic Accuracy
 - a. Students have an understanding of time
 - b. Students have an ability to dance with an awareness of the beginnings and endings of phrases
 - c. Students have an ability to accent movement
 - d. Students have an ability to distinguish the center of the beat
 - e. Students have an ability to dance within complex rhythmic structures, counting patterns and unconventional time signatures
 - f. *Students are skillful in dancing to traditional rhythms (3s, 4s, 6s, 8s) and unconventional collections of counts with overall musicality*
- F. Initiation and Follow-Through
 - a. Students have an awareness of body part initiation
 - b. Students excel in their ability to use weight and momentum in body part initiation
 - c. Students have an ability to distinguish successive or sequential vs. simultaneous movement
 - d. Students move with both internal and external focus
 - e. Students excel in their understanding of point of initiation
 - f. *Students demonstrate strong body/eye focus*
- G. Strength, Flexibility and Endurance
 - a. Students have strong torso, feet, arms and overall alignment
 - b. Students descend to and ascend from the floor safely
 - c. Students have familiarity with proper stretching techniques for major muscle groups
 - d. Students have the ability to easily complete a two-hour technique class: demonstrating the endurance to complete a two hour class without strain
 - e. Student have clear articulation in feet
 - f. Students complete long and complex movement sequences
 - g. Students excel in their ability to do floor work and take weight into the upper body
 - h. *Students understand developing "stability through mobility"*
 - i. *Students have the capacity to move through sequences with appropriately applied energy*
- H. Professionalism, Etiquette and Performance Ability
 - a. Students excel in their understanding of movement quality
 - b. Students excel in their concentration efforts
 - c. Students demonstrate willingness to experiment
 - d. Students have an appreciation for different movement approaches
 - e. Students move through the space with confidence
 - f. Students have peer assessment skills
 - g. *Students more rapidly learn and reverse phrase work*
 - h. *Students begin to focus on performance skills and presence*
 - i. *Students demonstrate clear differentiation of qualities in one phrase*
 - j. *Students begin to develop personal ownership (voice) of movement*

Class Structure

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.

Class begins promptly at **10:10am**. 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 **11:30am**. 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.) Please notify the instructor of any injury (current or past) that may affect your full performance in class.

Should a student observe class, it is expected that the student engage 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 when applicable). **More than one observation will equal an absence, unless there is prior discussion with the instructor.** *see "Expectations" for more on participation/attendance. **If a student sits out for a week of class (3 classes), an entire letter grade will be deducted from the student's grade.**

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 will be used as teaching methods to correct alignment and suggest new patterns of movement. The teacher and fellow students will 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 and Grading Policy

Attendance is important in any field, but vital in the field of dance. Learning to dance requires that your body do it. You will not 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, or reading 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 may arise, students are granted one permissible absence. Students may also make up two absences by participating in (if appropriate) or watching, *and* writing a one-page observation of another dance class. **AFTER A STUDENT HAS USED HER/HIS SINGLE ABSENCE AND TWO MAKEUPS, THE STUDENT WILL BE DOCKED ONE-THIRD OF A GRADE FOR EVERY ABSENCE FOLLOWING.** (see attached: UM Dance Program - Injury Policy)

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.
- 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.

Performance Attendance & Written Assignments

Students are required to attend **eight performance/gallery events** during the spring term. (plus *strongly encouraged* to attend dance events at large; in Missoula, at the Myrna Loy Center in Helena and at the Hamilton Center for the Performing Arts.)

Attendance is required at the following **five** productions:

- **ACDA Benefit Concert**
 - February 5-6 (Fri-Sat) at 7:30 pm; Open Space
 - \$5 donation at the door
- **Spring Studio Works**
 - February 27 (Sat) program I at 6:30pm; program II at 8:30pm; Open Space
 - Tickets \$5 at the door
- **Bare Bait Dance, All About the Moon ***
 - March 10-12 at 7:30pm; March 12-13 at 2pm, Open Space
 - Tickets at the door or barebaitdance.org

* If you are attending the ACDA NW Conference, a supplemental show will be suggested in place of *All About the Moon*.
- **Dance In Concert**
 - March 23-26 (Wed-Sat) 7:30 each night, Montana Theatre
 - General Admission \$20/ student \$16. Tickets at Box Office in PARTV lobby
- **Dance New Works**
 - April 26-30 (Tues-Sat) 7:30pm, Open Space
 - \$9 General Admission, \$6 required students. Tickets at Box Office in PARTV lobby

PLUS choose **one** of the following School of Theatre & Dance shows (required):

- **Hot 'n' Throbbing**
 - Feb 23-27, March 1-6. Masquer Theatre
- **All in the Timing**
 - March 15-19. Masquer Theatre
- **Romeo and Juliet**
 - April 27-30, May 3-7. Montana Theatre

AND choose *any* **one** live music event (required):

AND choose *any* **one** gallery exhibition (required):

Each student will submit 5 critical art responses over the course of the semester (in any order):

- comparing live theatre and one recently seen dance piece
- comparing live music and one recently seen dance piece
- comparing a gallery exhibition and one recently seen dance piece
- a full critique of one dance piece, while referencing relevant focus from technique class
- one alternative response to a dance piece

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 she/he take notes either during or immediately following each event. **The student's grade will be lowered by one letter grade for each assignment that is not submitted.**

Journal/Self-Assessment Writings

Throughout the course of the semester, you will be asked to reflect upon and assess your growth in this class. These writings may take place in class, but most likely outside of the studio. In lieu of weekly journal your teacher will provide you with prompts, on paper and via Moodle. Included in your direct response to a question, feel free to include details regarding your development as a dancer, performer, artist, global citizen... Include aspects of what is going well, where you are struggling, what your questions are...

Odds and Ends

- Additional assignments *may* be scheduled throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor.
- **** We may meet during finals week on Thursday, May 12th 10:10-12:10 ** *date/time may be negotiable***
- 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 across the hall.
- **Locker rentals** are available for all students in the dance classes. We recommend that you do not leave personal belongings unattended in the dressing rooms, hallways, or dance studios, as thefts unfortunately occur. Backpacks and personal belongings are discouraged in dance studios, with the exception of water bottles. Lockers are your best solution and may be rented for **\$7/semester**. For details, see the Dance Program administrative assistant, PARTV 199 (door across from women's dressing room, then up the stairs.)

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://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/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/umarts/theatredance/About/handbook.php>.

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.