

USC Kaufman

Glorya Kaufman School of Dance

Course Title DANC 181A Contemporary Dance**Section:** 22394**Units:** 2**Term:** Spring 2025**Day:** Tuesdays**Time:** 4:00pm-5:50pm**Location:** KDC 220**Instructor:** Kelly Alvarez**Office:** KDC**Office Hours:** By appointment**Contact:** kelly.alvarez@usc.edu**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.

Prerequisite(s): none**Course Notes:** Letter grade, pass/no pass**Course Description**

This is a movement-based course appropriate for students of all abilities. No prior dance experience is required. Students can expect to learn fundamentals of contemporary dance and develop a deeper mind/body awareness, spatial awareness, musicality, and physical strength and flexibility. Students can develop and foster an appreciation of contemporary dance as an art form and grow to make connections between dance and other areas of study and/or disciplines. Classroom exercises and materials will be informed by historical pioneers of modern dance as well as more contemporary choreographers and practitioners. Movement exploration, improvisation, and basic composition will be incorporated as integral components of the contemporary dance form and culture.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A) Acquire bodily and conceptual understanding of the basics of modern and contemporary dance forms.
- B) Develop a basic understanding of the evolution of modern and contemporary dance forms.
- C) Develop a basic understanding of the tenets of choreography, improvisation, and performance.
- D) Execute written journal entries reflecting on achievements and challenges in the class.
- E) Execute an objective and informed written analysis of a USC Kaufman performance.

Required Materials

There are no required textbooks for this course. Supplemental readings and resources will be available on Brightspace.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

There will be group projects, practical assessments, written assignments, quizzes, a midterm, and a final exam. ***See Brightspace for all rubrics and the most current information.**

IN-CLASS WORK (40%)

The in-class work points are calculated two times during the semester; half at mid-term (for weeks 1-8), and half toward the end of the term (for weeks 9-16). Your in-class work is vital to your progress and success in this course. Dance is a movement-based embodied practice. It requires the student to take agency in their own work, have a desire to learn and improve, and show up consistently with good work ethic. In this course you will be evaluated on:

- (20 points) Accountability: Attendance & Communication
- (5 points each for the following): Consistency & progress, Participation & practice, Application of Feedback, Sequencing/knowing the phrases

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (15%)

Self-Reflection/ Journal (3 entries x 3 points each = 9 points)

Please see required prompts for each journal entry on Brightspace.

Examples of prompts that may be asked of you might include:

- Where was I at the beginning of the semester compared to now?
- Did I have any fears, questions, or uncertainty at the start of the term?
- Is there anything particularly memorable, exciting, or inspirational about the class?
- Are there any challenges or triumphs I would like to discuss?
- What are my goals for the remainder of the semester?

Performance Observation Paper (6 points)

You will be required to attend a live dance performance and write a reflection of ONE piece from the show. A list of upcoming performances will be provided to you via Brightspace and email. Please visit <https://kaufman.usc.edu/performances-2/> for all Kaufman performances this semester. If you have a different performance in mind you would like to write about, please email the Professor for approval. Please type using 12pt font, double-space, and use 1-inch margins (no larger). Your paper should be 1 ½ to 2 pages in length. Include your name, course, and date in the top right corner and SINGLE-SPACE this info. Be sure to spell check and proofread your paper for grammar and sentence structure. Keep in mind that titles of longer works or names of concerts are written in *italics*. Names of individual pieces or shorter works are written in **"quotations."**

Choose ONE piece to write about only! **Identify the title of the piece, the choreographer(s), and music credits.** This is an OBJECTIVE observation of elements you can identify and analyze within the piece (ie: not whether you "liked" or "disliked" the piece). You can address elements such as the relationship of the dancers to one another, costuming or performance site, mood or theme of the piece, movements you recognize, memorable moments, etc. Use appropriate terminology studied in class. Submit on Brightspace in .pdf or word format. NO Google Doc links. *I recommend bringing a pen and paper to the show. Videos and cel phone usage are generally not allowed. Write your paper soon after attending the concert. You can turn it in any time. The deadline to submit, however, is May 13th by 6:30pm.

GROUP PROJECT (8%)

Working collaboratively with a group, you will create a presentation on one of the dance figures we have studied. Research the choreographer/dance figure. Each student in the group must provide one source. As a group, there must be at least one video source and one written source. Create a references page in MLA format and submit on Brightspace.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_works_cited_page_basic_format.html (Links to an external site.)

As a group, work on a creative presentation (such as a lecture demonstration) of that figure's style, history, and contribution to the dance world, etc. There **must** be some element of live dancing in your presentation, and you must also include the rest of the class in some way. You may provide handouts or include other supportive elements to your presentation. Ask the Professor for assistance with video equipment or duplication. The presentation should be approximately 15 minutes in length.

QUIZZES (3 quizzes, 4 points each = 12%)

There will be three in-class quizzes throughout the term; two written and one practical. Written quizzes will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and fill in the blank. The Professor will provide a hard copy of written quizzes. The practical quiz will consist of basic movement exercises practiced in class.

MIDTERM (10%) - TUESDAY, 3/4

The midterm is an in-class practical exam, during which you will demonstrate phrases/sequences alongside your classmates in small groups. Please arrive looking professional. All-black attire is preferred.

FINAL EXAM (15%) – 4/29 & 5/13

The final exam will consist of two parts; a practical portion (8 points, in class 4/29) and an online written portion (7 points, due 5/13). The written final will be in the same format as the quizzes, except online via Blackboard. For the practical portion, worth 8 points, you will perform a longer phrase alongside your classmates in small groups. Please arrive looking professional. All-black attire preferred.

EXTRA CREDIT

There will be an opportunity for extra credit at the end of the term, worth up to 5 points. Please check Brightspace for details.

Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
In-Class Work	40	40%
Written Assignments -3x self-reflection/journal, 3pts ea -Pilates Interest Paper, 6pts	15	15%
Group Project	8	8%
Quizzes (3 x 4 pts ea)	12	12%
Midterm Exam	10	10%
Final Exam	15	15%
TOTAL	100	100%

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

Assignment Submission

Deliverable assignments must be submitted via Brightspace (.pdf or word). All submissions are due by 11:59pm on the due date, unless otherwise noted. No Google Doc links, please.

Assignment Rubrics

All assignment rubrics are posted on Blackboard under Assignments.

Grading Timeline

Assignment grades will be posted to Grade Center within two weeks of due date.

Late work

There will be a 10% deduction in points for each day an assignment is late. For example, a five-point assignment will be deducted by 0.5 points each day it is late. A "day" is defined as 12am or later.

Technology in the classroom

Cell phone, smart watch, tablet, and computer use is not allowed in the studio, except during specific class assignments approved by the Professor, such as a video viewing.

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.

Attendance

Consistent attendance is important to your growth in this course. It also contributes to a positive community experience and class environment. Please do your very best to show up to every class. In the event you are sick, especially with cough, fever, or rash symptoms, please do not come to class! However, communication with the Professor is vital when missing a class. Absences for health and emergency reasons can be excused with documentation. As described above, attendance and

communication are taken into consideration as part of your “Accountability” in-class work grade. Excessive absences do not foster a trajectory of progress and learning in this movement-based class.

Community Agreements

- Respect one another and ourselves
- Listen and be heard
- Be present and focused
- Treat the classroom as a space that should feel positive and welcoming for all
- (any suggestions for modifications are welcome and we will discuss as a group)

Classroom norms [Expectations]

- Students are expected to attend each class and fully participate.
- If you are injured or have had injuries, please let me know.
- If an injury prevents your physical participation in the class, you may be asked to observe and take notes.
- If you are sick, have fever or cold symptoms, or an unidentifiable rash, DO NOT come to class and please email me.
- Please wear proper attire such as a leotard, yoga pants, leggings, shorts, tank tops, or T-shirts. Attire must allow for unrestricted movement. Loose or baggy clothing is not permitted except as a warm-up layer. Long pants or layers are recommended for floorwork.
- No jewelry other than stud earrings.
- Bare feet or socks strongly preferred. No street shoes allowed. Ballet or jazz shoes are acceptable.
- Do not wear your street shoes in class on the dance floor.
- Longer hair should be pulled back and secured away from your face.
- Please practice good body hygiene and refrain from wearing perfumes, as some students may be allergic.
- No food or gum in the classroom, water is OK and recommended.
- Turn cell phones off.
- Students are expected to respect one another and themselves. The studio is a sacred space and should feel positive and welcoming for all.

IMPORTANT: Please check your USC email at least once every 24-hours. Brightspace announcements will be utilized for this class. Enabling notifications from the Pulse app is recommended.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Note: This is an *outline* for our class and is subject to change. There will be in-class video viewings and those web links will be posted on Blackboard for your reference. We will also have brief lecture segments, during which you will need to take notes in a notebook. (see below **notes* indication)

Week	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverables/ Due Dates
Week 1 1/14	Introductions/review syllabus Intro to contemporary dance		
Week 2 1/21	Exercises & phrases Modern pioneers, contemporary figures, terminology <i>*notes</i>	Read excerpt from <i>The Creative Habit</i> , Twyla Tharp	

Week 3 1/28	Exercises & phrases cont'd Reading discussion Review for quiz 1 <i>*notes</i>	Review for quiz 1	JOURNAL #1 TUES 1/28
Week 4 2/4	Exploring Space, Time, Weight Improvisation Choreographic devices <i>*notes</i>	Review for quiz 1	QUIZ #1-WRITTEN TUES 2/4
Week 5 2/11	Exploring Effort w/ improv Review for quiz 2 <i>*notes</i>	Review for quiz 2	
Week 6 2/18	Phrase work Review for midterm	Review for quiz 2 Review for midterm Read "10 Ways to Watch Dance"	QUIZ #2 WRITTEN TUES 2/18
Week 7 2/25	Review for midterm Reading discussion <i>*notes</i>	Review for midterm	JOURNAL #2 TUES 2/25
Week 8 3/4	Phrase work Midterm	Review for midterm	MIDTERM TUES 3/4
Week 9 3/11	Composition Work on group project	Work on group project	
Week 10 3/18		*No class 3/18 Spring Recess	
Week 11 3/25			GROUP PROJECT TUES 3/25
Week 12 4/1	Start phrase work for E.E. (quiz material)	Review E.E. choreography	
Week 13 4/8	Elective Experience rehearsal Review quiz 3 material Terminology cont'd <i>*notes</i>	Review quiz 3 material	
Week 14 4/15	Elective Experience rehearsal Review for final exam	Review for final exam	QUIZ #3-PRACTICAL TUES 4/15
**FRI 4/18 Time T.B.A.	Elective Experience Performance (evening)		
Week 15 4/22	Warm up Review for final(s)	Review for final exam(s) ----- Can begin working on Journal #3 & Performance Observation Paper	
Week 16 4/29	Review for final exam(s) ----- Summative experience class *4/29 last in-person class		PRACTICAL FINAL EXAM in-person TUESDAY 4/29
FINAL DELIVERABLES TUESDAY, 5/13 @6:30pm	*Asynchronous final date: Tues, 5/13 - 4:30pm-6:30pm		ONLINE WRITTEN FINAL ----- JOURNAL #3 ----- PERFORMANCE OBSERVATION PAPER

Student Health & Wellness Appointments

Visit the [student health website](#) for more resources.

<https://sites.google.com/usc.edu/counseling-mental-health/>

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

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 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 a physical practice, dance sometimes requires that instructors use touch to provide proprioceptive and kinesthetic feedback to students; they may use touch to correct alignment, improve technique, and promote healthier movement practices. 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 students 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).

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 can review the technology resources from the [Student Basic Needs Resource Guide](#). The guide includes links to the USC ITS loaner laptop program, USC Computing Centers, the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, and the Affordable Connectivity Program.

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/>.

Religious Holy Days Policies

University policy grants students excused absences for observance of religious holy days. You must 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.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

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.

Policy on A.I. Generators:

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.

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.

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.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call suicidepreventionlifeline.org
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) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086
eetix.usc.edu 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
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report 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.usc.edu
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) 821-4710
campussupport.usc.edu 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
diversity.usc.edu 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
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu 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) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC) ombuds.usc.edu

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) 442-3340 or otfp@med.usc.edu and chan.usc.edu/otfp

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

Trojans Care for Trojans (TC4T)

<https://campussupport.usc.edu/trojans-care-4-trojans/> TCFT is an initiative within the Office of Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention that empowers USC students, faculty and staff to take action when they are concerned about a fellow Trojan challenged with personal difficulties.