

## **DANC 185: Hip Hop Dance**

**Fall 2014**

**2 units**

**Day: Monday/Wednesday**

**Time: 3:30pm-4:50pm**

**Location: PED 207**

**Instructor: d. Sabela grimes**

**Office: TBD**

**Office Hours: To be scheduled by email**

**Contact Info: [hiphopfundamentals@gmail.com](mailto:hiphopfundamentals@gmail.com)  
[delvingr@usc.edu](mailto:delvingr@usc.edu)**

### **Catalog Description**

Elements of Hip-Hop dance, including technique, movement, musical rhythm, tempo and phrasing required to develop the skills needed to perform this unique dance form.

### **Full Course Description**

This course introduces and surveys the *Funkamentals* approach to learning and understanding foundational principles of body movement, form and community building practices present in Black social dances practices with interrelated and interdependent Hip Hop/Street dance styles. Study includes the foundational elements, vocabulary, musical connection, culture and history of the styles and their development.

### **Course Overview**

*Funkamentals* is a groove-oriented approach to learning Black dance practices, vocabulary and movement principles. Participants learn muscle control, re-centering and body alignment related to various Street/Hip Hop dances, dance forms and dance styles. The course is designed to explore *Funkamental* (*funky* – state of being, *mental* – state of mind, fundamental) body language, mechanics and spiritual modes present in a variety of African American/Afro-diasporic social/trendy/popular dance practices. In this cipher we will literally move through processes that allow for an embodied exploration of the corrugated spaces of Afro-diasporic dance practices on the vertical and horizontal planes of the dance floor. As we “move” through the genealogy of Afro-diasporic and regional African American dance we will shine light upon Hip Hop/Hood Hop dance aesthetics, HHNL (Hip Hop Nation Language) stemming from Black expressive cultural practices, “secu-spiritual” and philosophical belief systems and Afro-diasporic knowledge production, circulation and preservation. Special attention will be placed on the improvisational principles of “freestyling” + collective individuality at various degrees depending on level. In an effort to facilitate a more complete understanding of the overall dance cultures, *Funkamentals* links these dance vocabularies and practices with African American musical movements and genres like Blues, Jazz, Swing, New Jack Swing, Rock, Soul, Funk, House, Techno and Hip Hop within geological, historical and cultural contexts. In addition to focusing on what’s most appropriate in training the human body, this movement system includes the mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of the movements.

The basic format of each course follows the initial assessment of the participants. Therefore, every class is tailored to the group. Classes always start in a “cipher”/circle. And, the participants are introduced to the idea of “CIPHERING”, “CIPHER BUILDING” and the circulation of “CIPHER KNOWLEDGE”. From this foundation we transition moves into movement/move-meant (moves that mean something); moving onto phrases, combos, routines, etc. We’ll experience collective interaction/partnering, individual work, floor work, freestyle and improvisation.

## Learning Objectives

To strengthen each dancer's relationship with learned *Funkamentals* movement procedures, choreographic sets and movement vocabulary in relation to the music, the collective, the space and themselves.

- To familiarize oneself with Hip Hop's relationship to African diasporic dance traditions of the United States of American and Caribbean islands through studio practice, reading, and performance viewing.
- Establish an understanding of the difference, interconnectedness, and diversity of Hip Hop and African American vernacular dance forms and practices through studio practice, reading, and performance viewing.
- Learn to recognize and identify popular dances, dance forms and music styles that have their origin in Black communities of the US.
- Develop and explore *Funkamentals* and Hip Hop dance vocabulary.
- Introduce and stimulate an understanding of the theories, socio-political contexts and histories of the styles studied.
- Explore and develop movement vocabulary in relationship to musicality, tempo and rhythm.
- Develop cognizance of personal and collective voice and style.

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

DeFrantz, Thomas. *The Black Beat Made Visible: Hip Hop Dance and Body Power*, Wesleyan University Press, 2004  
Additional short readings, film and videos may be assigned relating to topics covered in the cipher.

## Proper Attire for Technique Class

Loose, baggy comfortable clothing is appropriate. Freedom of movement is important. Tennis shoes/Sneaks can be worn, preferably clean with non-marking soles. For the safety of yourself and other students, no dangling or noisy earrings, bracelets, anklets, necklaces, large hoop earrings or watches are to be worn in class. Small stud earrings are permitted. Kneepads, on occasion, are recommended.

## Additional Policies

Attendance is mandatory because the majority of the course material is covered in studio. All students, *cipher members*, are expected to actively engage and participate in each cipher session (class) and cyber cipher (online) discussion. There will be two excused absences allowed (no doctor's notes are necessary or accepted). **Students who miss any four (4) consecutive classes at any time in the quarter will be dropped from the course. Unexcused absences are penalized by a 10 point deduction each occurrence.** No make-up classes are allowed. Tardiness is not tolerated as early warm-ups are critical to preventing injury; the full class time is necessary to complete course training, and tardiness creates a significant disruption to the course work of the other students. Tardiness of 20 minutes or more will constitute an absence. Further, three tardy attendances of less than 20 minutes will also constitute an absence. Because active participation as defined herein is so utterly important to this course, each unexcused absence will count for a 3-point deduction of active participation points. For group assignments, be sure to notify your fellow classmates of your absence (24) twenty-four hours prior to the class session. If you become ill, injured or unable to participate in class for an extended period of time you must provide a doctor's note to verify the problem within (48) forty-eight hours of the missed class. Failure to do so will result in no credit for the missed class(es).

## Studio Guidelines

Food and beverages are not allowed in the dance studio. Water bottles are acceptable and the only exception to this rule. Please refrain from side conversations during class.

**Cell phones/electronic devices MUST be silenced; Do not use cellular devices during class time; If you continue to check your phone/text message/make or take phone calls during class time, expect your grade to be affected negatively. Furthermore, repeat offenders will be asked to leave class for that day.**

## Course Schedule

### WEEK 1

- Orientation/expectations and general assessment, introduction of *Funkamental Movement System* guiding principles and vocabulary.

### WEEKS 2 - 6

- Introduction of *Funkamental Isolations, Funkamental Shuffles*
- Focus on how physical balance, alignment, steadiness and readiness relate to getting in to “the pocket”, the groove.
- Understanding static and dynamic cool as means to develop a sense of personal style
- Introduce concept and practice of *wireless transmission* as means to develop “whole body listening”.
- *Cipher Building*: developing movement phrases/combinations collectively through circulation of *cipher knowledge and understanding*.
- Static and dynamic control, simple turns
- Introduction to rhythmic footwork patterns

### WEEKS 7

- Collective Cipher Review Session and Final Evaluation Cipher

### WEEKS 8 - 15

- Continue to expand on the aspects noted above while introducing the *Funkamental* practice of “stacking” and corporeal polyrhythms.
- Introduction of *Compound Funkamental Isolations, Compound Funkamental Shuffles*
- Floorwork: drops and “get downs”
- True School, Hood Hop, Trendy dances
- Begin developing phrases and combinations that incorporate movement material covered in the first half of the semester.

### WEEK 16 - FINAL EXAM

- Collective Cipher Review Session and Final Evaluation Cipher

## Online Cipher

In addition to what’s covered in class each student is required to participate in the “Cyber Cipher”. There are a total of two (2) different online tasks that will be assigned. Each task requires a written response/feedback in the discussion forum. Basically, read and examine the assigned material, whether it be an essay, article, blog, video, etc, then post a response. There is a maximum of 5 grade points for each response. A paragraph with 3 critical arguments, ideas and/or insights and at least one response to a fellow *cipher member’s* post = Five (5) points. No response = Zero (0) points. We will discuss the anticipated standard of performance in class. Our net location is TBD.

## Exams

Mid-Semester Evaluation Cipher and Final Evaluation Cipher (Mid-Term and Final Exams) grades are considers individual and group execution of material covered in class.

- Mid-Semester Evaluation Cipher: October 8, 2014
- Final Evaluation Cipher: December 10, 2014

## Grading Breakdown

There are a total of 100 points for the quarter. Students earn the 100 points by completing the Mid-term (20pts), Final (20), Cyber Cipher Participation (10) and Cipher Participation/attendance (50pts). Unexcused absences are penalized by a 10 point deduction each occurrence. The Mid-term and Final exams require individual and collective participation.

		TOTAL POSSIBLE	=100 POINTS
Letter Grade Requirements:	Cipher Participation		=50 points
	Mid-Term Skills Test		=20 points
	Final Skills Test		=20 points
	Online Cipher Responses (2)		=10 points
	*No more than 4 unexcused absences		
Grading Scale:	100pts – 90pts		= A's (A+, A, A-)
	89pts – 80pts		= B's...
	79pts – 70pts		= C's...
	69pts – 60pts		= D's...
	under 60		= F's...
100 A+	87-89 B+	77-79 C+67-69 D+	59 and below F
94-99 A	84-86 B	74-76 C 64-66 D	
90-93 A-	80-83 B-	70-73 C- 60-63 D-	

## Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html), (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

## Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

## Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

***PLEASE NOTE: It is often necessary for the instructor to place his/her hands on a student in order to better facilitate the learning process and to illustrate proper alignment. If a student should have an aversion to this practice please notify Professor Grimes prior to the start of classes.***