Southern Methodist University
Meadows School of the Arts
Division of Dance

SYLLABUS FOR BEGINNING MODERN DANCE (January Term)

Course Number:  DANC 1303, January 2019
Instructors:  Christopher Dolder, Anne Westwick
Classroom:  B100 Owen Arts Center
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Office Hours:  M-W 12-1pm. Available immediately after each class as well.

Pre-attendance Reading/Viewing

Federal and SMU accreditation guidelines require that all JanTerm courses contain 18 hours of out-of-class preparatory work for each student. Each Beginning Modern Dance student is required to read contextual information presented in the following textbook: *Dance Composition Basics* by Pamela Anderson Sofras. Included with the textbook is a DVD with visual prompts. This textbook and DVD can be purchased from Amazon for under $25. Please read Chapters 1-4 and view the relevant DVD material before the first day of class.

Daily Schedule and Class Descriptions

9:00-10:20am  Warm-up, Yoga, and Mat Conditioning

We will begin each morning with a body conditioning class to warm, strengthen, stretch and ready the body for the ensuing dance technique class. A number of modalities will be taught, including yoga, mat Pilates, and floor barre.

Yoga, which translates from Sanskrit as the yoking or union of body, mind, and spirit, is a physical and mental practice. It explores the potential of the body, working in harmony with the breath and mind, to achieve focus, physical strength, flexibility, stamina and self-realization. We will practice a dynamic, creative style of Hatha yoga, blending the principles of Ashtanga and Iyanger yoga. Postures will be linked with transitional movements and a synchronized breathing pattern. The result will be a kind of moving meditation, a physically challenging but mentally calming and focusing class.

Mat Pilates is a series of exercises to strengthen the “power house” or muscles of the core/torso. These movements are also coordinated with the use of the breath.

Floor barre is based on ballet barre exercises, which will be performed on the mat. This movement modality creates long, flexible muscles and stresses range of motion in the joints. It also will strengthen often ignored muscles in the feet and hips.
10:30-12:00pm Modern Dance Technique

Beginning modern technique assumes no previous dance training but should still challenge those students with some previous dance experience. Each class will begin with slow, seated movement exercises to focus on efficient and dynamic alignment, integrating breath with the mechanics of coordinated movements while stretching and strengthening muscles. Standing, axial exercises will follow to work on balance, spirals of the torso and shifts of body weight. Increasingly more complex dance phrases will conclude each class which may include locomotion, elevation, simple fall and recovery movements, and turns. Classes will build progressively in speed, complexity, and range of motion and will be accompanied by live musical improvisation.

12:00-1:00pm Lunch break

1:00-2:20pm Aesthetics and Critical Analysis

Each day we will watch various modern dance works and hold discussions on the creativity and aesthetics incorporated in the development and presentation of these dances. Students will learn introductory skills in performance appreciation and critical analysis.

2:30-4:00pm Dance Composition

Students will experiment with developing personal movement vocabulary in support of creating solo and duet choreography. Videography will also be incorporated to help the student evolve a better understanding of how his/her movement vocabulary is perceived by the viewer.

Student Learning Objectives

Warm-up, Yoga, and Mat Conditioning

- Knowledge of the postures of the Sun Salutations and other basic yoga asanas as well as beginning Pilates and floor barre exercises, with correct alignment and use of breath.
- More efficient skeletal alignment
- Greater muscular strength and range of motion
- Less mental and physical stress
- Effective use of the breath to initiate and deepen postures, eliminate mental distractions and begin to practice meditation
- Ability to observe and occupy the present moment
- Keener self-observation and awareness
- Mindfulness: students will begin to respond to stimuli, rather than react in a habitual way
• Ability to develop one’s own conditioning practice, outside instructor led classes

Modern Dance Technique
• Understand and embody concepts of safe and fluid alignment
• Learn the basic movement building blocks of modern dance and corresponding terminology
• Begin to explore personal movement language and style
• Expand movement range and dynamic nuance
• Increase sensitivity to musical accompaniment
• Analyze the basic components of movement (time, space, and force) and how these create personal artistic expression
• Increase strength and coordination.

Aesthetics and Critical Analysis
• Musicality: counts, tempo, accent, phrasing, meter, rhythm
• Energy release: bound, sharp, sustained, swinging, weighted, light
• Spatial concepts: floor patterns, negative/positive space, relationship to space
• Dance vocabulary and theatrical terminology

Dance Composition
• Develop skills in movement invention
• Movement phrasing
• Theme and development
• Weight-share partnering

Required writing
Each student is required to write a two-page critical analysis of a specific dance work shown in class. The paper is due on 1/16/19.

Attendance
Physical attendance and practice are critical to passing this course. Promptness is mandatory to insure proper warm-up. Once a class has begun, a student must obtain instructor consent to join the class. If denied, a student may observe class and take notes. Students who are habitually tardy will be asked to drop the class.

• Absences are highly discouraged in JanTerm due to the short, concentrated nature of the course. Each unexcused absence will drop a student’s grade by
Grading
10% Written critical analysis
40% Final movement exam
50% Productivity in class
  Preparation and retention of material and corrections
  Effort and focus, attention to detail
  Positive attitude and personal growth and improvement in physical technique
  Musicality, dynamics, and phrasing
  Proper alignment

Grading Rubric
An A student is consistently in the studio for class, on time, and prepared mentally and physically to dance and learn about dance. The student is focused throughout class, listens and watches for all directions and corrections, applies them quickly and retains new movement patterns, alignment, etc. throughout the term. The dancer is open to new ways of moving and viewing modern dance, and works steadily and progressively towards improvement in both the technical and artistic aspects of dance. The student is able to discuss a movement phrase or a dance performance using appropriate vocabulary, and is able to see and describe choreographic details concerning the use of space, time and force. Every class demonstrates the student’s investment in the physical and intellectual learning process. By the terms end, the A student has grown in terms of increased strength, coordination of body parts, more fluid and efficient alignment, and ability to analyze artistry and creativity within the modern dance vernacular.

A B student is in the studio for the majority of class sessions, prepared and ready to work. The student is generally focused throughout class, listens and applies corrections, but may not retain these consistently throughout the term and may need reminders to work on technical challenges. The dancer has an open mind to new ways of moving, but may need encouragement to look and listen for details or to enhance his/her energy. In describing a dance or portion thereof, the student is able to use relevant vocabulary and some details on elements of time, space and force, but is not completely successful in evoking a movement image in words. The student is usually self-motivated and understands the physical, intellectual, and artistic elements necessary for growth as a dancer, and achieves a moderate improvement based on personal potential.

A C student is in the studio for the minimum number of required classes and may be inconsistent in mental or physical preparation for class. The dancer’s focus may occasionally lapse, and while he/she listens to corrections that are made directly to him/her, may not consistently apply corrections or details given to the class as a whole. The student may not always notice or apply stylistic, spatial, or musical nuances given, and technical execution may be comprised by following others rather than intellectually and physically learning a movement phrase. In speaking or writing about a dance, the student is minimally successful in evoking the movement and images or using relevant
vocabulary. The student achieves a minimum of their potential growth in physical and artistic skills by terms end.

Attire
Loose fitting clothing that allows for a full-range of movement.

Instructor - Christopher Dolder biography

Christopher Dolder received an undergraduate degree in Dramatic Art and Dance from the University of California, Berkeley and a Master of Fine Arts in Choreography from Mills College with an emphasis in dance kinesiology. A former soloist with the Martha Graham Dance Company, he has spent the last twenty years on a multi-disciplinary journey that has taken him to projects in Theater, Dance, Music, Videography, Kinesiology, “Green” Architecture, and Agrarian Land Rehabilitation. Mr. Dolder is an associate professor and chair of dance at the Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University where he is currently designing a 3D interactive software application for teaching dance kinesiology as well as developing a new form of physical data capture. Christopher also conducts research in contemporary dance cultures. He is currently in the final editing stage of his documentary The Ecstatic Dance of Burning Man: Permission to Transcend, a seven-year research project filmed in Nevada’s Black Rock Desert, chronicling the emergence and evolution of dance sub-cultures throughout the history of the Burning Man Festival.

Instructor - Anne Westwick biography

Anne Westwick has been a dancer, choreographer, and teacher for over 30 years, performing for modern choreographers Martha Graham, David Wood, Yuriko Kikuchi, Donlin Foreman, and Janice Garrett; ballet companies including the San Antonio Ballet and Berkeley Ballet Theater; and musical theater productions including national and international Actor's Equity tours of The King And I. Ms. Westwick has received grants from the Hawaii State and Maui Dance Councils, the Nevada State Dance Council, Dance Magazine, and the University of California Institute for Research in the Arts. She has B.A. in Dramatic Art/Dance from U.C. Berkeley and an M.F.A. in Choreography and Performance from Mills College. Anne has taught and choreographed at studios in the San Francisco Bay Area, New York City, Hawaii and Nevada. She was a tenure-track assistant professor at Mills College for five years and has held faculty positions at U.C. Berkeley, Maui Community College, Solano Community College, and the Maui Academy of Performing Arts. Anne currently is a professor of practice in the Meadows
School Division of Dance teaching ballet, modern dance, composition, and yoga. Anne is a certified yoga instructor and has been teaching body conditioning and yoga for the past ten years.

Beginning Modern Dance DANC 1303 satisfies the Creativity and Aesthetics Breadth pillar of the UC Curriculum.

* Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) at 214-768-1470 or www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4; an attachment describes the DASS procedures and relocated office.)

* Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

* Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)