

USC Kaufman

Glorya Kaufman School of Dance

Course Title DANC 280 Introduction to Dance as an Art Form

Section: 22465

Units: 4

Term: Spring 2025

Day: Tuesday & Thursday

Time: 12:00pm-1:40pm

Location: KDC 235

Instructor: Kelly Alvarez

Office: KDC

Office Hours: By appointment

Contact: kelly.alvarez@usc.edu

Catalog Description

Gateway to the minor in dance. An interdisciplinary overview of dance relating to the aesthetic and art in various subjects. Applications of the elements of dance studies, art criticism, and viewing productions to explore topic such as architecture, photography, poetry, technology, cinematic arts, sports, medicine, and more.

Prerequisite(s) and Recommended Preparation: none

Course Notes: Letter grade, pass/no pass

This course will take place in-person in the classroom, and will incorporate lecture components, group work, video viewing, reading, research, live dance concert viewing, site-specific dance composition, and online assignments. Announcements and assignments will be posted on Brightspace.

Course Description

In this interdisciplinary overview of dance forms, students will study the origins and evolution of classical and contemporary dance, explore emerging topics in the field of dance studies, and apply elements of art criticism to viewing dance productions. Through curiosity, exploration, critical reading, research, and dialogue, students will be able to gain a comprehensive understanding of dance as an art form and, in turn, will be poised to become emboldened dance advocates. Students will examine dance within a range of contexts including their own ethnographies and scholarly interests. Various methods of dance composition, including site specific dance, choreographic devices, and fundamental Laban Movement Analysis will be explored. In a final paper, students will undertake research and offer original comments on a topic of their choosing, using current secondary source readings and scholarship to situate the topic within a broader historical context.

Learning Objectives

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

- Develop critical reasoning and analytic skills, adopting varying approaches to viewing, critiquing and appreciating dance performances
- Engage with the theoretical, historical and aesthetic underpinnings of significant dance works
- Examine relevant theoretical trends in the field of Dance Studies
- Understand dance in relationship to other scholastic and artistic disciplines
- Identify significant dance artists and be able to historicize/contextualize their contributions
- Develop research, writing, and speaking skills, learning how to incorporate observation and personal experience in persuasive writing and spoken participation in class
- Collaboratively create a site-specific dance composition using choreographic devices and basic Laban Movement Analysis
- Learn about basic technical elements of a theatre, including terminology and applications.
- Become active participants by attending a live dance performance

Required Materials

No textbook required. Readings and video viewings will be available through USC Digital Libraries and/or via Brightspace. Please bring a method of notetaking to each class.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

There will be group projects, in-class discussions, readings, video viewings, written assignments/ journals, quizzes, a midterm, a performance observation paper, and a final paper. **See Brightspace for all rubrics and the most current information.*

IN-CLASS WORK (10%)

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).

In-class work is vital to your progress and success in this course. You will be evaluated on:

- Accountability (attendance & communication)
- Growth (consistency & progress)
- Participation (active engagement)

WEEKLY READING/VIEWING JOURNALS 10x 3 points each

Students will upload informal (bullet points okay) reflections on the week's assigned content. See Brightspace for each journal due date. Journals should address the reading and/or viewing assignment(s). **Label/Identify each reading or viewing and give at least 3 bullet point notes/reflections for each.** See below for prompt examples. **In addition to your bullet point notes, each journal overall should include two possible questions to pose for class discussion.** Think of your bullet points as creating a study guide for the mid-term and to generate ideas for your final paper.

READING:

- What are the author's main points?
- Any passages that you find particularly meaningful/helpful/controversial?
- What dancers and/or choreographers are mentioned? (Engage in research/provide a short bullet point for each).
- What dance companies are mentioned? (Engage in research /provide a short bullet point for each).

VIEWING:

- How would you describe the:
 - Structure? Style? movement quality of this piece?
 - Music?
 - Narrative: Is there a story? Theme? Purely abstract?
 - Production elements: Costumes? Lighting? Set Design? Props?
 - Interview or documentary elements?
 - Does this piece elicit any reaction from you? What is your personal response?

****What are TWO QUESTIONS you would pose to the group for discussion this week?***

GROUP PROJECT (10%)

Working collaboratively with a group, you will create a site-specific composition using fundamental Laban Movement Analysis and choreographic devices. Sign-ups will be available in class prior to starting. Rubric and additional details will be available on Brightspace.

PERFORMANCE OBSERVATION PAPER (10%)

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 14th by 2pm.

QUIZZES (3 quizzes, 5 points each = 15%)

There will be three written in-class quizzes throughout the term. Quizzes will consist of true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blank, and/or matching. The Professor will provide a hard copy of written quizzes. Please bring a pen or pencil on quiz days.

MIDTERM (10%)

The midterm will be a written exam, consisting of true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching and short answer. The Professor will provide a hard copy of written exam. Please bring a pencil to class on midterm day.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER (15%)

Students will conduct scholarly research to investigate a topic of their choice (choreographer, composer, dance work, historical era, critical issue, or how dance relates to another discipline, etc.). Students' 5-7-page typed, double-spaced and proof-read paper will use MLA STYLE (use OWL website for style guide), and include a strong thesis, original title, proper citations and separate bibliography. You will be required to use at least 5 sources, including one book. Papers will be due via Turnitin/Brightspace. Rubric to be posted on Brightspace.

*A rough draft introduction paragraph will be due on Thursday, 5/1, which will account for 2 of the 15 points.

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.)

EXTRA CREDIT

An optional extra credit opportunity, worth up to 5 points, will be available on Brightspace near the end of the term.

Grading Breakdown

| Assessment Tool (assignments) | Points | % of Grade |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
| In-Class Work | 10 | 10% |
| Journal, 10x 3pts ea | 30 | 30% |
| Performance Observation Paper | 10 | 10% |
| Group Project (site-specific composition) | 10 | 10% |
| Quizzes (3 x 5 pts ea) | 15 | 15% |
| Midterm Exam | 10 | 10% |
| Final Research Paper | 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). Please see Brightspace for each assignment's due date and time, as these may vary. **No Google Doc links, please.*

Assignment Rubrics

All assignment rubrics are posted on Brightspace.

Grading Timeline

Assignment grades will be posted to Brightspace 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.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

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 and the group project.

Laptops or tablets recommended but not required during group project assignment and preparation.

We will use the monitor in class at times. Please place yourself where you can clearly see the material. If you need assistance or support in viewing the monitor, please let me know. Access to Brightspace required. *USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program:*

<https://itservices.usc.edu/usc-computing-center-laptop-loaner-program/>

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. 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.

***If you arrive late, please see me after class to be sure I've accounted for you*

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 on designated movement days, such as yoga pants, leggings, shorts, tank tops, or T-shirts.
- Closed-toe, comfortable shoes and/or socks are required on movement days.
- No food or gum in the classroom, water is OK and recommended.
- Turn cell phones off, “do not disturb,” or on vibrate.
- During class time, laptops and electronic note taking devices are to be used for class purposes only
- We will often be moving the desks and chairs around during class. Please help in returning the furniture to its original configuration before leaving class for the day.

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 Brightspace for your reference. We will also have lecture segments, during which you will need to take notes in a notebook, laptop, or tablet.

| Week | Topics/Daily Activities | Readings, Viewings, and Homework <i>**All upcoming readings and video viewings will be posted on Brightspace about one week prior to their due date.</i> | Deliverables/ Due Dates |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Week 1 1/14 & 1/16 | Introductions/review syllabus What is art? Birth and evolution of ballet | Work on Journals #1 & #2 | JOURNAL #1 THURS 1/16 |
| Week 2 1/21 & 1/23 | Ballet cont’d Birth of modern dance | Work on Journals #2 & #3 | JOURNAL #2 TUES 1/21 |
| Week 3 1/28 & 1/30 | Modern & postmodern dance Dance & social issues Review for quiz | Work on Journal #3 Review for quiz | JOURNAL #3 TUES 1/28 |
| Week 4 2/4 & 2/6 | Neoclassical ballet and contemporary dance | Work on Journal #4 | QUIZ #1 TUES 2/4 ----- JOURNAL #4 THURS 2/6 |
| Week 5 2/11 & 2/13 | American jazz dance Hip Hop | Work on Journals #5 & #6 | JOURNAL #5 THURS 2/13 |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Week 6 2/18 & 2/20 | Jazz & hip hop cont'd Guest speaker Wed 2/20 | | JOURNAL #6 TUES 2/18 |
| Week 7 2/25 & 2/27 | Dance in the digital era Screendance Review for midterm | Work on Journal #7 Review for midterm | JOURNAL #7 THURS 2/27 |
| Week 8 3/4 & 3/6 | Review for midterm | Review for midterm | MIDTERM THURS 3/6 |
| Week 9 3/11 & 3/13 | Laban Movement Analysis (Basic Efforts) | Work on Journal #8 | JOURNAL #8 THURS 3/13 |
| Week 10 3/18 & 3/20 | | *No class 3/18 & 3/20 Spring Recess | |
| Week 11 3/25 & 3/27 | Choreographic devices Composition Review for quiz | Work on Journals #9 & #10 Review for quiz | JOURNAL #9 <i>and</i> QUIZ #2 THURS 3/27 |
| Week 12 4/1 & 4/3 | Production elements Visit to the theatre T.B.A. | Contact group members Study for quiz | JOURNAL #10 TUES 4/1 |
| Week 13 4/8 & 4/10 | T.B.A. Guest – Perf. Arts Librarian | | |
| Week 14 4/15 & 4/17 | Work on group project Review for quiz | Work on group project Review for quiz | QUIZ #3 THURS 4/17 |
| Week 15 4/22 & 4/24 | Group project presentations (see sign-up) | Work on group projects | GROUP PROJECTS THURS 4/24 |
| Week 16 4/29 & 5/1 | Summative experience class *5/1 last in-person class Wrap-up, community building, research paper feedback | Work on research paper | INTRO PARAGRAPH DRAFT DUE THURS 5/1 |
| FINAL DELIVERABLES WEDNESDAY, 5/14 @ 4pm | *Asynchronous final date: Wednesday, 5/4 – 2pm-4pm | | FINAL RESEARCH PAPER ----- PERFORMANCE OBSERVATION PAPER |

Student Health & Wellness Appointments

Visit the [student health website](https://sites.google.com/usc.edu/counseling-mental-health/) 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, Pilates 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).

USC Technology Support Links

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Brightspace 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 eeotix.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, or 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 or 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.