

**DANC 130 Improvisation and Composition I:
Introduction
Section 22365D
Fall 2015
Day: T, TH
Time: 2:00-3:20pm
2 units**

Location: PED 207

Instructor: Thomas McManus

Office: STO 334

Office Hours: To be scheduled by email

Contact Info:

Catalogue Description

An introduction to improvisational and compositional skills that start to prepare students for the creative processes of dancing, dance-making and performance.

Full Course Description

An introduction to improvisational and compositional skills that start to prepare students for the creative processes of dancing, dance-making and performance. Based in physical research, this course will also consider improvisation and composition as a topic in readings and written work, involve individualized digital archiving of dance assignments, and lays the foundation for discovery in the form.

Learning Objectives

This course is the first in a series on improvisation and composition in the first two years of the BFA Dance degree. Part of the core curriculum, the syllabus builds essential tools for a well-rounded, progressive dance studies. The class work is designed to:

- Prepare students for the creative processes of dancing, dance-making and performance
- Research improvisation and composition in readings and written work
- Begin digital archiving of dance assignments

Recommended Prep: Extensive Ballet Training

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

A Choreographer's Handbook. Jonathan Burrows. Routledge, 2010.

Improvisation Technologies CD-ROM, William Forsythe

Art and Fear, David Bayles and Ted Orland

The Art of Making Dances. Doris Humphrey. (p. 66-71). Grove Press, 1959.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Additional insight and perspectives into physical research in course will be assessed and analyzed through the following written and compositional assignments:

- Essay: My Dance-Web
- Essay: Improvisation and Composition: What I Find Useful and What I Find Challenging (5-7 pages)
- Tumblr Portfolio Archive Assignment
- Final Dance Composition Assignment

Grading Breakdown

50% Class Readings, Assignments and Participation

- Be physically and mentally attentive during class time
- Contribute thoughtfully to creative research. EG: Applying and furthering concepts presented in class in self-directed improvisation and composition exercises and assignments.
- Complete reading and video assignments and be prepared for discussion
- Develop collaborative skills. ED: Demonstrate developing communication skills; learning how to listen to peers in classroom setting, willingness to learn how to effectually express creative and analytical ideas to peers, mentors and teachers in class; learning effective strategies for creative process problem-solving and contributing to creative collaboration.
- Apply and demonstrate comprehension of concepts and theories presented. EG: Demonstrate development of a 360 degree view of an approach to the body (as opposed to a solely 'frontal' mirror view); exploring and expanding an understanding of the dancers' kinesphere; developing real-time composition skills.

20% Preparation and Review:

- Students are expected to take notes summarizing content covered in class.
- Demonstration of conscientious review and application of course content in creative investigations and research of studio practice. EG: Notes. Movement corrections; concepts covered in each class, are aptly applied in improvisation exercises and compositional assignments in each subsequent class.

30% Essays and Assignments (7.5 per essay or assignment)

- 1. Essay: (3-4 pages) Due: Week 4
- My Dance-Web
- 2. Essay: (5-7 pages) Due: Week 7
- Improvisation & Composition: What I find useful & What I find challenging
- 3. Tumblr Portfolio Archive Assignment. Due Week 10
- 4. Final Dance Composition Assignment. Due Week 15

Assignment Submission Policy

Due Week 4: Essay: My Dance-Web

Due WEEK 7: Essay: Improvisation and Composition: What I Find Useful and What I Find Challenging

Due WEEK 10: Tumblr Portfolio Archive Assignment

Due WEEK 16: Final Dance Composition Assignment

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Course topics are taught in a seven, two-week modules that impart a comprehensive introduction to improvisation and composition studies at a University level.

- WEEK 1: Surfaces: Awareness of Dancing Spaces from the Floor Up
- WEEK 2: Surfaces: Awareness of Dancing Spaces from the Floor Up
- WEEK 3: 360 Degree Perspective of the Body: Means of Conveyance
- WEEK 4: 360 Degree Perspective of the Body: Means of Conveyance
- WEEK 5: Understanding Focus in Dance
- WEEK 6: Understanding Focus in Dance
- WEEK 7: Integration of Improvisation and Composition: Where Did These Practices Start and How Do They Work Together?
- WEEK 8: Integration of Improvisation and Composition: Where Did These Practices Start and How Do They Work Together?
- WEEK 9: Starting Points: Setting Motion in Motion
- WEEK 10: Starting Points: Setting Motion in Motion
- WEEK 11: Creating Phrases
- WEEK 12: Creating Phrases
- WEEK 13: Building Phrases
- WEEK 14: Building Phrases
- WEEK 15: Class Showings, Final Assignment
- WEEK 16: Final Dance Composition Assignment. To be performed at the performance space at the Glorvya Kaufman International Dance Center or a performance venue on campus. Dates and times according to the USC Schedule of Classes Final Exam Schedule

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, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) 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 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.