



**DANC 280g: Introduction to  
Dance as an Art Form  
Section 22480**

**SPRING 2022**

**4 units**

**Day: T/TH**

**Time: 12-1:50am**

**Location: KDC 235**

**Instructor: Alison D'Amato**

**Office: KDC 224**

**Office Hours: By appointment**

**Contact: adamato@usc.edu**

**Catalogue Description**

Gateway to the minor in dance. An interdisciplinary overview of dance relating to the aesthetic and art in various subjects. Applications of the elements of dance studies, art criticism, and viewing productions to explore topic such as architecture, photography, poetry, technology, cinematic arts, sports, medicine, and more.

**Course Overview**

In this interdisciplinary overview of dance works and practices, students will be introduced to important artists, explore emerging topics in the field of dance studies, and encounter multiple methodologies for approaching the art critically. Through self-directed analysis of course readings and recorded performances, course participants will collectively develop rich vocabularies tailored to address the breadth of the dance field today. Students will approach dance not only aesthetically but as integral mode of enacting and preserving cultural values, examining how such values operate in their own communities and the world at large. Interdisciplinary connections will be emphasized, including those between dance and visual arts and architecture, literature, music, cinematic arts, fashion, emergent technologies, and more.

**Learning Objectives**

In this course, students will:

- Develop critical reasoning and analytic skills, adopting varying approaches to viewing, critiquing and appreciating dance performance
- Engage with various theoretical, historical and aesthetic underpinnings of dance
- Examine relevant theoretical trends in the field of Dance Studies
- Learn to read and interpret actively and analytically, to think critically and creatively
- Embody certain historical trends in the online environment, making connections between personal histories and the larger history of the discipline
- Respond creatively to course materials in a medium of their choosing
- Sustain dialogue with members of the course community, articulating original insights and responding to the insights of others.

## **Course Policies**

### **Readings and Viewings:**

Each week, students will encounter (via Blackboard) a roadmap for self-directed study. The Blackboard Module will contain a recommended bibliography, viewing list, and lecture slides. You may read or view as many of these materials as you like, keeping in mind that sustained engagement with the provided materials will be assessed via the midterm and final exams. The majority of course readings are readily available through online databases accessible from the USC Libraries' website. While most of these articles will also be posted on Blackboard, I encourage you to become familiar with library resources, particularly in preparation for your response papers.

Readings will serve as valuable resources, but as dance remains deeply rooted in embodied practice, watching and experiencing through in-class activities and videos will also inform our approach. Accordingly, visual media will often serve as vital primary materials for the course and, like lectures and reading materials, may be the basis of questions on exams. Students are encouraged to engage with additional media in conjunction with their readings.

### **Community Expectations:**

Students should be present, prepared, and ready to engage with each other and the course material. Viewing, discussion, and class activities figure greatly. Active participation includes adhering to standard classroom etiquette: no food or drink, no sleeping, and no private discussion. Students are expected to engage fully in group discussions and activities, to ask thoughtful questions, to come to class fully prepared, and to exercise personal responsibility and consideration of others at all times.

As regards the use of devices, a collaboratively-devised technology policy will be established in the first few sessions of the course. The instructor reserves the right to amend or revise this policy at any time.

### **Names and Pronouns:**

You are entitled to be addressed by correct pronouns and the name you prefer, even if these differ from those under which you are enrolled. As a class, we will do our utmost to refer to each other respectfully.

### **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:**

This class takes place at a university committed to equity for all students, where diversity and inclusion are considered critical to the academic environment. In this classroom, free speech is respected, and civil discourse is expected, with a safe learning environment the priority. We will endeavor to use language that is respectful—sometimes being inquisitive and creative, because language changes all the time—particularly when it comes to differences in age, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, race or socioeconomic status.

### **Religious Holy Days Policies:**

University policy grants students excused absences for observance of religious holy days. Please inform the professor at least one full week in advance to request such an excused absence. You will be given an opportunity to make up missed work if necessary.

## **Recommended Readings**

See Blackboard Modules for week-to-week bibliographies.

## **Description and Assessment of Assignments**

### **Blackboard Modules and Discussion Board**

Each week, students will receive (via Blackboard) a roadmap for **self-directed study**. The Blackboard Module will contain a recommended bibliography, viewing list, and lecture slides. You may read or view as many of these materials as you like, keeping in mind that sustained

engagement with the provided materials will be assessed via the midterm and final exams, as well as the Performance Analysis Paper. Each week, your self-directed study will culminate in a post to the Discussion Board (a response to my prompt or to a colleague). **Posts are due at 10am on Tuesdays prior to class meetings.**

**Mid-Term and Final Exam:**

Exams will be scheduled in 24-hour windows so that students have the opportunity to complete them during working hours in their time zone. Exams are open book (notes, reading, and slides must be handwritten or typed and printed out), and will evaluate your self-directed exploration of the material.

**Mid-Term:** February 24

**Final:** May 11

**Written Assignments:**

Written assignments will be submitted via Blackboard by midnight (end of the day) on the due date. Students are not permitted to share documents with the instructor via communal drives such as Google. No extensions will be granted; see rubrics for more information, including late submission policy. Students will complete **2 short papers** (each approximately 3 pages in length). Each analysis paper will be oriented around a clear, debatable claim (i.e. a strong thesis statement). Full rubrics for each assignment will be distributed separately, but include:

**Ethnographic/Auto-Ethnographic Analysis Paper**

Students are to safely observe, participate in, or reflect on a dance event that is NOT a formal performance (this could be a class, rehearsal, club meeting, nightlife event, family gathering, etc. – reflection is encouraged in light of ongoing public health situation), assessing how movement practices enact and sustain specific cultures and cultural values. **Due February 1.**

**Performance Analysis Paper**

Students are expected to view a full, online dance performance of their choice and undertake a thorough choreographic analysis. This will involve a detailed analysis of various performance components, as well as some discussion of interrelationships between elements. The goal is to move from description to interpretation. **Due March 31.**

**Creative Response:**

Students will undertake an individual or team project that creatively engages with core concepts, methods, and media explored in the course. The response can take many forms, including but not limited to a podcast or audio recording, a zine, a memoir, an open letter, a series of poems, a visual art object, a song, a choreographic work, a short film, a website or other digital project. Must be submitted alongside a 300-word statement of intent.

**Due April 19.**

**Grading Rubric**

Performance Analysis	20%
Ethnographic Analysis	20%
Mid-Term	15%
Final Exam	20%
Creative Response	15%
Discussion Board	10%

### Grading Scale

A+ = 100 points

A = 95-99 points

A- = 90-94 points

B+ = 87-89 points

B = 84-86 points

B- = 80-83 points

C+ = 77-79 points

C = 74-76 points

C- = 70-73 points

D+ = 66-69 points

D = 62-65 points

D- = 60-61 points

F = 60 or below

### Weekly Schedule

	Topic	Due Dates & Exams	In-Class Activities
<b>Week 1</b> January 11 & 13	Locating Dance Historically, Culturally, Aesthetically Introduction to Choreographic Analysis		Course Introduction Synchronous Activity: Practicing Choreographic Analysis
<b>Week 2</b> January 18 & 20	Ethnographic Approaches		Synchronous Activity: Practicing Ethnographic Analysis
<b>Week 3</b> January 25 & 27	Perspectives on Practice		Synchronous Activity: Practicing Phenomenological Analysis
<b>Week 4</b> February 1 & 3	Dance & Writing, Language, Narrative	Ethnographic Analysis Paper Due February 1	Synchronous Activity: Practicing Dance Notation
<b>Week 5</b> February 8 & 10	Dance and Music		
<b>Week 6</b> February 15 & 17	Dance and Emergent Technologies, Dance and Fashion		Guest Speaker: Selwa Sweidan
<b>Week 7</b> February 22 & 24	Midterm Review	Midterm February 24	
<b>Week 8</b> March 1 & 3	Dance and the Visual Arts, Architecture, Dance in the Museum		Synchronous Activity: Walking Dances
<b>Week 9</b> March 8 & 10	Site Specificity		Synchronous Activity: Exploring site specificity
<b>Week 10</b> March 22 & 24	Politics and Activism		
<b>Week 11</b> March 29 & 31	Dancing Identity	Performance Analysis Paper Due March 31	Synchronous Activity: Articulating Identity
<b>Week 12</b> April 5 & 7	Dancing Ability		
<b>Week 13</b> April 12 & 14	Globalization and Viral Choreographies		Synchronous Activity: Exploring Dance for the (very small) Screen

<b>Week 14</b> April 19 & 21	Dance and Competition Creative Response Discussion	Creative Response Due April 19	
<b>Week 15</b> April 26 & 28	Creative Response Discussion Wrap-up and Review		Final Exam Review

## Emergency Plan

In the event of a university-wide emergency, guidance and directions will be shared by Campus Emergency Operations in all available outlets, including the website and TrojanAlerts. Students are encouraged to maintain close contact with all available communications avenues for updates to university operations. USC Kaufman will abide by all university protocols and recommendations. If the Kaufman Dance Center is not available when classes resume, students can receive updates from the school's Departmental Operations Center (DOC) on Ramo Lawn (between the Thornton School of Music and Norris Cinema, close to the Bing Theatre).

## 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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### Support Systems:

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*  
[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](https://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710*

[campussupport.usc.edu](https://campussupport.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](https://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.