

Course Title: DANC181b Contemporary Dance

Section: 22398R

Prerequisite: DANC181a Contemporary Dance

Units: 2 (max 4)

Term: Fall 2023

Day: Tuesday

Time: 5:30-7:20

Location: KDC 106

Instructor: Holley Farmer

Office: KDC 231

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:15-5:15

Contact Info: holleyfa@usc.edu

Catalogue Description:

Continued study in the fusion of modern, post-modern dance and classical ballet techniques encompassing the study of the democratic nature of dance and choreographic composition in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Instructor Course Description:

This course will teach the physical practice of contemporary modern dance technique. It is designed to develop the dancer's physical and artistic range using tools provided by the Merce Cunningham Technique©

- Cunningham technique develops strength and precision, enabling the dancer to experience the body holistically, even while body parts may move independently of each other.
- The technique creates overall spatial awareness for the dancer, so that various spatial orientations may be considered "front," and multiple changes of direction frequently occur within a phrase.
- In Merce Cunningham's choreography, the music and dance co-exist in time, but don't reliably share meter or tempo. This requires the dancer to learn the internal scores of dance phrases, developing specific musical and time-based sensitivity.

"Technique is the disciplining of one's energies through physical action in order to free that energy at any desired instant in its highest possible physical and spiritual form. For the disciplined energy of a dancer is the life-energy magnified and focused for whatever brief fraction of time it lasts. . ."

- Merce Cunningham, *The Function of a Technique for Dance*

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, the student will:

1. Demonstrate increased technical understanding of physical alignment, strength, coordination, and control using the tools of the Cunningham established class progression.
2. Demonstrate increased awareness of the relationship between movement in space and time, as it is used in this dance form, through the performance of selected Cunningham phrases.
3. Demonstrate increased skill in the analysis of live and/or recorded dance performances in relationship to contemporary performance through discussions and written work.

Description of Assignments and Assessment:

Each Assignment in this course is related directly to our learning objectives listed above.

- A **Midterm** consisting of a self-evaluation after an in-class demonstration of skills learned at this point in the class. (learning objectives #1,3) Please see Blackboard for description of in person examination protocol and writing assignment prompt. (30% of grade value)
- Your **personal attendance at a live concert dance performance**, (10% of grade value) followed by a two-page response paper (15% of grade value) (learning objective #3). Please see Blackboard for ticket documentation instructions and writing assignment prompt.
- A **culminating in-class workshop and review, Nov 28th**, consisting of the performance of Cunningham derived dance phrases. (learning objective #2) (If student is absent, they will be unable to participate in the Final assignment due Dec 12th.)
- A **Final** consisting of a written self-evaluation due during Finals week, Dec 12th by 6:30pm. (learning objectives #1,2,3) Please see Blackboard for writing prompt. (30% of grade value)
- Your consistent **participation** in class. Throughout the entire semester your participation will be assessed. This will culminate on the last day of instruction, November 28. Please see Blackboard for participation assessment rubric. (15% of grade value)

Assignments	Points	% of Grade
Midterm	30	30%
Performance attendance	10	10%
Written analysis	15	15%
Final	30	30%
Participation	15	15%
TOTAL	100	100%

Course schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	
Week 1	Introduction to Cunningham Principals	
Week 2	Explorations in Time	
Week 3	Examination of technology's effects on Cunningham Technique	
Week 4	From set exercises in center to application of movement principals across the floor	
Week 5	Introduction to repertory phrases	
Week 6	Selected repertory phrases for midterm study	
Week 7	Selected repertory phrases for midterm study	
Week 8	MIDTERM	
Week 9	Movement explorations in time and space	
Week 10	Movement explorations in time and space	
Week 11	Principals of seeing and being seen in performance	
Week 12	Creating performance content relying on Cunningham's concept of "Events"	
Week 13	Preparation for final workshop and review	

Week 14	Preparation for final workshop and review + in class performance	
Week 15	Final workshop and review + in class performance (potential contribution to The Elective Experience?)	
Final	Due Dec 12 by 6:30pm	

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to notify me within 48 hours of the missed class.

- 1 absence will be excused for each day the class meets per week.
- 1 percentage point deducted from the total course grade for each additional absence.

Assignment Submission Policy:

Please submit all assignments on Blackboard

Late Submission:

Each day an assignment is late, three points will be deducted.

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale. 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

Classroom norms

Respect your peers as you want to be respected. Provide kind attention. Learn from each other and teach each other. Please let me know if there's something you need to enhance your learning experience. We can make it happen.

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](#).

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).

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.

Names and Pronouns

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 during this 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.

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)

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

This syllabus is subject to change.