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DANC 108A.01: Dance Forms - Musical Theatre

Pamyla Stiehl

The University Of Montana, pamyla.stiehl@umontana.edu

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DANCE FORMS: MUSICAL THEATRE

School of Theatre & Dance – University of Montana

DANC 108A-01 / Fall 2017 / 2 credits

M / W 2:00–3:20 pm; PARTV 035

<u>Professor</u>	<u>Contact Info</u>	<u>Office / Office Hrs</u>
Dr. Pamyła Stiehl	Email: pamyła.stiehl@umontana.edu	McGill 212C
T.A.: Natalie Johnston	General Office: 406-243-4481	T / R 1:00-3:00 or by appointment

DESCRIPTION: A foundational course in techniques and styles of dance and choreography for musical theatre

GOALS: The goal of this course is to foster an appreciation of and familiarity with musical theatre dance – its various idioms, distinguishing characteristics, and historic periods – while learning basic dance technique and mastering different styles of dance performance. The course is developed around the learning of dance numbers from musical theatre that are representative of various periods, styles, and disciplines. In addition to technical training, students will learn and perform four choreographed Broadway show routines. Students will also acquire knowledge and analytical skills regarding the discipline of dance and musical theatre performance overall.

OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Execute basic dance steps, techniques, and styles of movement, using them as building blocks to steadily progress to more difficult steps, styles, and dance combinations;
- Identify, execute and retain specific choreography, both in training (warm-ups and across-the-floor exercises) and in fully choreographed musical theatre dance routines;
- Identify and demonstrate performance and acting styles/techniques when executing theatrical dance routines;
- Critique outside dance performances, varying in styles/genres and venues;
- Chronicle, analyze and critique your own process, progress, and performance in a dance number, analytically journaling your learning/performing experience.

REQUIRED DRESS: Dance shoes (preferably soft-soled jazz shoes) are the only acceptable footwear for class – NOT street shoes. You will need to have these shoes for every class. You will also be required to dress appropriately for class (dance or exercise attire). Throughout the semester, **if you do not have appropriate shoes or attire for class, you will not be permitted to dance and be counted as absent for the class.** (*See notes at end of syllabus regarding Dance Studio Rules and Protocol.*)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION:

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, watching a film of the dance, or reading about it in a book. In other words, there is no way to make up the material you miss.

The Dance faculty therefore **EXPECTS STUDENTS TO BE IN EVERY CLASS MEETING.** However, knowing that unpredictable circumstances can arise, students are permitted two absences. Students may also make up two classes. Make-ups are determined by the instructor and may include: watching and writing a one-page observation of another dance class that is either a more advanced level of the style the student is studying (or a different style) or by participating in another section of the same level and style of the class.

AFTER YOU HAVE USED YOUR TWO ABSENCES AND TWO MAKE-UPS, YOU WILL BE DOCKED ONE-THIRD OF A GRADE FOR EVERY ADDITIONAL ABSENCE. (In other words, **after three absences, grade will be docked.**)

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS and DANCE PRODUCTION ATTENDANCE:

1. ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED AT THE FOLLOWING:

- A. ***UM Dancers on Location: A Site Specific Dance Concert:***
Friday September 15 @ 5PM, Sunday September 17 @ Noon; meet at the UM Mansfield Mall. Free!
- B. ***Dance Up Close:***
November 10 @ 7:30PM, November 11 @ 2PM and 7:30PM; Masquer Theatre. Tickets available at the UMArts Box Office in the PARTV Lobby.
- C. ***Fall Studio Works:***
December 8: Program I at 6:30pm, Program II at 8:30pm; Open Space.
Tickets \$5 ***at the door.***

To achieve credit for the required attendance requirement, you will need to send me an email for each production, with a reflection/critique on the performance as follows, due the week following its last performance (no later):

- 1. *To which pieces in the production did you experience a strong reaction?*
- 2. *Regarding the choreography of those pieces:*
 - a. *What is the content, subject, meaning or movement idea?*
 - b. *How did the movement/style of the movement support (or detract) the choreographic message?*
 - c. *What is it about the movement/choreography/performance that inspired your reaction?*
- 3. *Your reaction to the performances of the dancers: expression and technique.*
- 4. *Your opinion on the theatrical elements: costumes, lighting, sets and sound score. Did they work with the choreography? Provide some detail to support your opinions.*

- 2. **Homecoming Parade Participation (Oct. 13-14):** For this class, you are required to march/perform in the Homecoming Parade as part of the School of Theatre & Dance entry. The date of the parade is **Saturday morning, October 14**, as well as a quick "logistical" rehearsal the previous **Friday, October 13**. **The exact rehearsal and call times on Fri/Sat are TBD**. Please put these dates on your schedule now. If you have a documented conflict, please let me know at the beginning of the semester and we will work on a substitute assignment.
- 3. **Personal Performance Analysis:** For one of the group numbers (your choice), you must submit a written analysis of your own development, process, and execution. The paper must be **AT LEAST 3 PAGES** and should provide some answers to the following questions: Who am I as a theatrical character in the number/show (character, background, and personality/ psychology)? What do I want in this dance? How do I feel? Do my objectives change during the number? What is my relationship with the other dancers, the audience, the music, and the choreography? When and where do these relationships change? Does my focus shift at times? Why? Have I found varying dynamics? Where? How did all these things evolve during my rehearsal process? What were my challenges and/or victories as I learned and executed the number? **Avoid generalities; be personal and specific/descriptive! THIS ASSIGNMENT WILL ONLY BE CREDITED IF IT MEETS THE FULL CRITERIA.**
- 4. **FINAL EXAM / PERFORMANCE:** The final exam will be an open class during which, after a warm-up, you will perform all routines learned throughout the semester. You may invite observers so that you have an audience. You will receive credit for the assignment based on **effort, progress, and positive contribution/participation** on that day.

Late written assignments will not be accepted -- no exceptions!

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 we do not have a point breakdown, but rather general guidelines.

To receive an "A" you must:

- show signs of aptitude for dance technique
- have an energetic, attentive attitude
- progress over the semester
- be at the top level of the class
- and, of course, fulfill the attendance, critique, and performance requirements

You will receive an "F" if your absences and lack of critiques/assignments add up (or subtract) to an "F."

Your grade will be **lowered by one-third of a letter for each assignment/critique you do not complete** (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 with the instructor.*

CLASS SCHEDULE / CALENDAR:

I will most likely be emailing you regularly with updates, reminders, and general information. Feel free to email me regularly as well with questions, concerns, or to simply touch base or discuss an issue. I will do my best to answer within 24 hours.

Daily Schedule: Typically, the first half of each class period will be spent in warm-ups and across-the-floor combinations, leaving the balance of the period devoted to learning the group number/s. Role will be taken at 2:00 p.m. sharp each day before warm-ups – as noted above, tardiness (and absences) will affect your grade. Following is a rough breakdown as to the group numbers (subject to change, if necessary) that will be learned throughout the semester:

WEEK 1	Course Orientation/Technique Basics
WEEK 2	Technique Basics
	Friday/Sunday Sept. 15 and 17: <i>UM Dancers on Location</i>
WEEKS 2 – 5	"American Idiot" (<i>American Idiot</i>) – Contemporary Broadway
	Friday/Saturday Oct. 13-14: Homecoming Parade
WEEKS 5 – 9	"Dance at the Gym" (<i>West Side Story</i>) – Classic Show/Broadway Jazz
WEEKS 9 - 12	"Natasha and Anatole" (<i>Great Comet of 1812</i>) – Fosse Style
	Friday/Saturday Nov. 10-11: <i>Dance Up Close</i>
WEEKS 12 – 14	"Steal Your Rock 'n' Roll" (<i>Memphis</i>) – Broadway Social/Pop Style
WEEKS 14 – 15	Review and Polish all dance routines
	Friday Dec. 8: <i>Fall Studio Works</i>
	Monday Dec. 11: Personal Performance Analysis DUE

TUESDAY, DEC. 19: 1:10-3:10 pm – FINAL / PERFORMANCE

DANCE STUDIO – PARTV 035 – RULES AND PROTOCOL

NO street shoes are allowed in the dance studio at any time, even carried in-hand. Anyone entering the studio must remove their street shoes **BEFORE** entering and leave them outside the studio. The only shoes permitted in 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 should never be worn on Marley floors).

Individuals concerned about theft should rent a locker for their shoes and other belongings.

NO food or drinks (except water in closed bottles) are permitted in the dance studios or theatres. Electronic devices must be stowed out of reach during class.

NOTE: **Locker rentals** are available for any student. The School of Theatre & 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 rented for \$10/one semester or \$15/two semesters through Administrative Associate IV Sharon Collins (sharon1.collins@umontana.edu; PARTV 194).

OTHER CRITICAL COURSE POLICIES & PROTOCOL

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.

SCHOOL OF THEATRE & DANCE:

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>.

Risk: *There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre & Dance classes as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class, shop, 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.*

Guests: *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 the instructor's consent. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student's grade.*

DISABILITY SERVICES:

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.