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DAN 100A.01: Modern Dance I

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The University of Montana

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Modern I - Continuing
Syllabus
Fall 2001 - T/Th 2:10 - 3:30 pm
Instructor: Melanie Kloetzel

Modern I - Continuing is an advanced beginner class. This means that I expect students to already possess some of the rudiments of dance training. Whether this is by way of previous attendance in dance classes or by natural ability, I will decide whether each student has the necessary skills for this class.

Note: This is not a ballet class. While I will be referring to certain terminology from ballet, I do not expect you to know these terms and I would encourage you to ask questions if you do not understand them. I rarely use warmups that can be likened to ballet classes. My own movement is based on yoga, Alexander Technique, gymnastics, release technique, and contact improvisation, all of which we will discuss as the semester progresses.

As far as grading is concerned, the majority of your grade will be based on attendance. By attendance, I mean not only showing up for class, but attending to the material at hand. Effort shows and I will be sure to take note of those fully participating in the class. Please refer to the general dance syllabus for details about the dance department's attendance policy. The rest of your grade will be based on your completion of one improvisation assignment, one choreography assignment, and three written reviews of dance concerts. I will provide you with the specifics of the improvisation and choreography assignments during the semester.

The written reviews need to be one page, typed, single-spaced in size 12 font, and should reflect your understanding of the concert. I expect you to pick two pieces to which you had a strong reaction. This reaction could be a positive or negative reaction or just one based on intensity. Explore your reaction with specific reference to movements, dancers, costumes, lighting, and tone of the piece. What was the theme of the piece? Did your feelings change as you watched the piece? Did the movement reflect the tone of the piece accurately? Did you have a kinesthetic reaction to the piece? Was it successful in its intention? Creative responses to the dance pieces are also encouraged though creativity cannot be used as a facade for poor writing technique. Papers need to be clear and well-organized with precise grammar and language.

Dance technique is defined by each teacher individually. Though certain dance skills can be applied across the board, each teacher has specific ideas about the skills necessary to perform their own movement style. My own style relies on upper body strength. As a class, we will develop the skills necessary to improve our ability to move in and out of the floor with ease. This includes a focus on upside down work, i.e. using

our arms as weight-bearers. In each class, we will be devoting some time to accomplishing certain upside down skills. However, this is not a gymnastics class and my approach to this work is based on momentum rather than force. I believe that all of you have the capacity to do this work, so do not be discouraged by your present perceived capacity/incapacity to go upside down. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please feel free to communicate them to me. We will also be interacting with each other physically as partners and spotters. This requires a very high level of respect and care for your fellow students. I have high expectations for what we can accomplish in this class, so be attuned to the material and your fellow classmates, and let's have fun!