

USC Kaufman **DANC 185**
Hip Hop Dance
FALL 2015
Section: 22423R
Day: Friday
Time: 12:00–1:50pm
2 units

Location: AHF B20

Instructor: E. Moncell Durden

Office: TBD

Office Hours: To be scheduled by email

Contact info: durdenmc@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. (Duplicates credit in former THTR 185.)

Full Course Description

This course introduces and surveys the *BEATS* 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

Beats 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 *Beats* (Body, Emotion, Action, Time, Space) 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, *Beats* 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

In this course the student should:

- Develop a strong understanding of Hip-Hop vocabulary and technique, demonstrating comprehension of major principles through in-class practice, and self-evaluations.
- Make a personal connection to dance by exploring their own folkloric and cultural dance or dance cultures in which they identify.
- Cultivate a comprehension of the relationship between authentic jazz dances, hip-hop and house dance.
- Explore rhythmic flow between body and music as well as ground movements, techniques and transitions.
- Gain a contextual and historical intelligence of Hip-Hop dance and its intersecting social dynamics of race, gender, sexuality, and class.
- Explore improvisation and its correlation with the musical scale, time, space, weight, levels, direction, flow, and emotion.

At the successful completion of the course the student will be able to demonstrate competence at the low intermediate level, with visible progress in the practice of the following:

Topical Outline

This class will meet once per week and will be composed of

1. Warm-up (covers Isolation exercises)

2. Cyclical and across the floor exercises
3. Locomotive exercises and combinations
4. Featured combinations that synergize fundamental concepts of kinesiology and rhythmic flow
5. Cool down (Best practices)

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Students will be required to view media outside of class for discussion and other assignments.

NOTE: At the instructor's discretion, this syllabus is subject to change.

This course syllabus represents a proposed plan for the semester. The main intention for this syllabus is to outline a plan to engage in the course material thoroughly. Therefore we will follow the syllabus diligently but not rigidly. I may use my discretion to extend out examination and / or discourse around a particular topic. Which might involve adding, subtracting and /or interchanging specific assignments. I will be respectfully transparent and alert you of any changes to subject matter related to this course. Nevertheless, any changes will not result in a significant increase in the course reading materials and, mostly, will comprise of additional visual and / or audio material to enhance class content.

Classroom Conduct/Safety

- Honesty - please be honest with yourself, classmates and the instructor about physical ailments, family emergencies, etc.
 - o Students who are ill/injured are expected to attend class and participate by observing and taking notes.
- Respect - please respect yourself, classmates, work space and instructor at all times.
- Cell phones (and/or other electronic devices) - should be turned off or placed on silent mode (unless otherwise instructed).
- Attire - We will make use of the studio floor. Wear comfortable, loose, non-restrictive clothing in which you can move freely in all classes. This includes appropriate attire for movement **and** shoes (sneakers/tennis shoes). Please Do Not Wear Your Street Shoes in the studio. Have another pair just for class. (I do not recommend jazz shoes, flat bottom shoes are best) **Absolutely no denim jeans! Please come dressed to move for every class!** e.g.; sweat pants, tights, t-shirts, and or other dance appeal. Be prepared to remove jewelry and watches. And lastly: no gum chewing or eating.
- We will be screening a few films in this course. Students who fall asleep during screenings will be considered absent for the class.
- Food and Drinks - please, no food and drink in the studio except water.
- Enjoy yourself but know that this class should be taken seriously.

- Openness and willingness to try new things (e.g. leave attitudes that hinder openness to the principles of the course outside of the class such as frustration with pace of the class, dislike of movement style, lethargy).
- Intellectual curiosity (in this course means fostering and developing an individual understanding and use of technique and how it is used to communicate and develop nuance and articulation within movement phrases).
- Ability to accept and work with feedback.
- Evaluation of the student's individual rate of technical progress over the semester. In other words, your attitude, how you approach the material, the relevance and thoughtfulness of your contributions (question and /or comments) are all part of participation (see participation below). Additionally, you will be penalized if your participation detracts from overall objectives of the class and or group(s).

Attendance/ Class Participation

The evaluation of your work in this class will be based on the quality of participation and the degree of involvement in all class movement and discussion sessions and any assignments. In addition, your evaluation will include the individual progress made in all content areas of the course, including but not limited to: Knowledge of material, ability to apply corrections, execution of set combinations, degree of improvement as well as:

- Your punctuality and class attendance
- The consistency of participation in all class activities
- The conceptual clarity, and degree of involvement in any creative projects
- The thoughtfulness you have toward others and the learning environment
- Knowledge of forms and dance techniques

Experiences missed in class cannot be made up. Because of this, Absences may justify some grade reduction.

TWO absences are permitted before the student's final grade is affected. *Note that two absences equals missing a week of class.* **Upon the third absence, the student's final grade will be affected.** Students failing a course due to attendance should consult with an academic advisor to discuss options.

- Lateness/Tardiness - A student is considered late after 15 minutes. **2 tardies = 1 absence.** For significant lateness, the instructor may consider the tardiness as an absence for the day.
- Attendance - The instructor will take attendance. It is each student's responsibility to inform the instructor if they are late to class.
- The attendance and lateness policies are enforced as of the first day of classes for all registered students. If registered during the first week of the add/drop period, the student is responsible for any missed assignments and coursework.

Students unable to engage in the physical practice for any reason, attendance is still required. In this case students will be required to observe class and take notes. These notes should contain a critique of the class noting specific principles, techniques, and concepts that were covered in class that day. Notes are due at the conclusion of class (notes will be returned at next class). Continued observation days will deduct two (2) points from your attendance points.

Class Participation

- For this course maintain appropriate participation in class activities (i.e: NOT texting, or surfing the internet, no taking selfies, and not practicing techniques or combinations from other dance class); actively participating in all movement exercises, making comments during discussions and willingness to share views and ideas.
- Participation:
 - Verbal - participating in class discussions
 - Kinesthetic - Warm-up, Across/ Center Floor, Combinations, and Cipher Sessions.
 - Auditory - listening to music, instructor and peers
- Positive, fully prepared, and ready for physical involvement in all movement experiences. Concentration and alertness in class, and exercising personal responsibility and consideration of other and the learning environment.

Assignments

DANCE REVIEW: Attending a USC Kaufman Performance (due last day of class):

Students will write a personal reflection paper (3-5-pages, typed, double-spaced and proof-read) offering original comments on the content and form of a live dance performance given by USC Kaufman BFA Students. Ticket stub and/or program must be stapled to your paper.

Your choice of attending:

- Mid-Term informal studio showing in PED 207: **Oct 19-23**
- End of semester showcase in Bing Theatre: **Dec 2-4, 2015**

ANALYSIS/REFLECTION PAPER:

More information on this assignment will be posted to Blackboard prior to the start of classes.

FILM REFLECTION PAPER:

More information on this assignment will be posted to Blackboard prior to the start of classes.

****All assignments are due at the time specified. Exceptions for late assignments are as follows: illness (with a doctor's excuse) or serious family emergency.****

➤ **Criteria for Written Work**

- Conceptual understanding of the materials
- Correct Spelling and Grammar
- Work must be submitted in Times New Roman 12 pt, double-spaced
- The margins cannot exceed 1.5 inches
- Heading:
 - Top Left Hand corner of first page

Full Name

DANC 185 Hip Hop Dance

Fall 2015

Instructor: E. Moncell Durden

Date

- Title should be centered on the following line (e.g. Dance Critique)
- Do not double space the heading
- Your last name should be at that top of each page

➤ ***Please go to Blackboard to view detailed descriptions of the following:***

- ◆ **Reading materials**
- ◆ **Assigned films and clips**
- ◆ **Analysis/Reflection Paper Rubric**
- ◆ **Film Reflection Paper Rubric**
- ◆ **Movement Midterm**
- ◆ **Final Exam**

Exams

Movement Mid-Term and Final Exam grades consider individual and group execution of material covered in class. There will also be a written essay question component for each exam.

Mid-Semester Evaluation Exam: Week 7

Final Evaluation Exam: Friday, December 11th, 11:00am-1:00pm

Dance Journals

Class journals are for your own assessment in order to track your growth, a tool for writing assignments. Journals should reflect your experience of the class, including but not limited to: forms, techniques, discussions on social and aesthetic values, theory, commercialization, cultural sensitivities, pre' and post ideologies.

Suggestion for personal growth:

- Video tape yourself after the first week of classes, then again around Mid-Term then during the last week of the course. Write about your experience in

class, what you thought about your dancing, and any ideas on the material covered in class.

- Write your goals for this class. Clearly articulate your general intent for taking this class, and then narrowly define some specific objectives you have determined for yourself. (Are you reaching your goals, do you deem you are working to the top level of performance. Why? Why not? (Please do not hesitate to comment on your interactions with the teacher).

Criteria for Grading

There are a total of 100 points for the semester. Students earn the 100 points based on the four P's Presence, Participation, Performance and Progress. Unexcused absences are penalized by a 10 point deduction each occurrence. The Mid-Term and Final exam requires individual and collective participation.

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 100

Letter Grade Requirements:

Attendance/Participation	=10 points
Analysis/Reflection Paper	=15 points
Kaufman Performance Review	=15 points
Film Reflection	=20 points
Mid-Term movement skills test	=20 points
Final Movement Presentation	=20 points

Grading Scale:

100pts - 90pts	= A's (A+, A, A-)
89pts - 80pts	= B's...
79pts - 70pts	= C's...
69pts - 60pts	= D's...
under 60pts	= F

Statements for Students with Disabilities

Any students 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 (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu

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.

Statement of Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism - presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words - is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community - such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member - can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu/will> provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change):

WEEK 1

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

WEEK 2-6

- Exploring nine elements of music: notes, articulation, technique, feel, dynamics, rhythm, tone, phrasing, space and listening
- Focus on: (T.G.I.F.) technique, groove, isolation, flow
- Develop strength and endurance
- Improvisation, becoming comfortable with mistakes
- Explore the three planes of music; Expressive, Sensual and the Sheer Joy of listening to music
- Introduce rhythmic organization of social interaction through entrainment
- Linear/translation, rotation/counter rotation, expansion/ contraction

WEEK 7

- Mid Term in-class movement skills test

WEEK 8 - 15

- Continue to expand on the aspects noted above while introducing BEATS exercises for poly-rhythmic flow and phrasing development
- Accenting instruments vs. lyrics
- Becoming visually harmonious
- Ground movements
- Combinations and improvography
- Begin developing phrases and combinations that incorporate movement material covered in the first half of the semester.

WEEK 16 - FINAL EXAM

Final Evaluation Exam: Friday, December 11th, 11:00am-1:00pm

Final Reflection Paper Due by TBD