

Fall 2024

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 the 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 centrality of African diasporic movement idioms to American modern dance, 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 and ("counter-histories") are constructed and how key concepts, such as "choreography," "technique," and "virtuosity" continue to evolve. 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:

- Explore history and counter-history as modes of engaging with past, present, and future
- Practice research skills using the USC Libraries
- Effectively prepare for and lead an inclusive class discussion through the explication of texts
- 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

Course Policies

Readings and Viewings:

Each week, students will encounter (via Brightspace) a mix of 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. Community agreements, detailing further expectations for professor and students, will be posted on Brightspace.

Attendance Policy:

Two absences will be excused, no questions asked (there is no need to email the professor). Additional absences will incur one-point deductions from the total grade. Students are considered late and will not be able to participate in class if they are 10+ minutes late to class. Being tardy three times will count as an absence. Reasons for additional exceptions include religious holidays, illness quarantine, family emergencies, medical circumstances. Please email the instructor regarding these eventualities.

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, and even if they evolve over the course of a semester. 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 Brightspace 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. Students will work individually, identifying one quote from an assigned reading to explicate. [*To explicate: to explain, analyze, place in context, interpret.*] Good choices for this might be expressions of a reading's main idea, particularly interesting moments, particularly irritating moments, or particularly confusing moments. Good choices for this might also be quotes that speak in an interesting way to the theme of the week or the class as a whole. Quotes, along with the student's 2-3 sentence explication, must be submitted to Brightspace by 5pm the day before class meets. Grading rubric to be distributed separately.

Asynchronous Research Activities: Approximately three times during the semester, in-person class sessions will be replaced by asynchronous activities designed to facilitate the development of research skills. These may include a physical exploration of library resources, team projects, or other activities. Please see Brightspace for activity descriptions and assessment rubrics.

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: October 8

Final: Thursday, December 12

Response Papers: Two response paper prompts will be developed collectively within the first week of the class. Prompts will be grounded in an overarching discussion of history versus counter-history, the historian's positionality, the presence of the body in research and writing, and dance as an engine of history and culture. Students may address a historical figure, historical moment, choreographic product, aesthetic framework, or technical framework of their choosing. 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. **Due 11/1 and 12/6**. Approximately 4 pages in length, double spaced. Written assignments will be submitted via Brightspace by 11:59pm 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 the extent that they serve your research and writing process*. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; by and large, they are not yet prepared to produce text that will meet 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%
Asynchronous Research Activities	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	Holidays/Events/Deliverables/In-class Activities
Week 1 August 27 & 29	History and Counter-History; Roots of Western Concert Dance (What is “the West?”)	Navigating Course Materials Community Agreements
Week 2 September 3 & 5	Intro to Romanticism; Rise of the Ballerina & “Disappearance” of the Male Dancer	
Week 3 September 10 & 12	Ballets Russes Constructing the Classics	
Week 4 September 17 & 19	Balanchine, the NYCB & Modernism	9/17: Asynchronous Activity

	Birth of the “Modern” Dance	
Week 5 September 24 & 26	Birth of the “Modern” Dance (continued): Female Soloists and German Developments	9/26: Asynchronous Activity
Week 6 October 1 & 3	The Graham Legacy; Midterm Review	10/3: Rosh Hashanah
Week 7 October 8	Midterm	10/8: Midterm Exam 10/10: Fall Break
Week 8 October 15 & 17	Black Self-Representation; Africanist Foundations	
Week 9 October 22 & 24	West Coast Histories	
Week 10 October 29 & 31	Cunningham and “Post-modernism” (“Postmodernism”?)	11/1: Response Paper Due
Week 11 November 5 & 7	Cunningham and “Post-modernism” (“Postmodernism”?)	11/5: Election Day
Week 12 November 12 & 14	What Constitutes “Virtuosity” in the 21 st Century?	11/14: Asynchronous Activity
Week 13 November 19 & 21	What Constitutes “Contemporary?” in the 21 st Century?	
Week 14 November 26	Syncretism, Collaboration, and Globalization	11/28: Thanksgiving
Week 15 December 3 & 5	Research Paper Dialogue/Course Review and Wrap-Up	12/6: Response Paper Due

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.