

**Sam Houston State University  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
Dance Program—Spring 2008 Semester  
DNC 492.02 (3 Credit Hours) -- Pre-professional Ballet (Ballet V)**

**Course Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Jennifer Pontius  
**Class Meeting Time:** MWF 2:30-3:50 p.m. & TuTh 12:30-1:50 p.m.  
**Class Meeting Location:** AB III, studio 101  
**Instructor Office:** AB III, 245  
**Instructor Office Hours:** By appointment or see schedule on door  
**Instructor Phone:** 936-294-1300  
**Instructor Email:** [DNC\\_JKP@shsu.edu](mailto:DNC_JKP@shsu.edu)

**Course Description**

In this pre-professional ballet class, dancers will be expected to develop a high degree of technical ability and expressive range. The development of artistry, technical prowess, muscular refinement, musicality, and the ability to integrate information correctly and thoroughly, are all expected. Professional demeanor and working habits are mandatory.

**Course Objectives**

- Acquire solid working knowledge of ballet vocabulary and theory.
- Demonstrate well developed and well balanced integration of artistry, athleticism, dynamic shading, and structural and mechanical function in ballet technique
- Achieve consistently correct and functional alignment throughout the body, sustained in changes of direction, high elevation, and other advanced movement sequences
- Gain expressive range through musicality, dynamics, and phrasing of movements
- Incorporate port de bras, epaulment, and refine body positioning (“line”)
- Expand range of movements in jumps, turns, and traveling movements to incorporate beats, multiple turns in large poses, sustained adagio movements, and increased control on demi-pointe
- Although it is not required, women are encouraged to wear pointe shoes. An expectation of advanced ballet work for women is mastery of pointe work. Even if you never intend to dance en pointe, the exercise will strengthen musculature of the feet,, the external rotators, develop abdominal strength, and improve alignment, all of which are applicable skills for all dance techniques. Even doing work in pointe shoes without rising to full pointe is valuable, so you can wear shoes that are no longer useful for “real” pointe work (I know how expensive pointe shoes are). Male students are also welcome to wear pointe shoes, though it is not a standard expectation for men to develop technique in pointe work.

**Attire**

Traditional ballet attire is required.

Women: Solid colored leotard, pink tights, pink ballet slippers. A short ballet skirt may be worn. Tights should be worn as they were intended—extending over your feet rather than rolled up at the ankle. Make sure your shoe elastics are sewn on, not tied around your foot.

Men: Black tights, dance belt, solid-colored fitted t-shirt, ballet slippers.

Women and Men: No dangling or noisy jewelry. Hair that is long enough to fall into your face must be secured back: clips, ponytail, or bun, depending on length.

Leg and body warmers are fine, and sometimes necessary if the room is cold or you are injured, but...NO BAGGY OVERDRESS! NO HOODIES! NO MATERIAL TRAILING OVER YOUR FEET, THAT'S DANGEROUS.

### **Attendance Policy**

I really hate keeping track of attendance, and judging the validity of your excuse. I also do not approve of students coming to class when they are very ill because they are afraid of having their grades affected. I believe you will recover sooner, stay healthier better, and infect fewer people if you stay home when you are truly sick. I am much more interested in the quality of work you demonstrate when you are here. My theory is that if you are here and working, you will improve, and your grade will reflect that.

However...you are permitted six absences. Each additional absence will lower your final grade by 5%. Make-ups are entirely at the instructor's discretion. Please remember that it is your responsibility to keep up with your attendance status and make-up options. I am available through the contacts listed above.

On tardiness: Do not expect to be permitted to participate in the class once it has begun. If class is already in progress when you enter the room, wait for the end of the exercise, and request permission to join.

On injuries: If you cannot participate fully in class due to an injury, tell me about your issues OUTSIDE of class time when possible.

### **Grading**

Assuming your attendance is regular and your attitude and behavior are appropriate, your grade will be assessed based on the notes below. You will receive a mid-term evaluation and a final evaluation. You are ALWAYS welcome to make an appointment with me to talk about your progress, problems, etc.

### **ASSESSMENT OF TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT**

Note: If, at the beginning of the semester, the student demonstrates significant deficiencies in the elements listed below, they may be advised to enroll in a lower level technique class. If they choose to remain in advanced ballet, they will be further advised that a grade of A, or possibly even B, is unlikely.

“A” level work is characterized by:

- stable, correct alignment through torso and legs, both when standing and in movement, including jumps, leaps, and turns
- muscles well toned and consistently engaged as appropriate
- consistently optimized use of turnout
- full articulation and stretch of the feet
- classical port de bras, epaulment, and body positions
- secure work on demi-pointe, including ability to sustain a balance in correct alignment on demi-pointe in passé for at least 5 seconds, and to control shifts from one position to another while on demi-pointe (as from cou-de-pied to a low arabesque, with arms traveling from 1<sup>st</sup> position to 2<sup>nd</sup> arabesque), and to control descents from demi-pointe
- consistent ability to execute a clean double pirouette cleanly on either the right or left, both en dehors and en dedans, from both 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> position, ending in a variety of poses
- grand pirouettes in attitude, arabesque, and in 2<sup>nd</sup> position
- jumps with beats well executed, including brise, brise vole, cabriole, jete battu, assemble battu,
- clean, fluid grand allegro with full elevation
- well developed musicality
- ability to perform exercises with attention to all details (sequence, port de bras, body positions, clean technique, correct musicality, performance quality)
- consistent focus in class resulting in ability to perform exercises correctly without requiring repeated demonstrations and clarifications
- consistently professional decorum

“B” level work is characterized by:

Significant mastery of many of the elements listed above. Effort and progress are taken into consideration.

“C” level work is characterized by:

Consistent effort and some progress towards elements listed above. “A” level work may be assessed as “C” when attitude, attendance, or ability to retain information is deficient.

“D” level work is characterized by:

Non-professional work habits, excessive absences, poor command of technique and performance.

“F” level work is characterized by:

Truly excessive absences, egregious work habits.

NOTE: I plan to arrange a jury for the end of semester. This will be primarily for feedback for you, as well as an objective eye for my grading assessment, and an opportunity for you to demonstrate ability to perform practiced material in a formal context.

### **Academic Honesty**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

### **Classroom Demeanor**

Students will refrain from behavior that is disruptive to the class. Please turn off or mute your cell phone and/or pager before class. No eating, drinking, smoking, sleeping, reading newspapers, talking among one another at inappropriate times, or engaging in other distracting or disrespectful manners. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result minimally in a directive to leave the classroom and accept an absence; repeated incidences or grave offenses may require a report to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with the University policy.

### **Visitors in the Classroom**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU id card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

### **Religious Holidays**

Absences for observation of a religious holiday are excused, given notification to the instructor. You will then be allowed to make up any assignments missed.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Requests for accommodations must be initiated by the student. This should be done at the beginning of the term. Students requiring accommodations should go to the Counseling Center and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to process the required forms.