

**DANC 170: Choreography & Performance**  
**Section: 22383**

**Spring 2023**

**2 units**

**Day: M/W**

**Time: 12:00pm – 1:20pm**

**Location: KDC 104**

**Instructor:**

**Alison D'Amato**

**Office: KDC 224**

**Office Hours: To be scheduled by email**

**Contact Info: adamato@usc.edu**

### **Catalogue Description**

Compositional methods and approaches to developing choreographic ideas; integration of improvisational techniques as a means to generate movement ideas and expand movement vocabulary, edit choreographic material, and evaluate and execute choreography and performance.

### **Course Overview**

Through a combination of individual and collaborative movement meditations, compositional studies, reflective writing, and dialogue, each participant will be introduced to varied strategies for performance and choreography in dance. By participating in somatic explorations, choreographic improvisation, and the devising and enacting of scores, students will hone a heightened sense of proficiency in performance, and confidence in diverse approaches to dancemaking. Each exercise is intended to support the student's investigation of movement in relation to space, time, and energy, as well as develop intuitive and analytical perceptions of the craft. **\*Important note: this course does not presuppose training or expertise in any given dance form. We will approach all dance backgrounds (formal, social, vernacular, personal) with open arms and honor the innate intelligence of all bodies.\*** The course also provides a selection of literature that supports a critical and theoretical comprehension of dance making and performing. Individual and group composition assignments, assigned readings, and participatory exercises will be the primary vehicles for learning.

### **Learning Objectives**

In this course, students will:

- Craft and refine an accessible, meaningful, and personalized statement of intent relative to their work in choreography and/or performance
- Regularly share original work, and participate in discussion relevant to the work of their peers
- Produce a written statement that reflects their creative evolution in dialogue with course exercises and course materials
- Produce and embodied statement that encapsulates and expresses the meaningful skills in choreography and performance attained over the course of the semester

### **Course Policies**

Required Materials: Recommended readings are provided for self-directed study. We will reference these in our discussion sessions (one reading required per two-week module), and they will be necessary for your Mid-Semester Written Reflection, but no specific reading is mandatory. Most of these 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.

**Clothing:** Any clothing that does not restrict the student's range of movement is acceptable. Shoes are not permitted on marley flooring.

**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, no internet browsing, 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.

**Names and Pronouns:** Students are entitled to be addressed by the correct names and pronouns, even if these differ from the ones under which they are enrolled. As a class, we will do our utmost to refer to each other respectfully at all times. Students are entitled to request new modes of address at any point.

**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\***

- brown, adrienne maree. 2017. *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. AK Press.
- Buckwalter, Melinda. 2010. *Composing While Dancing: An Improviser's Companion*. U. of Wisconsin Press.
- Davenport, Donna. 2017. "Dance Is Academic," *Journal of Dance Education* 17:1, 34-36.
- Dumit, Joe. 2020. "Notes Toward Critical Ethnographic Scores: Anthropology and Improvisation Training in a Breached World." In *Between Matter and Method: Encounters in Anthropology and Art* (Gretchen Bakke and Marina Peterson, eds.). London: Routledge.
- Foster, Susan Leigh. 2002. *Dances that describe themselves: the improvised choreography of Richard Bull*. Wesleyan U. Press.
- Gere, David. 2003. *Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader*. Wesleyan U. Press.
- Goldman, Danielle. 2021. "A Radically Unfinished Dance: Contact Improvisation in a Time of Social Distance." *TDR* 65:1, 62-78.
- Kloppenber, Annie. 2010. "Improvisation in Process: 'Post-Control' Choreography," *Dance Chronicle* 33:2, 180-207.
- Morris, Tracie & Ralph Lemon. 2000. *Geography: art/race/exile*. Wesleyan U. Press; U. Press of New England.
- Landau, Tina, & Bogart, Anne. 2004. *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*. Theatre Communications Group.
- Lycouris, Sophia, Sue Oliver & Vicky Karkou (eds.). 2017. *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Wellbeing*. Oxford University Press.
- Schuh, Anne. 2019. "Having a Personal (Performance) Practice: Dance Artists' Everyday Work, Support, and Form," *Dance Research Journal* 51:1, 79-94.
- Carolee Schneemann et. al. 2012. "Belief." *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 34:1, 15-33.

\*Subject to change; see Blackboard Modules for most updated, week-to-week bibliographies

## Web resources/scores (this list will be continuously expanding!)

<http://www.ilandart.org/category/news/>  
<https://thenapministry.wordpress.com>  
<https://movementresearch.org/publications/critical-correspondence>  
<http://scores.motionbank.org>  
<https://1000scores.com>  
<https://imaginedtheatres.com>  
<https://www.thing.net/~grist/ld/fluxusworkbook.pdf>  
Forsythe, Improvisation Technologies: <https://vimeo.com/2904371>

## Assignments/Modes of Assessment

In this course, we begin from the premise that each student *wants* to be present, *wants* to participate, and *wants* to grow. Therefore, assignments will be approached as opportunities for sharing and the promulgation of dialogue, not as benchmarks for evaluating information retention or achievement.

Mid-Semester Written Reflection: Students will produce a piece of writing (analytical, poetic, hybrid, etc.) of any length that expresses their current evolution relative to course materials and exercises. Students must demonstrate familiarity/engagement with at least one course reading or web resource. Full rubric to be distributed separately. **Due 2/28, 11:59pm.**

Final Embodied Reflection: Students will produce a live performance (solo or group) of any length that expresses their most pressing interests relative to course materials and exercises. Can be set or improvised. Accompanied by a written score or not. Full rubric to be distributed separately. **Due week 15, schedule TBA.**

Participation in Sharing/Dance-backs/Discussion Sessions: All students will receive full credit for participation in these sessions unless notified in writing (via email, feedback provided) by the professor. **Expected preparation for discussion sessions includes familiarity with at least one course reading or web resource.** Two absences permitted (no questions asked); beyond that, each absence will constitute a 10% deduction from the overall participation grade.

Choreographic Affirmation (Initial): Students will craft a personal statement of any length that gets to the heart of why they desire to create and perform embodied work. What drives you? What are you passionate about? Why does the world NEED your work? At this point, the affirmation can be provisional: "I want to..." rather than "I already do..." Full rubric to be distributed separately. **Due 2/3, 11:59pm.**

Choreographic Affirmation (Revision): Students will revise (or rewrite) their personal statements from Week 4. Now... What drives you? What are you passionate about? Why does the world NEED your work? At this point, the affirmation should be assertive: "My creative practice is/does..." rather than "I want to be/do..." Full rubric to be distributed separately. **Due 4/28, 11:59pm.**

## Assignment Submission

Written assignments to be submitted via Turnitin on the course Blackboard page. Participation and embodied reflection to be evaluated in-person (or via recording). If a student cannot attend on the due date for the embodied reflection, they should notify the professor at least two weeks in advance. Accommodations cannot be guaranteed within two weeks of the due date. Each day of late submission of written assignments will take three points off those allotted for the assignment.

## Grading

Mid-semester Written Reflection	25%
Final Embodied Reflection	25%
Participation in Sharing/Dance-backs/Discussion Sessions	10%
Initial Choreographic Affirmation	20%
Revised Choreographic Affirmation	20%

A | 95-100 points  
A- | 91-94 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 | 64-66 points  
D- | 61-63 points  
F | 60 or below

## **Grading Timeline**

Assignment grades will be posted to Grade Center two weeks after submission.

## **Course Schedule: A Daily Breakdown**

Each meeting will open with a 5-10 minute “directed research” practice. The purpose of these is to access each student’s autonomy as concerns the process of readying the body to dance. We will move together in silence (although headphones are permitted!), doing whatever it is we need to arrive in the moment. Here is an example of the flow for a two-week module (three-week modules will have expanded periods for exercises, working periods, and sharing):

Day One (M): Warm-up and/or group exercises introducing core concepts of module

Day Two (W): Additional Exercises and/or Supervised working periods

Day Three (M): Supervised working periods and/or Sharing and Dance-backs

Day Four (W): Sharing/Discussion Session

## **Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

### **WEEK 1-3:**

Making Together (strategies for ensemble-generated composition)

Viewpoints, Choreographic Improvisation, Contact Improvisation, Walking Dances, etc.

### **WEEK 4-5:**

Making Alone (strategies for movement invention and development, can be solo or group)

Authentic Movement, Movement Invention, From Improvisation to “Set” Material

### **WEEK 6-7:**

Dancing “to” the Music...or not!

Music Visualization, Sound-Guided Improvisation, Expanding the Palette

### **WEEK 8:**

Midterm Review, Reflection, and Check-In

**\*Mid-Semester Written Reflection Due 2.28**

### **WEEK 9-11:**

Working with Scores

### **WEEK 12-14:**

Narrative/Dramaturgy, Character Development, World-Building, Development of Final Reflections

### **WEEK 15:**

Course Wrap-Up, Sharing Final Embodied Reflection

## KSOD Policies

### Mental and Physical Health at Kaufman

Student 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.

Dr. Greco: [Kelly.Greco@med.usc.edu](mailto:Kelly.Greco@med.usc.edu)

Marisa Hentis: [Hentis@usc.edu](mailto:Hentis@usc.edu)

### Music Rights Agreements

The University of Southern California maintains blanket licensing agreements for music with the following organizations: American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), Society of European Stage Authors and Composers (SESAC), and Global Music Rights (GMR). This gives the University, and its affiliate organizations, the ability to play music in specific situations ON THE CAMPUS without paying royalties to the artist. These situations include live performance, background and house music in performing arts spaces and hospitality venues, on the student radio station, and on the USC.edu domain. When choosing music for student choreography and performance, it is important to remember to stick within the repertory of these rights granting organizations or within the public domain (see below). Please be aware, that though USC does pay for these licensing, it ONLY covers live performance and the other criteria listed above when on the campus and usage by USC and its affiliates. This DOES NOT protect the student when posting their work on websites that monetize content, including social media and YouTube, or for use for self-promotion and public facing content. This is considered out of the bounds of the agreement and would require the student to enter into an agreement with the artist and their representation. In order to check if a piece of music you would like to use is within the grounds of the USC agreements, please refer to the online catalogs that the rights granting organizations provide:

ASCAP: <https://www.ascap.com/repertory>

BMI: <https://repertoire.bmi.com>

SESAC: <https://www.sesac.com/#!/repertory/search>

GMR: <https://globalmusicrights.com/search>

Additionally, should you have any questions or need help to determine if a piece of music falls within the bounds of these agreements, please feel free to reach out to the Kaufman Production Coordinator ([saccoman@usc.edu](mailto:saccoman@usc.edu)).

### Public Domain

In the United States, artists or their trusts/organizations hold copyrights on work created for the life of the author plus seventy years. Beyond this, the creator's repertoire is considered in the public domain and does not require licensure to use. For example, some bodies of work that fall within the public domain are: the choreography of Marius Petipa, the music of Camille Saint-Saens, and the operas of Giuseppe Verdi. Please be aware that though this does mean the work itself is in the public domain, it may not specifically mean that the performance and/or recording is as well. If there is a band/orchestra/performer listed, (this may not always be the case) please make sure that they and/or their repertoire are represented by one of the rights granting organizations listed above. Again, should you have questions or need assistance, please feel free to reach out to the Production Coordinator.

### 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).

# USC Policies and Services

## 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:

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.