

DANC 180: African Dance

Fall/ Spring

2 units

Day: Friday

Time: 12:00am-1:50pm

Location: KDC 107

Instructor: S. Anindo Marshall

Office: (213) 740-9327

Office Hours: By Appointment Only

Contact Info: 818-970-6540 *

sarahanm@usc.edu

Catalog Description

African Dance technique at the beginning/intermediate level. The course is a way of knowing, understanding, and experiencing culture, emphasizing cultural traditions, community outreach and diversity.

The course works through artistic process, practice, performance, and related activities, using dance, theater, and music work rooted in the African tradition and contemporary African aesthetics. The focus will be West and Central African traditional dance and music.

Full Course Description

This course will look at African cultural traditions, their evolution, development, with focus on rhythm, songs, and culture as well as dance choreography traditionally performed for rites of passage, courtship, and other cultural occasions. African dance is distinctive and is characterized by total body articulation and simultaneous emphasis on various parts of the body as it moves in time to the music. In Africa, dance forms are an important part of ritual ceremonies that mark the experiences of one's life, teach social values and offer praise, depict stories and re-enact histories of the community, communicate with ancestors, and work therapeutically to heal the sick. Dance plays an important part in ceremonial rituals and rites of passage. Students will learn traditions related to specific ethnic groups and regions of West and Central Africa and learn dance forms that have an important part of ritual ceremonies that mark the experiences of one's life, teach social values and offer praise, depict stories and re-enact histories of the community, communicate with ancestors, and work therapeutically to heal the sick. They will learn that African dance plays an important part in ceremonial rituals and rites of passage. Students will learn African history as it relates to the dances. They will also look at the influences African dance has had on Western dance and music.

Learning Objectives

This technique class is a non-majors course. It provides the foundation for learning the basics of African Dance movement vocabulary and historical contexts. This course aims to:

- Develop dance vocabulary (terminology and movement).

- Promote knowledge and awareness of safe performance techniques.
- Promote an introductory understanding of the theories, contexts and history of African dance practices.
- Develop awareness of musicality
- Develop awareness of vocalization
- Understand the importance of community in African based dance practices.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- To acquaint oneself with African dance traditions through studio practice, reading, and performance viewing.
- Develop understanding of global patterns and processes and their potential impact on society; Students will acquire knowledge about African dance and its impact on cultures of the Western Hemisphere (and the globe).
- Identify music choices that lend to the vocalization and physicality of African based dance practices.
- Demonstrate understanding of the interconnections, difference, and diversity of a global society; recognize similarities and differences in manifestations of North American culture impacted by “trans-cultural” patterns similar to that of Africa.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE PARTICIPATION

In-class Participation:

- Turn off or silence cell phones.
- Listen and remain attentive during class.
- Engage in in-class discussions regarding movement practice and historical context.
- Any injuries that prohibit class participation must be reported to the instructor.
- Remain respectful and attentive while others are speaking/demonstrating in class.
- No gum, food, or drinks will be allowed in the studio.
- If you cannot participate in class due to an injury you must quietly take notes on the combinations, ideas, and concepts discussed in class. These notes must be turned in to the instructor at the end of the class period. In some cases, it may also be appropriate to record combinations on electronic devices; the purpose is solely for your at-home practice. Videos of course material are not permitted to be posted on the Internet.
- If you must leave the classroom before the end of class, please let the instructor know beforehand.
- Wearing appropriate attire to all classes (as described within the syllabus)

Attendance:

Attendance when you are healthy and full participation in class exercises, as well as completion of all assignments and the dance reflection paper, are paramount for a

passing grade. Students will be expected to practice outside of class in order to progress at an appropriate pace.

The class also has a required final exam. Attendance at the final exam is crucial to receiving a passing grade in the course. The exam will be given on the date as published in the USC schedule of classes for spring semester 2022.

If illnesses or family emergencies occur, that result in excessive absences, please communicate with the instructor at your earliest convenience.

Dance Reflection Paper:

Students are required to observe one dance concert during the semester. I will get the list and share it with you. A 2-page, double spaced, written paper is due on the day of the final, in which students are required to write their observation of the entire show, including any technical elements that they recognize from class being translated to the performance stage in reference to specific pieces. Students are also encouraged to engage all of their senses while observing the work (i.e. what was the mood of the piece, how many dancers were in the piece, were any sounds incorporated into the movement, did it appear to travel in any particular way, costuming, multimedia). Any conflicts should be brought to the instructor's attention at-least one month prior to the date of the concert. Dance reflection papers should be written in proper MLA format and are due on the day of the final exam (. Instructions on MLA formatting can be found at:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

A list of appropriate performances for the dance reflection paper will be provided by the course instructor.

Proper Attire for Technique Class:

Students are required to dance barefoot. The torso needs to be visible; no baggy/ heavy sweatshirts. Dance pants, biker shorts, wrap around skirt - lapa (for the ladies/men) or slim fitting pants (for the men/ladies) are appropriate. Hair should be worn off the face. These items can be purchased online, at neighborhood dance wear supply stores or at athletic apparel stores. Students arriving to class in incorrect attire will be asked to sit-out and take notes but will be expected to engage in course dialogue.

Grading Breakdown:

Grades are based on an average of the assessments given by the instructor, completion of the assigned dance reflection paper, journal entries, plus subjective in-class qualities like effort, progress, attitude, and attendance. Dance etiquette should be observed while in and around the studio, and will affect grades as well.

Grading Scale and Point Values:

- In-class participation: 15 pts.
- Dance Performance Journal: 30 pts
- Dance Reflection Paper: 25 pts.
- Final Exam: 30 pts.
- 100 PTS TOTAL

- A+ = 100 points
- A = 96-99 points
- A- = 91-95 points
- B+ = 88-90 points
- B = 85-87 points
- B- = 81-84 points
- C+ = 78-80 points
- C = 75-77 points
- C- = 71-74 points
- D+ = 67-70 points
- D- = 61-63 points
- F = 60 or below

COURSE CONTENT

Week 1: Introduction to the dance studio, classroom etiquette, and attire (lapas for ladies throughout the semester). Introduction to class warm-up and basic singing exercises. Basic understanding of the origins of African based movement, foot patterning and rhythms. Overview of course syllabus and schedule.

Week 2 (and continuing throughout the semester): Basic African dance footwork and rhythms. Beginning understanding of drum accompaniment with African dances.

Week 3 (and continuing throughout the semester): Studio work in Guinea based dance practices. Introduction and lecture including practice of accompanying songs and vocalizations from Guinea and Senegal.

Week 4 (and continuing throughout the semester): In studio practice in Lamba and Balanta dances. Introduction to Senegalese culture and history. Continued practice of accompanying vocalizations and songs.

Week 5 (and continuing throughout the semester): Continuing in studio practice in Lamba and Balanta dances. Introduction to Senegalese culture and history. Continued practice of accompanying vocalizations and songs. Skirts needed.

Week 6 (and continuing throughout the semester): African History hand out and discussion.

Week 7 (and continuing throughout the semester): Understanding the significance of the Congo as a Western hub of Africa toward the U.S. during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. In class reading or video viewing on the history of the Congolese.

Week 8: MID-TERM - In class video viewing of African documentary. Write review of documentary and hand in a paper about African History. Journal entries including class assessments. All students will continue to expand on dance techniques.

Week 9: Continue studying Lamban and Balanta, while expanding on dance techniques.

Week 10: Continued practice of Lamba, Balanta.

Week 11: Review of basic African rhythms and dance (and continuing throughout the semester) Literature will be handed out.

Week 12: Understanding African movement. We will continue to review rhythms and dances. Rehearse the African piece for December performance.

Week 13: Studio work: We will work on our raffia skirts as part of costume making. and continue to rehearse rhythms, songs and dances.

Week 14: Review and continue studying all the rhythms. Focus on the performance piece. All students will continue to expand on drum techniques.

Week 15: Review rhythms we worked on throughout the semester. Dancers will only be tested on the last 6 weeks material for the final exam (weeks 9-14). Final exam will include movement assessment, rhythm, songs and include a short history/ vocabulary written portion – based on Lamba and Balanta.

FINAL EXAM - Friday May 6, 11am - 1pm

The final exam will be an in-class presentation of all elements learned. Final exam will include movement assessment, rhythm and include a short history/ vocabulary written portion - based on Lamba and Balanta. Dance reflection paper due on the day of final exam.

Note: All of the above will be taught to music spirited in the African tradition based on each individual form.

METHODS & PROCEDURES

In teaching, the instructor will utilize:

- Physical demonstrations by the teacher
- Improvisations & explorations individually, and/or in partners and in groups
- Light-touch hands-on corrections by the instructor
- Supporting different learning styles—visual, auditory, tactile/kinetic

- Acknowledging “multiple intelligence” – visual/spatial, verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal/intrapersonal.

Statement on 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 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://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://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety>. This is important for the safety of the 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 <http://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.

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.