Tufts in Talloires 2016
DNC 71: DANCE MOVEMENT & CREATIVE PROCESS
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Draft Syllabus

DESCRIPTION: Dance Movement & Creative Process explores the relationship between movement, the creative process and improvisation. The course emphasizes individual and group movement improvisation and creative problem solving. Designed for students of all levels, classes begin with a non-technical warm-up, followed by guided movement assignments focusing on various methods of sourcing material, basic contact improvisation, and oral and written language skills based in Laban Movement Analysis for describing movement. The course is organized into 3 general segments:

**Segment 1.** Introduction to basic elements of movement, as defined by Rudolf Von Laban: Space, Time, Body Shape & Personal Space, Movement Quality & Efforts, and Movement Relationships.

**Segment 2.** Increased emphasis on group relationships (e.g., mirroring, following and their variations); movement sourcing from materials such as every day life, written word, visual texts, props, etc. Includes an introduction to basic contact improvisation skills.

**Segment 3.** Emphasis on movement invention; more complex partnering; ensemble improvisation. Exposure to designing and embodying structured improvisational scores.

GOALS: The course focuses on exposing students to the movement vocabulary and techniques involved in generating original movement expression in independent and group movement situations. Goals for the course include cultivating the student’s physical movement capabilities, expanding expressive movement options and creative problem-solving skills, and developing collaborative abilities in improvisational situations. An additional goal of the summer course in Talloires is to become acquainted with the historical evolution of creative improvisational dance, emphasizing its origins in the work of Rudolf von Laban in Switzerland, France and Germany in the mid-1910s and 1920s. Sourcing inspiration for movement research will concentrate on the work of French artists from Laban’s time and those French artists working currently.
LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- Students will demonstrate increased physical facility (in such areas as movement range, endurance, speed, core strength, sequence memory)
- Students will know and be able to use basic Laban movement vocabulary in describing their own and other students’ work
- Students will cultivate an independent & reflective physical practice
- Students will demonstrate respectful and fruitful collaborative process
- Students will be able to assume a creative leadership role
- Students will apply critical thinking and reasoning skills in creative problem-solving
- Students will be familiar with the historical development of and current work in dance improvisation

REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT
(Attendance & participation are essential components for studio/lab dance courses) – For a complete explanation of assessment policies please see the Tufts Dance Program Assessment & Grading Policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Progress</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
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ATTENDANCE: The success of an intensive movement workshop is the responsibility of both the instructor and students. Experientially-based dance workshops build material progressively. It is in your best interest to attend every session. PLEASE ATTEND ALL SESSIONS.

PARTICIPIATION & INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS: Active participation in class is essential for individual progress. Active participation includes: promptness & preparedness; focused physical practice; active engagement with technical and creative problem-solving assignments; demonstrated retention of movement material and vocabulary; positive contribution to group collaborative activities and the classroom environment. Progress is demonstrated by contributing to an in-class atmosphere of mutual respect, responsibility and risk-taking; by consistently attending and being focused, curious, committed; by experimenting; by risking discomfort and applying what you learn from that; by being patient with yourself and others and supporting others in class.

You will receive a written mid-point participation grade based on the fulfillment of these standards in your daily class work.
ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments will be adjusted to accommodate the availability of technology and suggested work-load for each Talloires course. Reading packets will be provided for students if electronic access is not possible. Viewing assignments will be accessible via the instructor’s laptop if nothing else is available. Written work should be well-written, well-organized, inventive, concise, and demonstrate an understanding and integration of the readings, viewings, and experiential aspects of the class. Written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, in the equivalent of Times New Roman 12-point font and one-inch margins. Please proofread! Refer to Modern Language Association (MLA) style formatting for all writing assignments. Late assignments will be subject to grade deductions.

Assessment Rubric for Written assignments:

- **A to A-**: Novel, integrative, and original thinking, above and beyond required elements listed in Dance Program Assessment Policies. Flawless grammar.
- **A- to B+**: Very competent work that is clearly expressed, showing good comprehension, following instructions rigorously.
- **B to B-**: Average work, some good ideas, showing an understanding of the assignment.
- **B- to C+**: Less than average work, minimal effort shown.
- **C to D-**: Little to no effort shown, repetitive, excessive grammatical and/or spelling errors.
- **F**: Unsatisfactory or incomplete work, lack of comprehension, poorly written expression, off topic.

COURSE SCHEDULE: The following is a course outline of activities based upon the approximate schedule mentioned in the proposal.

- **2.5 hour sessions** will include a 1-hour, non-technical movement practice that builds from session to session as a basic movement technique class emphasizing somatic awareness. This aspect of the course will cultivate basic body awareness and abilities via investigations of principles of alignment, neuro-muscular-skeletal patterning, and movement efficiency. The second part of the 2.5 hour sessions will focus on movement improvisation techniques, beginning with individual experimentation and leading toward more group-oriented process.
- **1.5 hour sessions** will include a 30 minute basic movement class, followed by 1 hour of improvisational investigation. Depending upon how the longer and shorter classes are scheduled, 1 class per week will be used to review all skills to date via an open structure improvisation of longer duration.
- **Culmination** – In lieu of a course Final and depending upon the schedule of other course finals, the course will culminate in either a public or private showing for students, staff and invited guests. This will be based upon student interest in performing. A majority of students will need to express an interest in performance in order to move forward with a public showing.
Week of May 19: Session 1
- Introduction to Laban Movement Concepts and Historical Perspectives
- French perspectives in art during the 1910s (Laban in relation to the French avant-garde)

Week of May 23: Sessions 2-4
- How to Vary a Movement: Options in Space, Time, Body Instrumentation, and Effort
- Relationships: Self to Self; Self to Others; Group to Group (Mirroring, Shadowing, Flocking)

Week of May 30: Sessions 5-8
- Sharing Weight: Contact with the floor; Using Pull and Push; Safe Yielding and Supporting
- What does the Picture need? Entering and Exiting a Moving Frame
- Music & Movement: A Love/Hate Relationship (sourcing from French composers including Debussy, Varese, Satie, Messiaen, Boulez, Grisey, Murail)

Week of June 6: Sessions 9-11
- Sourcing Movement: Text, Visuals, Characterizations (sourcing from French artists including Breton, Cocteau, Goddard, Braque, Matisse, Duchamp, Soulages, Marisol)
- Abstract Expressionism versus Concrete Formalism
- Contact and Momentum

Week of June 13: Sessions 12-14
- Site-Specific Improvisation: Practice and Factors (sourcing from French photographers and architects including Le Corbusier, Cartier-Bresson, Doisneau, Arthus-Bertrand)
- Open Structures: Limitations and Sequencing

Week of June 20: Sessions 15-17
- Props & Narrative
- Open Structures: Durational Performance & Dynamic Variations

Week of June 28: Session 18 & Final Showing

ASSIGNMENT 1: DUE week of May 23
All Students read, watch and write, responding to the following.

Read:
2) Banes, Sally, “Spontaneous Combustion: Notes on Dance Improvisation from the Sixties to the Nineties,” pp. 77-88.
3) Foster, Susan Leigh, “Taken By Surprise: Improvisation in Dance & Mind,” pp. 3-12.
Watch: (arrangements will be made for access to this footage)
1) Making Dances: Seven Postmodern Choreographers
2) Rudolf von Laban: Excerpts of Laban Documentary

Write: 3-4 pages. Discuss two ideas from the readings and dance video in relation to experiences from class. How do you see the role of “play” and “non-conformity” manifested in improvisation? Do you see similarities in ideas from other aspects of your life? Are there any generational similarities or differences you note between what you feel is your generational viewpoint and other generational viewpoints described in the readings and video? Are there new ideas that come to mind?

ASSIGNMENT 2: DUE week of May 30
All Students read, watch and write, responding to the following.
Read:

Watch: (arrangements will be made for access to this footage)
1) Fall After Newton, Steve Paxton
   Part 1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k768K_OTePM
   Part 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGtJSxNUpI
   Part 3 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJ3Coktu40
2) The Poetics of Touch: Nancy Stark Smith
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6Pt0OXK7es

Write: 2-3 pages. Using some of the “reporting” techniques described in the DeSpain article and other reflective practices mentioned by Paxton and Smith in their articles and video excerpts, write a reflection of an in-class movement experience. You might plan to take notes during and immediately after class so that your impressions stay as fresh as possible. You do not have to write in complete sentences, but rather go for a shifting dialogue between “I-ness” and the activities performed “by the I” that DeSpain describes. Try not to edit or filter your impressions. This is similar to automatic writing, coming from your physical movement experience.

ASSIGNMENT 3: DUE week of June 6
Read:
Research & Record: Using the images and music from previous class experiences, create a series of 10 shapes that you can show in class. Keeping some of the ideas expressed by
Shahn and Goldsmith in their essays, design a system of recording/notating these shapes so that you can remember them. Record the source and some of the main movement characteristics that are specific to each shape. You can use short hand or prose to express your ideas. Use Laban movement description in your notation of the shapes.

**Present:** You will present these shapes in class and will be asked to work with them further in class.

**ASSIGNMENT 4: DUE week of June 13**

**Read:** Keefe, Maura, “What’s The Score? Structured Improvisation as National Pastime” pp.229-238.

**Photograph & Move:** Take a photographic journey of a particular space that interests you. Investigate it in at least 10 photographs from different angles. Working both in the space and from the photographs, create a movement structure for this space. Be prepared to share these photographs in class and to perform your structure both in and away from the space.

**Write & Present:** 2 pages. Discuss at least two ideas about space and structure that led your photographic movement investigation. Use Laban movement specificity in your description. How did you respond in levels, facings, body initiation, relationship to the structure, interaction with negative space, etc. Can you recall and describe the sequence and quality of your structure without being in the space or looking at the photographs? Did your photographing of the space play an improvisational or choreographic role? Do any ideas from the reading help you organize the space or your sequence and structure? Explain.

**ASSIGNMENT 5: DUE week of June 20**


**Create:** Movement assignment to be determined.

**Write:** 2 pages. Begin with ten words that describe your experience with this class thus far. How has studying dance movement and the creative process influenced the way you experience and see dance. What are some of the creative methods you think were used in the making of the dance works. Try to be specific and relate what you can to your work and what you have read and seen during the class.

**CULMINATING ASSIGNMENT: DUE week of June 28**

**Perform:** Working as an ensemble, we will create a performance using improvisational techniques from the class. The time, location, size and scope of the performance will be determined by the entire group during the last few meetings of the course. This will not include “set” choreographic pieces, but will be an opportunity for the group to revisit movement ideas and experiences.
DRESS CODE: Bare feet, yoga pants, warm-up pants, sweat pants, T-shirts, leotards. We do not recommend bare legs. Bring water. Do not chew gum or eat during class. Dangle earrings, rings, bracelets are potentially hazardous: please do not wear them during class. Dancers should plan to bring dance clothes in which they would feel comfortable performing.

A NOTE ON PHYSICAL SAFETY: An experiential dance course may not be appropriate for those who must frequently refrain from activity due to ongoing physical or psychological issues. Please speak to the instructor and identify any ongoing or new injury or condition and refrain from physical classroom activity that will harm or further injure yourself or others.