

USC Kaufman

Glorya Kaufman School of Dance

Course Title DANC 181a: Contemporary A

Section: 22395

Units: 2

Term: Fall 23

Day: Friday

Time: 10-11:50am

Location: KDC 107

Instructor: Betsy Struxness

Office: KDC Faculty Lounge

Office Hours: Friday 9-10am, 12-1pm

Contact Info: struxnes@usc.edu, 917-685-8383, Reply within 48 hours.

Catalog Description

An introduction to methods developed from modern and post-modern dance techniques, including the study of the rebellious, individualistic, and democratic nature of dance in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce modern dance fundamentals at a beginning level. Classroom exercises and materials will be informed by historical pioneers of modern dance as well as more contemporary choreographers and practitioners. Exercises will build strength, flexibility, and stamina, as well as sharpen the student's awareness of body, movement and physical environment. Particular attention will be paid to: integration vs. autonomy, clarity, relationship(s) to gravity, precision, focus, phrasing, the development of healthy range, and the purposeful application of effort. Somatic approaches will be called upon to enrich the experience of conscious embodiment. Improvisational and compositional strategies will be integrated to further expand notions of "technique."

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for this course are enunciated below and the overall objective is to give the student an understanding of the foundations of modern dance technique.

Students will:

- Acquire bodily and conceptual understanding of the basics of modern dance technique
- Develop an understanding of the evolution of modern dance technique
- Develop an understanding of the basic tenets of choreography, improvisation, and performance
- Execute a written response paper reflecting on achievements and challenges in the class
- Execute a written analysis of a USC Kaufman BFA student performance

Prerequisite(s)

There are no prerequisites for this course. This is a beginner course.

Recommended Preparation

Proper Attire for Technique Class

No shoes required. Socks may be worn for warming up, but should be removed for phrase work. Any clothing that does not restrict the student's range of movement (or the instructor's ability to observe movement) is acceptable; along these lines, long pants are strongly suggested to facilitate floor work.

Required Materials, Readings, Viewings, Clothing

Required Viewings: USC Kaufman Performance

<https://kaufman.usc.edu/performances-2/>

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Description and Assessment of Assignments

Active participation in all exercises, discussion, and coursework is crucial. In particular, students are expected to be prepared to comment on questions and classwork; commentary will be integrated into our moving practice. With regard to physical exercises, no unexcused sitting out; likewise, no sitting out without appropriate observation and journaling. Students should be respectful of the instructor, fellow classmates, and themselves at all times. No food or drinks (other than water), no gum, and absolutely no cell phones or other devices (even on water breaks).

Mid-Term Evaluation (Oct 6)

In class observation and evaluation on core skills and prepared movement phrases.

Response Paper (Oct 27)

Students will write a thoughtful, detailed reflection on their experience of the course – regarding what happens within class time, as well as how dance practice might affect activities or physical awareness outside of class. You may address challenges, areas of improvement, questions, and insights. You may relate our work in the class to experiences that you've had prior, but please also reflect on how course material might challenge you to think about aspects of movement/performance/embodiment in new ways.

Elective Experience (Nov 17 evening event)

USC students from a wide range of majors celebrate what they've learned during their fall dance elective courses, including Hip Hop, Bollywood, and more. Students of this course will participate.

Dance Analysis Paper Final (Dec 8)

Students will write a short paper offering original commentary on the content and format of a live dance performance of USC Kaufman BFA Students in the course of the semester. You will identify moments that parallel classwork, and moments that correlate with discussions had on body movement. Make sure to think about and comment on the kind of maintenance a dancer might need after seeing the performance. Be sure to include comparisons to your experience during Elective Experience. A more in-depth rubric for the paper will be posted on the course Blackboard page.

<https://kaufman.usc.edu/performances-2/>

Mandatory for all written assignments: 2-3 pages, Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, default character spacing, proper citations. Papers should be submitted via Blackboard by midnight (end of the day) on the due date. Students are not permitted to share documents with the professor via communal drives such as Google. No extensions will be granted; see individual rubrics (posted to course Blackboard page) for more information. No proof of attendance needed for the Dance Analysis paper.

Mid-Term and Final

During exam sessions, students will be evaluated on small-group performances of previously practiced technical exercises, short phrases, and improvisational structures and/or asked to submit a summation paper. No full or partial make-up exams will be offered.

Mid-Term Evaluation: In class, Oct 6

Final Response Paper: Dec 8

Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Embodied Practice	100	15
Mid-Term Exam	100	20
Response Paper	100	25
Elective Experience	100	15
Dance Analysis Paper Final	100	25
TOTAL	600	100

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale.

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy and Late Assignments

Assignments are to be submitted on the due dates as described in the weekly breakdown of course work. Assignments must be provided electronically to the instructor by class start time on the date due. Late assignments will automatically be deducted 5 points, and 5 points every (school) day it's late.

Assignment Rubrics

Rubrics will be located on Blackboard.

Grading Timeline

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

Late work

Each day of late submission will take three points off those allotted for each assignment.

Grading Dispute Note

I want to make sure that your grades reflect your performance. If you feel there is an error in the grading, please let me know. To dispute a grade, you must request a review by email no sooner than one week and no later than two weeks from the date the grade was published on Blackboard. In the email you must identify yourself and the assignment you are questioning. You must provide a specific argument for the grade change, identifying the row(s) in the rubric where you feel you were mis-scored.

Course Expectations

The student is expected to do the following:

- Be on time for class
- Be prepared for class with proper attire
- Engage in class activity and discussion
- Be open to receiving corrections and adjustments
- Communicate any and all attendance issues BEFORE the class in question.

Attendance, Tardiness and Absences:

Attendance is mandatory. There will be two excused (communicated before class) absences allowed. NO doctors' notes are necessary or accepted. NO make-up classes are allowed. Tardiness is not appreciated. The full course time is necessary to complete course training, and tardiness creates a significant disruption to the course work of the other students. Tardiness of 20 minutes or more will result in two points deducted from Embodied Practice. Because attendance is important to this course, each unexcused absence (no communication or communication after the fact) will count for a five points deduction from Embodied Practice.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

AI-Generated Tool Usage - not permitted

Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Course Evaluations

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. The process and intent of the end-of-semester evaluation should be provided.

Please check your USC email at least once every 24-hours.

Course schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Activities	Readings Due	Important Dates & Events
Week 1 Aug 25	Intro to the course & review of the syllabus, core skills & vocabulary, basic warm-up exercise, and initial phrases		
Week 2 Sept 1	Intro to floor work, warm up and phrase expansion		
Week 3 Sept 8	Refinement of core skills, building upon phrase materials		
Week 4 Sept 15	Thinking in circles and refining lines, isolation work in progressions		
Week 5 Sept 22	Analyzing movement form from art, refinement of core skills, build on phrase material		
Week 6 Sept 29	Preparation for Midterm Evaluation		
Week 7 Oct 6	Midterm Evaluation		Midterm Evaluation
Week 8 Oct 13 Fall Break	Fall Break - No Class		
Week 9 Oct 20	Intro to Improvisation, and choreographic improvisation		
Week 10 Oct 27	Intermediate warm-up and phrase materials		Response Paper

Week 11 Nov 3	Intermediate warm-up and phrase materials, Preparation for Elective Experience		
Week 12 Nov 10	Preparation for Elective Experience		
Week 13 Nov 17	Preparation for Elective Experience		Elective Experience - Part of Final
Week 14 Nov 24 Thanksgiving			
Week 15 Dec 1			
Week 16 Dec 8 Final			Dance Analysis Paper Final

KSOD Policies

Health and Wellness at Kaufman – see last pages of Syllabus for more information
 Health and Wellbeing is crucial to being a performing artist. We are committed at USC Kaufman to assisting our students exceed their potential. If you have a wellness appointment (i.e physician, physical therapy, psychology/counseling, dietetics, etc.) we ask that you attempt to schedule your appointments around class schedules. If your appointment time can only be scheduled during class time, this is an excused absence. Please inform the course coordinator that you have a wellness appointment prior to the class and CC your advisor and/or Dr. Hentis to the email. You do not need to clarify the type of medical appointment.

Student Health & Wellness Appointments

Free and confidential mental health treatments are available for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. Students can make an appointment with a licensed clinical psychologist. Please see the student health website for more resources.

Counseling and Mental Health Services

Student Health Main: (213) 740-9355 (WELL) on call 24/7
 Direct: 213-740-9788

Free physical therapy consultations are available for BFA students only. Students can make individual appointments for physical therapy with Dr. Marisa Hentis through the link tree or walk-in to the fitness zone and training room on the mezzanine level of KDC. All other Kaufman students may also receive physical therapy services at Engemann Student Health. Please reach out to Dr. Hentis for more information.

Dr. Marisa Hentis: Physical Therapy
Email: Marisa.Hentis@med.usc.edu
Direct: 847-809-7256

Free nutritional and dietary consultations are available for students. Students can make individual appointments through MySHR.

Michelle Katz, RD: Dietetics
Email: michelle.katz@med.usc.edu
Phone: (213) 740-9355 (WELL)

Student Basic Needs

USC Student Basic Needs provides support to students facing food insecurity, housing insecurity and financial insecurity. While their Trojan Food Pantry is temporarily closed, the department distributes grocery bags to students who do not have a meal plan; they also partner with World Central Kitchen to provide free restaurant-prepared meals. They also connect students to suitable housing or shelter in Los Angeles. Finally, they work with USC Financial Aid to provide one-time supplemental funding for students in sudden financial distress due to unforeseen circumstances. Visit <https://studentbasicneeds.usc.edu/> for more information.

Dance majors in need are encouraged to contact their academic advisor, who can assist them with accessing these and other resources that may be available through USC Kaufman.

Names and Pronouns [This is language from Michael Gorse Supervisor at the USC LGBTQ Center.]

In our classroom and at USC, every student has the right to be respected and referred to by their name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity. Pronouns are words we use in place of names (e.g., he/she/they/ze), and for some people, they are an inherent piece of their identity. At any point through the course, please feel free to share with me if you would like me (and your classmates) to address you in a different way. I will not tolerate misgendering and disrespect of people's names and pronouns in our classroom.

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.

“Call-In” Agreement

We as Kaufman faculty support conversations surrounding racial justice and encourage fostering a culture of calling people IN to the conversation as opposed to calling people out.

Statement on Physical Contact

As an embodied art form, dancing is a physical and an emotional act. In the process of studying dance, students often experience physical contact with their instructors and peers. Faculty members may use touch to provide proprioceptive and kinesthetic feedback to students; they may use touch to correct alignment, improve technique, and promote healthier movement practices. In some classes, particularly those involving partnering, students’ will experience physical contact with their peers. As developing artists experimenting with modes of expression, students may also experience a variety of emotions in the classroom. As such, it is imperative that the studio-classroom be a safe, inclusive, and respectful space for all students and faculty. Open and honest communication and respectful and considerate interactions are always expected and are a fundamental requirement of studying in the USC Kaufman School of Dance. Unless otherwise articulated to a faculty member or peer, consent to discipline-specific and appropriate touching is assumed. Students always have the right to revoke that consent and should express any discomfort they feel in the classroom to the faculty instructor or Vice Dean immediately. USC Kaufman seeks to nurture compassionate artists who respect the dignity, humanity, and personal embodied experience of all individuals.

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).

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).

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

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

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

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

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

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

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

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (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: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.