

The University of Texas at El Paso
Syllabus Spring 2024

Advanced Contemporary Dance

DANC 3346/4346

Professor: Neri Torres

Email: FNTorres@utep.edu

Class Meets: M, T, W, TR – 10:30am to 11:50am

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00pm – 2:00 pm by appointment









Office location – Fox Fine Arts, room A450




Course Description

This course continues to develop the art and discipline of modern dance technique with a focus on *tecnica moderna* as conceived by renowned Cuban choreographers Ramiro Guerra and Eduardo Rivero, which integrates Graham, Cunningham, Limon and Afro-Cuban dance, all closely linked to improvisation and expressive breathing techniques. You will expand your performance and creative skills through the exploration of a range of movement qualities based most notably on spine articulation, movement isolations, awareness of gravity and complex polyrhythms. The ability to take risks and work with others to investigate and analyse movement in depth from anatomical concepts as well as to explore one's own maximum capabilities are fundamental and supported in this course.

Course Objectives and University Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will be able to:

Student Learning Objectives	Outcome
1- Demonstrate an ability to apply dance technique and performance skills to movement phrases and improvisational exercises.	  Critical Thinking Skills, Confidence
2- Develop greater fluency in dance technique and performance skills	 Confidence
3. Demonstrate the capacity to research movement through technical inquiry that includes the embodiment of physics, somatic principles, and personal anatomical investigation.	  Critical Thinking Skills, Problem solving
4- Apply their learned skill as a person/dancer/thinker/artist.	   Critical Thinking Skills, Teamwork, Communication,

	 Leadership
5-Demonstrate musicality, dynamics, clarity and articulation in time and space.	 Confidence
6- Approach all training, practice and performance from an anatomically correct standpoint.	 Confidence

Course Expectations

We expect you to honor the traditions and methods of studio etiquette.

Students are expected to be in the studio and ready to begin class by 10:30am. If you are tardy, you will wait at the studio door for permission to enter. Joining while an exercise is performed is not allowed.

Long hair must be pulled away from the face and secured.

No street shoes are allowed on the studio floor.

It is expected that the class will work together to form a community that supports curiosity/interest, learning, and the sharing of both. Professional conduct can mean any number of things to any number of people. I believe that if the first imperative is community, conduct that is respectful and supportive will follow.

All phones must be turned off and stored with the exception of personal emergencies or any similar imperative (or that is required in class)

Attendance

Students may accumulate 20% of the course in absences (8 for classes to meet every day) of the total of meetings per course. However, consider the repercussions in your progress in this class! Each absence over the allotted days lowers the final letter grade by one letter. Ideally, as a pre-professional, you are expected to arrive 10 minutes earlier to do your own warm up.

According to UTEP Catalog, “At the discretion of the instructor, a student can be dropped from a course because of excessive absences or lack of effort. A grade of “W” will be assigned before the course drop deadline and a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” See Policies and Regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences. Therefore, if I find that, due to non-performance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will drop you from the course. I will provide 24 hours advance notice via email.

If a student experiences a personal or family emergency that would, by these no-fault standards cause a failing grade, the faculty will help the student withdraw from the course, even after the withdrawal date deadline. However, the situation must be documented in writing usually by a health care professional if illness or injury has struck.

Incomplete Grade Policy

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed

at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

Make-up Work

Make-up work will be given only in the case of a documented emergency. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero. It is therefore important to reach out to me—in advance if at all possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.

Technical Support

If you do not know how to use Blackboard – go to Tech Support Room 300 at Library immediately. Do not wait until you do not understand until you are having problems. You can contact Help Desk via email, helpdesk@utep.edu, by phone 747-5257. Hours are M-F 7a-8p, Sat 9a-10p and Sun 12-4p.

Copyright Statement

Some of the materials in this course are copyrighted. The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

Scholastic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

Course Resources:

Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support. Please refer to the QR code below for a listing of campus resources.



Accommodations Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

Course Communication: How we will stay in contact with each other

Here are the ways we can keep the communication channels open:

- Office Hours: I will have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. My office hours are in-person, however, you can request a virtual meeting and I will send you a Zoom link. Please see the days and times at the top of this syllabus.
- Email: UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours of receipt. **When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student e-mail account and please put the course name in the subject line.** In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.
- Announcements: Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

Subject Matter

The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, and dance specifically has the characteristic to break your personal/cultural space. Also occasionally, I will touch you to correct a movement here and there. If you have concerns about any movement, physical touch or any specific subjects that might not feel comfortable, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. I expect mutual respect in all our discussions and verbal exchanges—including any that may occur outside of class—to be conducted in a respectful and professional matter.

Grading:

Grades are based on effort, improvement, technical skills and attendance. Effort (essential to this class) is demonstrated by a positive attitude, focus on class work, willingness to listen, apply corrections, try new things as well as your understanding and execution of alignment, rhythmic clarity and your willingness to challenge your personal boundaries as well as your participation in class discussions. I will look at students' abilities to demonstrate the movement accurately and with ease without having to watch another person for memory. I will also observe and note their abilities to offer constructive feedback to their peers.

Effort, improvement and work ethic 10 pts.

Punctuality, risk-taking, following course policy, memorizing of exercises, ability to work with others, reading required material, developing of work related skills)

Practical assessments 40 pts. (20 pts. each)

You will have two practical exams, in which you will perform steps and combinations learned during the semester. These practical exams will be over material specifically prepared for the test. You will know the material well before testing begins.

The dates for these exams are: **Wednesday, March 6th and Wednesday, May 1st.**

Journal/Self-Reflection (Due Wednesday, March 6th and Thursday, May 2nd) 10%

You will work on 8 entries throughout the semester, focusing on goal setting, imagery, self-reflection, and self-assessment as it relates to this course.

Short Dance Studies (4) 40 pts.

Performance Attendance Critique 10 pts.

You will attend two live dance performances during the semester and write a 2-page paper (for one of the performances) discussing the show following the guidelines the instructor will provide you during the semester. (For information on performances see below).

Attendance Possible Points 100 pts.

Total Possible Points: 200

Grading Scale:

Effort – 10 pts.

Practical Exams – 40 pts.

Journal/Self-Reflection – 10 pts.

Short Dance Studies – 40 pts.

Dance Critique – 10 pts.

Attendance – 100 pts.

A: 160 +

B: 158 – 140

C: 139 – 120

D: 119 – 100

F: 99 –

Course Timeline

Week 2 – 1/22

Dance Study #1 -. Create movement phrases leading at different moments with your trochanters, middle spine (bottom of your ribs) and neck (fully engage your scalene and sternocleidomastoid). Use all of them to the maximum of your physical capabilities. 40 secs max, you may use music, levels and different pathways. **Due date, TR, Jan. 25th**

Week 4 – 1/5

Dance Study #2 -- Mix up two specific body parts (you can change/alternate them throughout the exercise) to create irregular shapes. Think of connecting them through positions you normally wouldn't correlate—for example, the back of your lower left leg and the right shoulder. You may use transitions (steps, turns, runs, etc.) to shift between shapes. It's more than okay to feel and look weird! The aim is to invent movement outside the habitual harmonizing aesthetic you might be used to. Create no less than 8 shapes! 40 seconds max, no music, use levels. **Due TR, March 8th**

Week 7 – 1/26

Create movement phrases using momentum and incorporating bursts of extremely fast movement to travel across the floor (make sure you understand and engage in the principle of momentum as it relates to dance). 40 seconds max, you may use music. Make sure to use levels and contrasting dynamics). **Due TR, Feb. 29th**

Week 8 – 3/4

Midterm

Week 15 – 4/22

Create a group piece based on exercise from class. Make sure to apply contrasting dynamics, changes of rhythm and levels. Due TR, April 26th

Week 16 – 4/29

Resources:

https://previews.us-east-1.widencdn.net/seeds/52756949/assets/asset-view/a/1/6/2/a1627ed7-465f-4246-9691-7139bb2214e2/video_480p/faststart.mp4?response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22SpinalMobility.mp4%22&Expires=1704509108&Signature=TvFX9WYRUEyTgIXh6bcw0BdV2k0k6i3NhnNzP1Hb3t~TwqKtOpzvJW4~msYC2sZkBIreCZ6zi2-RG~cxSIwm82YiDHWUZr0Z83Mfpc7CG95ieHCq5bb-UJVkeH9HsHKH-bMLgx-W1h8D48pmJ89azJCnax3h43vxcGT8IeBj8f2zk1mavcy~SfylldJA7UlxPAg5fAPrH42xCNinabf-VDxWgSZYnOhfMie~fh6psL2X2jurLIBaIPY2Wu-MCMK82BnuaFDHOIXezxHyu2V6UgABtF~0-rmZllb8AbZ6yExlzn-tQn-r88hrT8YPog7AF-

[r95RLd73miNJl38yzDFg__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJD5XONOBVWVOA65A](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351111111/r95RLd73miNJl38yzDFg__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJD5XONOBVWVOA65A) Thoracic spine movement

Required attendance to dance performances