

Spring 2022

4 units

Day: M/W

Time: 12-1:50pm

Location: KDC 240

Instructor: Alison D'Amato

Office: KDC 224

Office Hours: By appointment

Contact: adamato@usc.edu

Catalogue Description

Exploration of dance as an art form in its artistic, political, and socio-cultural climate. Studies of the continuum of dance within its historical context.

Course Overview

This course examines a continuum of Western concert dance from its emergence in the 16th century to the present. We begin with ballet's origins in Italy and France, and trace its development through the early 21st century, at a moment when it is practiced globally and shaped by local contexts. Other topics include: the transnational development of modern dance, the development of African diasporic forms (jazz, tap) in the West, the emergence of dance as a tool for diplomacy and the articulation of nationhood, the appearance of late-20th century modes of *tanztheater*, physical theater, and somatics, and the negotiation of the label "contemporary" in non-Western contexts. Throughout, we pay close attention to how dance histories are constructed and how key concepts, such as "choreography," "technique," and "virtuosity" are defined. The class challenges entry-level perceptions by illustrating how dance has been, and continues to be, inextricable from social, political, and historical contexts. Readings, viewings, and in-class activities will expose students to theoretical perspectives and methodologies coming from within dance studies. Particular attention will also be accorded to primary sources, including but not limited to artist writings, reviews, images, and films. Our multidimensional approach is designed to illuminate what the study of *dance* in particular brings to historical research: an awareness of history as embedded in lived experience, rooted in place and culture, and attuned to the frictions and flows of an ever-changing world.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

- Deploy critical thinking with respect to historical record construction and canon formation
- Detail the theories that underpin aesthetics in the Western concert dance tradition
- Contextualize movements in Western concert dance within broader historical trends
- Effectively prepare for and lead an inclusive class discussion
- Develop research skills relative to primary source materials
- Sustain dialogue with members of the course community, articulating original insights and responding to the insights of others.
- Formulate original writing reflective of course themes and original research

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 updated, week-to-week bibliographies.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Blackboard Modules: 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.

Discussion Leaders: For most course meetings, one or more students will be chosen to lead discussion. Teams should meet before class having worked through that week’s module, ready to enter into dialogue. Leaders may want to give a brief overview of the readings, connect arguments to relevant supporting or contrasting positions, demonstrate how readings address the theme of the week or seminar as a whole, and pose questions designed to facilitate an inclusive discussion.

Mid-Term and Final Exam: Exams will be scheduled in 24-hour windows so that students may complete them remotely. 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 23
Final: May 6

Response Papers: The two response papers will address significant choreographers/choreographic works/techniques from *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* perspectives. For intrinsic papers (**due February 10**) the student might perform a “close reading” of a specific dance, address the biographical events shaping an artist’s life, or discuss the importance of specific technical vocabularies. Extrinsic papers (**due April 28**) will discuss the historical, cultural, or political context(s) surrounding choreographers/choreographic works/techniques. Topics are determined by the student in consultation with the professor(s). Each paper should be structured around a thesis statement containing a strong debatable claim. Papers will be graded based on the student’s engagement with course materials, original thinking and thoughtful (properly cited) use of at least 3 scholarly sources. Approximately 4 pages in length.

Written assignments will be submitted via Blackboard (Turn It In) by midnight (end of the day) on the due date. Students are not permitted to share documents with the grader or instructor via communal drives such as Google. No extensions will be granted; see individual rubrics for more information, including late submission policy.

Grading Rubric and Scale

Discussion Leader	10%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Response Papers	25% each

A+ = 100 points	B+ = 88-90 points	C+ = 78-80 points	D+ = 67-70 points
A = 95-99 points	B = 85-87 points	C = 75-77 points	D = 64-66 points
A- = 91-94 points	B- = 81-84 points	C- = 71-74 points	D- = 61-63 points
			F = 60 or below

Weekly Schedule

	Topic	Due Dates/In-class Activities
Week 1 January 10 & 12	Introduction to Dance History, Roots of Western Concert Dance, What is “the West”? Inventing Choreography	Navigating Course Materials Practice: Genealogical Analysis
Week 2 January 19	Intro to Romanticism	

Week 3 January 24 & 26	Rise of the Ballerina/ Disappearance of the Male Dancer Ballets Russes	Explore <i>Jacob's Pillow Interactive: Rites of Spring</i>
Week 4 January 31 & February 2	Constructing the Classics Balanchine, the NYCB & Modernism	
Week 5 February 7 & 9	Birth of the "Modern" Dance: Female Soloists and German Developments	Response Paper #1 Due February 10
Week 6 February 14 & 16	African Diasporic Forms in the West: Jazz and Tap	Midterm Review
Week 7 February 23		Midterm
Week 8 February 28 & March 2	The Graham Legacy	
Week 9 March 7 & 9	Populism and Representation in the 1930s and 1940s	
Week 10 March 21 & 23	West Coast Histories	Exploring <i>Dance Heritage Video Archive</i>
Week 11 March 28 & 30	Cunningham and "Post-modernism" ("Postmodernism"?)	Exploring Cunningham's <i>Dance Capsules</i>
Week 12 April 4 & 6	Saying 'Yes' to Spectacle: Punk Postmodernism and the Revival of European <i>Tanztheater</i>	
Week 13 April 11 & 13	What Constitutes Virtuosity in the 21 st Century? What Constitutes "Contemporary?"	
Week 14 April 18 & 20	Intercultural Collaboration	
Week 15 April 25 & 27	Concept Dance Research Paper Dialogue/Course Review and Wrap-Up	Response Paper #2 Due April 28

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).

University Policies

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Students will need an electronic device with access to Zoom and Blackboard for this course. They are asked to familiarize themselves with these two interfaces. Please see the links below for technology support.

USC Technology Support Links

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

USC Technology Rental Program

We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program. To apply, please [submit an application](#). The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

USC's Nine International Offices

Support for international students is also available through USC's offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and South China, Taiwan, South Korea, India, UK and Europe, Brazil, and Mexico. Additional details and contact information can be found at <https://global.usc.edu/global-presence/international-offices/>.

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." Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in [SCampus and university policies](#) on scientific misconduct.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#)

phone number (213) 740-9355 (WELL)

On call 24/7 - Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)

Phone number 1 (800) 273-8255

On call 24/7 - 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 \(RSVP\)](#)

Phone Number (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours

On call 24/7 - Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

[USC Office of Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX](#)

Phone number (213) 740-5086

Title IX Office (213) 821-8298

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](#)

Phone number (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

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

[The Office of Disability Services and Programs](#)

Phone number (213) 740-0776

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](#)

Phone number (213) 821-4710

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

[Diversity at USC](#)

Phone number (213) 740-2101

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 phone number (213) 740-4321

HSC phone number (323) 442-1000

On call 24/7

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 phone number (213) 740-6000

HSC phone number (323) 442-120

On call 24/7

Non-emergency assistance or information.