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DANC 108A.08: Dance Forms - Ballroom

Martha Jane Newby

University of Montana - Missoula

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Ballroom Class Syllabus
Instructor: Martha Jane

Martha Jane's Uptown Dance
1008 Burlington Ste. D
Missoula MT 59801
406 640 3262
marthajanedance@yahoo.com

Dance Forms: Ballroom - 74002 - DANC 108A - 08
Class 4:00 pm - 4:50 pm M

Classes meet once weekly from Aug 31, 2017 -Dec 13, 2017 with the following exceptions:
Friday, November 10 Veterans Day – No Classes, Offices Closed
Wednesday, November 22 Student Travel Day – No Classes
Thursday-Friday, November 23-24 Thanksgiving Break – No Classes, Offices Closed

Place: Martha Jane's Uptown Dance (MJUP), 1008 Burlington Suite D, Missoula MT 59801
Instructor: Martha Jane Newby (email: marthajanedance@yahoo.com) 406 640 3262

Overview: An introduction to the basic forms of Ballroom dance. This includes include the three major Ballroom dances; Waltz, Fox-trot, and Tango. Students will be introduced to the basics of frame, lead and follow techniques, dance posture, floor craft and safety.

Objective: Learn the basics of Ballroom dancing and acquire the skills necessary to participate at a dance safely and courteously, as well as to become more in demand as a dance partner. The main objective is to be able to dance to at least 80% of any Ballroom music played at a partner dance musically, safely and courteously as well as learn about five connections in social dancing, the importance of musicality and how to play with it, dance vocabulary, technique and the function of technique, footwork, floor craft and expressiveness with the largest emphasis on respectful safe partnership and how to help you partner, and therefore yourself feel and become successful as partner dancers.

Have fun and develop an increased appreciation for partner dancing.

Text and Materials:

Required: Suede soled shoes within two weeks of the first class. This can be any form of dance shoe with a suede sole be it suede sole ballet slippers, suede sole jazz shoes, suede sole dance sneakers, or suede sole ballroom/latin shoes. Street shoes are NOT TO TOUCH THE STUDIO FLOOR! They are to be taken off on the carpet and put on the shelves.

Notebook for weekly class notes

Requirements: NO STREET SHOES, FOOD OR DRINK, OR CELL PHONES ALLOWED IN THE DANCE STUDIO

-come to every class prepared to dance wearing **CLEAN** comfortable clothing and dancing in socks or in suede bottom shoes. Be prepared to dance with every student in class and do all you can to help them feel like dancers. Each student becomes a text for every other student. Exercise good hygiene as you will be dancing with everyone else in close proximity and the odors presented by unfriendly bacteria collecting to old sweat are most unappreciated by your dance partners and your instructor. Avoid all perfumes and colognes. Many people are allergic. Do what you can to minimize you breath announcing what you've just eaten as well. Avoid all altering substances prior to class. Believe me, even if it makes you feel like you are dancing better, it will not make your dance partners feel that way and is most unfair to the others dancing with you. If anyone is interested in sources for shoes, contact the instructor.

Weekly class notes kept in notebook.

Students must attend all but two classes and participate in all but three. This translates into students being allowed two absences and one sit out. These absences are for school related things which require mandatory attendance of student, serious illness, break downs, family emergency etc. If student uses absences for other things they will still pass as long as they do not exceed the maximum absences for any reason.

A sit out is not a study hall. During a sit out student will focus on class and take notes that will be turned in at end of class.

Suede soled, soft heeled shoes are required by week 3

First tardy of over five minutes late is a warning, second is an absence

Write one midterm of 150 words on what you most need to improve, what you can do to help that happen and what you think would help your dancing skills to have more of in the class, and email to instructor the week of midterm. The primary focus of this paper needs to be on what you can do to help yourself improve.

Street shoes must be removed inside door.

Attend one dance performance sponsored by the dance department and write a 250-300 word response (one page) to be emailed to instructor within 48 hours of performance

Recommendations: Wash your hands before and after class to avoid spreading/ contracting unfriendly germs and carry hand sanitizer.

Attendance/ Grading: Each student is allowed to not participate for 3 class hours. In these classes that means that you can totally miss 2 classes and have one sit out (sit and observe one class). Please save your absences for the end of the semester. Things, including injury, accidents, deaths in the family and other unforeseen things will come up. If you have chosen to use your absences for unnecessary things and something comes up that you can not attend the class you will fail so please save them for the end of the semester. It is also very unfair to all the other students to have to dance with someone who is sick because that person has used their non-participation hours. In the swing classes you are also allowed one make up. This means that if you have to not participate for more than three classes you may attend one of the classes held another night. **THIS MAY ONLY HAPPEN ONCE!** Again, please use it wisely. The make up has to happen within the week either prior or after the class missed. If you know ahead of time that you might miss your class you could do your one makeup either on one of the three other classes prior to the class you must miss or one of the three other classes after the class you miss. By your next class it is too late to make up the class you have missed. Classes will start on time. If you are even two minutes late the first time is a warning, the second time is an absence. If your car pool or whatever lets you down, you are still tardy so make very careful arrangements.

To receive an A:

*Practice at least two hours per week or more as needed outside of class to make sure you arrive in the next class able to execute everything taught in the previous class with good form, technique, musicality, footwork, expressiveness, partnership skills and floor craft.

*All written assignments must be on time, error free clean copy, thoughtful and carefully written as 'A' pieces. - The notebook may just be jogged notes for your memory.

It is more difficult to be quantitative with movement. but these are guidelines we look for:

*Signs of aptitude for dance technique and musicality

*A consistently alert, energetic, attentive attitude

*Significant progress over the semester

*Show extraordinary partner skills - including respect, positivity and encouragement

*Demonstrate swing dance skills at least among the top few of the class

*And, of course have fulfilled all the above requirements

If students do not need an expressive arts credit, students are strongly encouraged to take it for c/nc as focusing on a grade can create anxiety that can in turn impede learning. I'd like to see you all relaxed and having fun while learning and good marks are very hard to get.

In addition the following applies to all Dance Technique classes:

DANCE TECHNIQUE CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Autumn Semester 2017

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA DANCE PROGRAM

TECHNIQUE CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Autumn Semester 2017

- I. NO STREET SHOES, FOOD, DRINK OR CELL PHONES ALLOWED IN STUDIOS.
- II. Many dance technique courses satisfy the General-Education Expressive Arts Group (Group IV). To receive Group IV credit towards graduation, the student must enroll in the course for a traditional letter grade and receive a C- or higher.
- III. 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*.

Your instructor MAY require attendance at additional concerts (see below), or choose to offer students a chance to use attendance as make ups for absences. This is at the discretion of each instructor.

- ❖ *Lovesong by Abi Morgan, directed by Bernadette Sweeney and produced by Bare Bait Dance: October 20-22 & 25-29 @ 8PM; location disclosed after ticket purchase.*
- ❖ *A Celebration Service, choreographed by Meredith Monk, performed by the School of Theatre & Dance and School of Music and produced by UMArts: November 3-4 @ 7:30PM and 9:30PM, UCC Missoula, 405 University Avenue. \$12 with student ID.*

Your instructor will require a written critique, quiz, or something else of their own choosing. You

will need to give specific examples to support your opinions, so take notes either during or after the concerts. Regardless of your assignment, as you watch, it will be helpful to think about the following:

1. To which pieces did you experience a strong reaction?
2. Regarding the choreography of each piece:
 - 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 details to support your opinions.

ATTENDANCE AND GRADE POLICY—DANCE TECHNIQUE

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.

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 exam requirements

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 letter for each critique you do not submit (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.*

We've get getting some great questions. Keep asking questions! We're trying to give you the chance to learn as much as possible in one semester. We move pretty fast. If in the end you are only able to use or retain ½ of what we learn you will still be far better than the good majority on any swing floor. Still, if you feel lost or have questions – ASK, ASK, ASK! If you have missed, I can not spend the class catching you up at the expense of the students who have been attending. Find another student who will work with you too.

Just as in any other class, IF YOU MUST MISS A CLASS GET ANOTHER STUDENT TO SHOW YOU WHAT YOU MISSED so you feel more confident when you return and get more out of the next class. It is a rare opportunity to get to dance study dance with the same group for so many hours and enables all to learn at a more advanced rate. Take advantage of it and Have Fun Dancing!

Safety:

Let the instructor know if you have any preexisting injuries or if you are pregnant. Immediately report any in-class injuries to the instructor. Listen to your body and go at your own pace.

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.

Semester Schedule:

Week 1-4

Orientation, explanation of various dance terms, lead and follow connection, and basic patterns as well as going over UM policies and rules of class. The basic Foxtrot first solo and then with partners, will be introduced as well.

Weeks 4-8:

Basic Waltz will be introduced, and more floor craft practice/ drills as well as more integration on how to apply Foxtrot moves to Waltz and Waltz to Foxtrot.

Weeks 9-11

By now students should be well on their way to feeling comfortable with the basic steps of Waltz and Foxtrot. More complicated combinations and will be added as well as introducing Tango.

Weeks 12-15:

At this point we start having minor contests concerning use of rhythm etc. Music will be played challenging you to determine which form of swing best fits the music and you will try to dance straight through for at least an hour not worrying about reviewing but treating it as though you were at a dance. We'll be doing review, clarification and beginning to create your own sequences. We will also learn a bit more in all three dances.

We've been getting some great questions. Keep asking questions! We're trying to give you the chance to learn as much as possible in one semester. We move pretty fast. If in the end you are only able to use or retain ½ of what we learn you will still be far better than the good majority on any swing floor. Still, if you feel lost or have questions – ASK, ASK, ASK! If you have missed, I can not spend the class catching you up at the expense of the students who have been attending. Find another student who will work with you too.

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