

DAN 1211, Fall 2011
Modern Dance 1 part 1

Instructor: Sophia L. Torres
Office: Mel 226

Great dancers are not great because of their technique, they are great because of their passion.
-Martha Graham (American dancer, teacher and choreographer of modern dance, 1894-1991)

Office Hours: By appointment
Office Phone: 713/ 743-9842

Class time: Mon / Wed 1:00 -2:30pm
Email: psophonia@gmail.com

DESCRIPTION

Welcome to Modern 1part 1. Modern dance is an art form that utilizes the entire body to express ideas, concepts and emotions. While modern dance has its origins in classical and ethnic techniques, it has evolved into a form that encourages artistic individualism and personal choreographic style. In fact, there are as many valid ways of dancing, as there are talented choreographers.

This course is designed for the beginning level dancer. Students will learn the fundamentals of modern dance through practical application and in class discussions. Students will explore the historical relevance of modern dance and its iconic founders.

COURSE OBJECTIVES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Develop basic understanding of human anatomy and alignment of the body. Attention to the spine both in stationary and locomotor action is crucial. Therefore, students will work to improve consistency, accuracy and fluidity of the spine in contraction and release, flat back position, spiral actions and undulation.
- Develop strength, coordination and flexibility. Through repetition, students will learn basic sequential movement involving multiple body parts acting simultaneously.
- Understand and utilize the transference of weight when changing levels and traveling. Students will practice large traveling sequences and the use of the floor to produce actions.
- Improve comprehension of music. Students will learn the language of music (ie. beat, accent, meter, duration and tempo).
- Acquire classroom and dance theater protocol. Students will learn the structure of the dance class and theater etiquette.
- Explore evolution of modern dance. Through assigned reading, in class discussion and video clips, students will learn about the early history of modern dance.

REQUIRED READING:

Basic Concepts in Modern Dance by Gay Cheney. (excerpts provided)

Learning About Dance: Dance as an art Form and Entertainment by Nora Ambrosio. (excerpts provided)

Addition handouts will be provided through the semester.

REQUIRED EVENTS:

ALL DANCE STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND THE FOLLOWING EVENTS:

1. Wed., Aug. 24: Dance Student Orientation & Pizza Party @4:00pm in Melcher Gym.
2. Fri & Sat, Dec. 2-3: Emerging Choreographers Showcase @ 7:30pm & 2:00pm (Sat. only) in Wortham Theatre / UH Central Campus

EVALUATION / GRADING

Each student will be evaluated according to his/her participation, focus, application of corrections given and overall improvement of course objectives. Attendance and active participation is critical to strengthen and develop ones skill and technique in dance.

1. Midterm Evaluation; Oct. 5, 2011. (30%)
2. Test 1: October 12, 2011 (10%)
3. Assignment 1: Weekend of Texas Contemporary Dance Paper. (10%)
4. Assignment 2: Performance Option Paper. (10%)
5. Final Evaluation: November 28, 2011. (30%)
6. Test 2: December 5, 2011 (10%)

*ALL STUDENTS in a degree granting plan for Dance at the University of Houston **must** meet the GPA protocol for the School of Theatre: Students who receive below a 2.5 grade in a major/minor/cert class will be placed on probation. Student must re-take class and complete with a minimum 2.5 grade. Please see the handout on GPA protocol for majors.*

ATTENDANCE

Your presence is essential to the learning process. Dance is not learned by watching or thinking about dance but by active and daily participation.

“Practice means to perform, over and over again in the face of all obstacles, some act of vision, of faith, of desire. Practice is a means of inviting the perfection desired.”

Martha Graham

The *School of Theatre Attendance Policy* will apply to this course. **PLEASE CAREFULLY READ THE THEATRE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY.** There is no distinction between an excused and an unexcused absence. Lack of participation through absences will affect your grade. If an injury or a non-contagious illness prevents the student from dancing, please discuss it with the professor.

Note: The instructor will not automatically drop a student due to lack of attendance.

Lastly, a student who behaves in an inappropriate or disruptive fashion will be asked to leave the class and will receive an absence for that class.

MAKE-UP

Each student will have 1 opportunity during the Fall 2011 semester to make-up an unexcused absence from class. This instructor will only accept the following assignment:

- Attend a master dance class (off campus) and write a 2 page description of your experience. How did you hear about the class / teacher? Did you have an expectation of what the class would be like? How difficult or easy was it to pick up the movement exercises. What did you walk away with at the end of the class? You must include a receipt signed by the master teacher and/or studio.
- Attend an extra option performance and write a 2 page summary paper on using the guidelines provided. You must include ticket stub and program.

Please direct all papers to S. Torres before submitting to the dance mailbox. Each paper must be typewritten and accompanied with your program or ticket stub. All make-up assignments must be turned in by **Monday, December 5, 2011**. Papers submitted after this date will not be accepted.

DRESS & CLASSROOM POLICIES

- Dance clothes and bare feet are required for modern dance class. This includes leotards, tights, bike shorts, and tight fitting workout clothes. Your clothes must be form fitting in order to view your technical progress. Excessive layering and baggy clothes are not permitted. Hair must be secured and pulled away from the face with all heavy jewelry removed and set aside before class begins.
- **No Gum.** The departmental ruling on gum chewing in class is based on the possibility of inhaling the gum and blocking the airway while dancing.
- **Water Only.** Hydrating the body during a work out is necessary for optimum performance. Water is acceptable to bring to class but please no sodas.
- **Cell phones.** All cell phones and pagers must be turned off before to class starts.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- For Academic Honesty:
<http://www.uh.edu/provost/shared-interest/policy-guidelines/honesty-policy/>
- For Academic Calendar:
<http://www.uh.edu/academics/catalog/academic-calendar/fall2011-summer2012/index.php>
- For Disabilities:
<http://www.uh.edu/provost/shared-interest/policy-guidelines/student-disability-accommodation/>
- For Dance Division Info:
<http://www.theatre.uh.edu/academics/dance/>

MIDTERM & FINAL MOVEMENT CRITERIA (Each worth 30% of total grade)

- Knowledge and understanding of the movement phrases. This includes movement clarity and accuracy. (20 pts)
- Execution of technique (Total Worth 40pts)
 - Alignment and use of spine in contraction, spirals, elongation, and curling/uncurling actions. (10pts)
 - Alignment and tracking of hips, knees, ankles, & feet. (10pt)
 - Use of weight, gravity, force & energy. (10pts)
 - Understand & maintain turn out and parallel positions. (Worth 10pts)
- Extension of line. (10pts)
- Appropriate dress for midterm & final. (10pts)
- Effort and attitude given in class. This includes attendance. (10pts)
- Musicality and phrasing. (10pts)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS CRITERIA (Each worth 10% of total grade)

1. Introduction. (10pts)
State the “Who, What, When Where” of the performance and a brief history of the company and the Artistic Director / Choreographer.
2. Description (20pts)
Describe one dance in detail. This paragraph should communicate how the dance looked and sounded. Describe any noteworthy / unique use of lighting, costumes and set design. Describe movement vocabulary and use of space / floor patterns. Name the composer of the music and describe the musical style. Is the energy projected out or does it draw the spectator in?
3. Analysis (20 pts)
This is your response to the work and personal interpretation of the dance. State the dance genre and style. Determine the choreographer's intent. Is the dance narrative (linear or non- linear), improvisation or abstract? Do you believe that the choreographer chose to allow the medium of movement to be the message or does the movement tell a story or convey a specific message or statement?
4. Evaluation. (20 pts)
This paragraph conveys how well the choreographer fulfilled his/her intent. Was the dance successful? Why or why not? Was the choreographer successful in communicating an overall idea? Were the dancers technically proficient at performing the work? How did the lighting, set design, costumes, and music enhance or diminish the dance? Be specific in supporting your likes and dislikes.
5. Conclusion.(20pts)
Make connections between the dance concert and your experiences in class. How does this dance concert compare to other dance performances that you have attended? How does it connect to dance history and current trends of dance making? Would you recommend this performance to others? Would you attend more performances by this company or by other dance companies in the future? How did this experience affect your ideas about dance as an art form?
6. Spelling and Grammar (10pts)

PAPERS SHOULD WRITTEN IN MLA FORMAT, size 12 Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. In the upper left hand corner of your paper put your name, professor's name, title of course, and the due date. The title of your paper should be centered. No Cover Sheet.

1. ASSIGNMENT 1: WEEKEND OF TEXAS CONTEMPORAY DANCE

All Beginning Modern I students are REQUIRED to attend *A Weekend of Texas Contemporary Dance* and turn in a minimum 3 page paper using the Written Assignment Criteria.

DUE: Wednesday, September 28, 2011



2. ASSIGNMENT 2: SELECT PERFORMANCE OPTION

All Beginning Modern I students are required to attend **1 performance option** and turn in a minimum 3 page paper using the Written Assignment Criteria. Ticket stub required.

You may choose from the following list of local performances scheduled for Fall 2011:

<p>1. Noble Motion Fri & Sat, September 2-3, 2011 @ 8pm Barnevelder Theater / 2201 Preston St. Houston, TX 77008 www.noblemotiondance.com Due: Sept. 7, 2011</p>	<p>2. Complexions Fri, October 14, 2011 @ 8pm Wortham Theater / 501 Texas Ave. Houston, TX 77002 http://www.spahouston.org/ Due: Oct 19, 2011</p>
<p>3. The Secondary Colors Thur – Sat, October 20-22,2011 @ 7:30pm Hobby Center, Zilkha Hall / 800 Bagby Houston, TX 77008 http://www.tdghouston.info/ Due: Oct. 26, 2011</p>	<p>4. A Committee of Style Thur - Sat, October 27-29 @ 8pm Barnevelder Theater / 2201 Preston St.Houston, TX 77003 lotusburger@sbcglobal.net. Due: Nov. 2, 2011</p>
<p>5. New Pulse Fri & Sat, November 18-19, 2011 @ 8pm Barnevelder Theater / 2201 Preston St. Houston, TX 77003 http://www.psophonia.com/ Due: Nov 21, 2011</p>	<p>6. <i>Memoirs of the Sistahood</i> Thur - Sat, November 17-19, 2011 @ 8pm DiverseWorks / 1117 E. Freeway Houston, TX 77002 http://www.memoirsofthesistahood.com/ Due: Nov, 21, 2011</p>

WRITTEN TEST CRITERIA (Each worth 10% of total grade)

This grade is based on information given through required reading, in class discussion and video clips.

Written Test 1 – Axial Skeleton, Muscles, Watching Dance / Oct.12, 2011

Written Test 2 – Appendicular Skeleton, Modern Dance History, Dance & Music Vocabulary / Dec. 5, 2011