

Modern V (Seminar in Dance)

DNC 492

Mondays & Fridays 2:30-3:50 pm, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30-1:50 pm

Academic Building III

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Office hours: Monday & Friday, 12:30-2:30,
Tuesday & Thursday 10-11 am

Please note, the majority of this course will be taught by Hilary Bryan.

Between October 29 and November 9 the course will be taught by guest artist Joy Kellman, with all students enrolled participating in these master classes.

Overview

Modern V is a pre-professional level modern dance technique class that presumes substantial previous modern dance training.

Modern Dance is a 20th Century tradition of innovation in human movement as art. Around the same time that Isadora Duncan (b. 1877, San Francisco) had her premiere in Paris (1909), Rudolf Laban gathered a devoted group of movement students to begin the huge job of elaborating his theories of movement. One of his student/collaborators Mary Wigman (b. 1886, Hanover Germany) initiated German Expressionist Dance. This class celebrates the ongoing evolution of Modern Dance and keeping in mind the experimental pioneers who have continued over a century of experimentation in dance.

We will filter our movement exploration through the language of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and Bartenieff Fundamentals (BF) as we work/play with movement drawn from Limon, Cunningham, Release, Contact Improvisation, and Action Theater techniques, and experiment with Post-modern dance, which simply refers to the many branches of contemporary dance and performance in continuous evolution since the late 1950's.

Each class will include guided movement exploration, exercises, improvisation, and repeated phrases. Breath, alignment, fluidity, creativity, body memory, play and composition will be studied in action. Readings, videos, discussions and live performances will help students to develop a personal theoretical context for understanding and articulating dance. The goal is to have fun while stretching and strengthening our bodies and minds, abilities and perceptions, in preparation for a career in dance.

Learning objectives:

- To integrate intention of body and mind.
- To internalize Patterns of Total Body Connectivity as preparation for any movement style or technique.
- To understand grounding and breath support for balance, dynamic weight shift, and presence in performance.

- To achieve fluid and dynamic body alignment for ease of movement.
- To modulate and refine power as artists.
- To expand movement vocabulary of upside-down and off-balance movement.

Evaluation

60% – Class Participation

(lively contribution to class discussions, attitude, Studio Response papers, attendance, etc.)

10% – Reserved Reading Project

10% – Journal

10% – Initiative, growth, effort, commitment, risk-taking

10% – Active engagement with Readings (3 Questions/3 Observations)

A = Hard work, excellent participation, demonstrable growth, articulate writing, risk-taking.

B = All work completed, excellent participation.

C = Very basic fulfillment of course requirements.

D = Weak participation, several absences, lack of care in assignments.

F = Failure to participate and/or complete class assignments.

Attendance

Students are expected to arrive on time, dressed & ready to dance. A student will be allowed five absences – excused or unexcused – before the grade is affected. The class participation grade will be reduced by 1/3rd grade for each subsequent absence, i.e., from A to A-, from B+ to B.

Late arrivals. Late arrival is inappropriate. It betrays your lack of respect for the class and is dangerous to your health. Three late arrivals/early departures count as an absence.

Injury/Illness. A student who is injured is expected to observe class and take notes. A student whose illness may be contagious is expected to be at home recuperating.

Make-up Policy. A student may make up missed class by taking and documenting process during another dance class. Analyze and document your process by describing what/how concepts *from our class* served you *in that other class*. The point is to make use of the connectivity patterns we are learning regardless of movement style. Make-ups must be arranged in advance with both instructors, ie, check in advance both with me and with the instructor of the class you want to take. Submit 300-500 word analysis of process (include word count at bottom of analysis).

Assignments – due dates follow

- *Class Attendance* – Four classes per week with occasional video showings, discussions.
- *Reading* – Assigned readings from book/reader. Occasional additional handouts.
- *Discussion Prep* – In response to any and all readings, write 3 observations and 3 questions.
- *Reserve Reading-thinking-feeling* – flip through books on reserve for this class (recommended texts below). Find some movement description or suggestion that interests you and experiment with it on your living room floor and in the studio. Document this reading/thinking/feeling in your journal with 3 observations & 3 questions & your response. Also described in appendix.
- *Studio Responses* – Two papers, 300-500 words each. Each paper has the weight of one class day.

Guidelines for Studio Responses and Reserve Reading are in appendix at end of syllabus.

Required Texts

1. *Journal* – your own, where you record interesting discoveries, observations, questions – about any part of your life – that are somehow reflected or inspired in the dance studio. Use this journal to research impact of this course material on all parts of your life. Use this as source material for your Studio Response papers.
2. *Making Connections: Total Body Connectivity through Bartenieff Fundamentals* by Peggy Hackney (1998, 2002)

Recommended Texts (see Reserved Reading Project in Appendix)

1. *Amazing Babies* by Beverly Stokes (2002)
2. *Bodystories: A Guide to Experiential Anatomy* by Andrea Olsen, in collaboration with Caryn McHose (1993)
3. *Wisdom of the Body Moving: An Introduction to Body-Mind Centering* by Linda Hartley (1995).
4. *Anatomy of Movement* by Blandine C. Germain (1985 French, 1993 English)
5. *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment* by Irmgard Bartenieff with Dori Lewis (1980).
6. *Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering* by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (1993).
7. *Taking Root to Fly* by Irene Dowd (1990, 1995).
8. *Dynamic Alignment Through Imagery* by Eric N. Franklin (1996).
9. *The Thinking Body: A Study of the Balancing Forces of Dynamic Man* by Mabel Elsworth Todd (1937).
10. *Human Movement Potential* by Lulu Sweigard

Preparation – Soma and Psyche

This is a dance class. Come prepared to dance.

Suggestions: empty bladder, water bottle, open mind, active curiosity, generosity toward self and others, willingness to learn by doing. Feeling stupid is part of it. Not knowing is part of it. Feeling like the only one who doesn't get it is part of it. The unknown is where all things are possible. Park your critic outside the door.

Attire

Comfy, stretchy dance, yoga or sport-wear for running, jumping, twisting, rolling, sliding on the floor (i.e., skirts, shorts, and zippers will be uncomfortable). Bare feet. No street shoes on dance floor. No food or drink except water. No cell phones. No dangerous or distracting clothing or jewelry. No dragging or sagging pants. Hair tied up and away from your face.

Touch

Dance is a physical language and often includes communication through touch and weight. Contact Improvisation in particular is based on human touch, sharing of weight, physical intimacy, trust and risk. Students will be expected to engage physically with other students, from holding hands to lifting and being lifted, to participating in hands-on warm-up exercises. Also, the instructor, in the practice of professional dance training, will occasionally touch students to demonstrate specific positions or principles. Please speak to the instructor about any concerns you might have in this regard.

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to withhold Academic Policy Statement 810213 of the SHSU Faculty Handbook:

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 Rules of Conduct

According to Section 5 of the Student Handbook, students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning:

Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

Visitors in the Classroom

According to the Faculty Handbook, the following is recommended concerning visitors to the classroom:

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification 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 the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic, Student Life program or activity. Disabled students may request academic assistance when needed from a committee of Continuing Academic Assistance for Disabled Students by visiting the Director of the Counseling Center, located in the Lee Drain Annex. Phone 936 294 1720.

Religious Holidays

Students who are absent from class for observance for a religious holy day will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within one week of returning to class. The student, not later than the 15th calendar day after the first day of the semester, must notify the instructor of each scheduled class day that s/he would be absent for a religious holy day. Refer to the Academic Calendar for the deadline for notification by students to the faculty of the student's intent to be absent on religious days and those days needed for travel.

Readings & Due Dates (subject to change in the most perfect way)

Readings are due the Monday of each week. 3 Questions and 3 Observations are due by Tuesday.

- Week 1&2 Getting to know you...
- Week 3 Breath Patterning
READ: Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapter 6 (p. 51-66).
- Week 4 Core-Distal Patterning
READ: Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapter 7 (p. 67-84).
DUE: Thursday, September 13, Studio Response Paper #1.
- Week 5 Head-Tail Patterning
READ: Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapters 8 (p. 85-110).
- Week 6 Upper-Lower Patterning
READ: Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapters 9 (p. 111-163).
- Week 7 Body-Half & Diagonal Patterning
READ: Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapters 10 and 11 (p. 165-200).
- Week 8 Effort & Phrasing
READ: Hackney, *Making Connections*, p. 217-221.
 Hackney, *Making Connections*, p. 239-241, 227, 119-120.
- Week 9&10 Hilary in Kiev, Berlin.
Work on reserved reading project. Do advance reading for weeks 13-16.
- Week 11&12 Joy Kellman Residency
Work on reserved reading project. Do advance reading for weeks 13-16.
- Week 13 Space Harmony & Shape
READ: Hackney, *Making Connections*, p. 223-227.
 Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapter 4 (p. 31-38).
 Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapter 5 (p. 39-50).
DUE: Tuesday, November 13, Reserved Reading Project & Journal.
- Week 14 Bartenieff Fundamentals & The Process of Change
READ: Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapter 3 (p. 19-29).
- Week 15 History & Fundamentals
SKIM: Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapter 1&2 (p. 1-18).
- Week 16 Integration
READ: Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapter 12 (p. 201-216).
Re-read: Hackney, *Making Connections*, Chapter 3 (p. 19-29).
DUE: Tuesday, December 4, Studio Response #2

Appendix One: Written Assignment Guidelines

STUDIO RESPONSES

Students are expected to take notes in response to dance classes. In addition there will be a practice of periodic in-class free writing. Students will twice prepare responses to their work in the studio, incorporating excerpts of these notes. Document your experience, your growth, changes in both body and mind. The intention of this assignment is to encourage ongoing reflection and documentation. Poetic and improvisational writing may be included.

These papers will each have the weight of one day in class. They will not receive letter grades.

Two papers, 300-500 words each. 12-point font, double spaced.

Note word count at end of paper.

DUE AS NOTED IN SYLLABUS

RESERVE READING PROJECT

Check out each of the reserve reading books listed in the syllabus. Page through until you find a drawing or a phrase that catches your eye. Take notes in your journal. What is interesting about this to you? How will you experiment with the suggestions in the book? Take your notes home and into the studio. Try suggestions out on the floor. Teach your new knowledge to a friend or roommate. Document your experiments in your journal. If possible, take the book overnight and see what else catches your eye.

You will write up your experience as an essay (300-500 words) that specifically addresses your response to reserve readings and how they influence your practice in the studio. Go back to your journal where you have collected notes on each of these texts (3 observations, 3 questions, and notes about your own movement experiments with ideas in the text). You might describe useful and/or failed experiments. Which text is your favorite and why? Which might help you achieve your own personal movement goals? Who would benefit most from which of these texts?

300-500 words. 12-point font, double spaced.

Note word count at end of paper.

Turn in journal with Project.

Use post-it notes or other method to show where Reserve Reading notes are located in journal.

DUE AS NOTED IN SYLLABUS

Reserved Reading Project Texts – these texts will be on reserve in the library

1. *Amazing Babies* by Beverly Stokes (2002)
2. *Bodystories: A Guide to Experiential Anatomy* by Andrea Olsen, in collaboration with Caryn McHose (1993).
3. *Wisdom of the Body Moving: An Introduction to Body-Mind Centering* by Linda Hartley (1995).
4. *Anatomy of Movement* by Blandine C. Germain (1985 French, 1993 English)
5. *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment* by Irmgard Bartenieff with Dori Lewis (1980).
6. *Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering* by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (1993).
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