

Fall 2023

4 units

Day: T/TH

Time: 2-3:40pm

Location: KDC 235

Instructor: Alison D'Amato

Office: KDC 206

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 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
- 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) one required readings, viewings, and lecture slides. 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 internet browsing, 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 week in advance in order to make any necessary arrangements. You will be given an opportunity to make up missed work if necessary.

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](#), p. 13). Distribution/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](#), p. 13).

Recommended Readings

See Blackboard Modules for updated, week-to-week bibliographies.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Discussion Leaders: For most course meetings, two 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. Rubric to be distributed separately.

Research Statement: Before writing the two response papers, students will produce a brief statement of interest (1-3 sentences). This should indicate where a research process might take you, not where you would arrive. Thus, it is not an argument/thesis, but a point of departure. To be accompanied by 3 properly cited *scholarly* sources. Full rubric to be distributed separately. **Due September 15.**

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 engagement with course materials.

Mid-Term: In class, October 5
Final: Thursday, December 7 (2-4pm)

Response Papers: The two response papers will address significant choreographers/choreographic works/techniques from *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* perspectives. Extrinsic papers (**due 10/27**) will discuss the historical, cultural, or political – NOT aesthetic - context surrounding artists/works/techniques. For intrinsic papers (**due 12/1**) the student might perform a “close reading” of a specific dance, address the biographical events shaping an artist's life, discuss the importance of technical vocabularies, OR address the relationship of a work to prevailing aesthetic frameworks (Romanticism, modernism, etc.). Topics are determined by the student in consultation with the professor. 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.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written

permission from the instructor(s). Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, 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. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity 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](#). Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

AI Generators: In this course, I encourage you to use artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programs to help you with assignments that indicate the permitted use of AI. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. To adhere to our university values, you must cite any AI-generated material (e.g., text, images, etc.) included or referenced in your work and provide the prompts used to generate the content. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Please review the instructions in each assignment for more details on how and when to use AI Generators for your submissions.

Grading Rubric and Scale

Discussion Leader	10%
Research Statement	10%
Mid-Term Exam	15%
Final Exam	15%
Response Papers	25% each

A 95-100 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
B+ 88-90 points	C+ 78-80 points	D+ 67-70 points	F 60 or below

Weekly Schedule

	Topic	Due Dates/In-class Activities
Week 1 August 22 & 24	Introduction to Dance History, Roots of Western Concert Dance, What is “the West?” Inventing Choreography	Navigating Course Materials Community Agreements Practice: Genealogical Analysis
Week 2 August 29 & 31	Intro to Romanticism Rise of the Ballerina & “Disappearance” of the Male Dancer	
Week 3 September 5 & 7	Ballets Russes Constructing the Classics	Explore <i>Jacob’s Pillow Interactive: Rites of Spring</i> Javier Garibay (USC Libraries), Guest Speaker
Week 4 September 12 & 14	Balanchine, the NYCB & Modernism Birth of the “Modern” Dance	Research Statement due: 9/15

Week 5 September 19 & 21	Birth of the “Modern” Dance (continued): Female Soloists and German Developments	
Week 6 September 26 & 28	The Graham Legacy	
Week 7 October 3 & 5	MIDTERM	Midterm Review: 10/3 Exam: 10/5
Week 8 October 10	Dance and Global Conflict in the 1930s	
Week 9 October 17 & 19	African American Representation in the 30s & 40s African Diasporic Forms in the West: Jazz, Tap & Broadway	
Week 10 October 24 & 26	West Coast Histories	Dance in the USC Special Collections Response Paper 1 due: 10/27
Week 11 October 31 & November 2	Cunningham and “Post-modernism” (“Postmodernism”?)	Exploring Cunningham’s <i>Dance Capsules</i>
Week 12 November 7 & 9	Saying ‘Yes’ to Spectacle: Punk Postmodernism and the Revival of European <i>Tanztheater</i>	
Week 13 November 14 & 16	What Constitutes Virtuosity in the 21 st Century?	
Week 14 November 21	What Constitutes “Contemporary?” & Intercultural Collaboration	
Week 15 November 28 & 30	Concept Dance Research Paper Dialogue/Course Review and Wrap-Up	Response Paper 2 due: 12/1

University Support Systems and General Info

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).

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.

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.

[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.