

**The University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Theatre and Dance
Syllabus - Fall 2023**

Course Information:

DANC 2345 Contemporary Foundations 1

(CRN 12375)

Term: Fall 2023

Delivery Method: In-person

Meeting Day and Time: M, T, W, TH - 10:30am - 11:50am

Location: Fox Fine Arts Center - Music M201

Instructor Information

Professor: Neri Torres, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Written Communication: fntorres@utep.edu and Blackboard

Phone Number: (915)417-7997

Office Location: Fox Fine Arts Center, Art A450

Office Hours:

- Face-to-Face: Mondays, 2:00pm -3:00pm (By appointment only)
- Virtual: Fridays, 4:00pm -5:00 pm (By appointment only) through Zoom
Meeting ID: 872 8643 6396 Code: tsha39c8
<https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/87286436396?pwd=WUtTTmlrTkcxYjcreDI4bWkxcDIldGdz09>




Course Description

This course aims to develop the art and discipline of contemporary dance technique introducing the *tecnica moderna* as conceived by renowned Cuban choreographers Ramiro Guerra closely linked to the movement vocabulary of Martha Graham, Jose Limon, Kathryn Dunham, Merce Cunningham and other great dance artists of the last century, improvisation and expressive breathing techniques. You will expand your musicality, performance and creative skills through the exploration of a range of movement qualities based most notably on spine articulation, movement isolations, gravity awareness and complex polyrhythms. The course includes live accompaniment.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

<u>Student Learning Objective</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Introduce beginning technical skills utilizing <i>tecnica moderna</i> .	Demonstrate embodiment of beginning dance skills.
Familiarize students with dance-specific vocabulary and movement concepts.	Recognize and integrate movement concepts and terminology.

Foster music and rhythm skills in relationship to movement.	Develop musicality as it relates to the execution of movement phrases.
Critically analyse the work behind the creation of a technique attending to social and stylistic components.	 Critical Thinking Skills
Create solo & group compositions applying specific concepts.	  Problem Solving and Teamwork Skills

Required Reading and Material

Muosouris, Melinda, The Dance World of Ramiro Guerra, in *Caribbean Dance from Abakua to Zouk*, Unniversity Press of Florida, 2002.

(You can read the article in the book that can be found at UTEP’s library online:

<https://www-fulcrum-org.utep.idm.oclc.org/concern/monographs/1v53jx38z>)

Cell phone or camera needed to record videos for specific assignments.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments for this course are assessed according to rubrics. You can find these rubrics on the Blackboard Home Page or by clicking on the appropriate assignment link in Blackboard and choosing to “View Rubric” from the button beneath the Points Possible for the assignment. All assignments will be available on Blackboard.

Effort, Improvement and Work Ethic 20%

Punctuality, risk-taking, following course policy, ability to work with others, developing of work related skills.

Reading Summary 10%

Summarize and upload to Blackboard the required article on Ramiro Guerra (two-page, 1.5 space, 12 Times New Roman).

- Formulate one question stemming from your reading analysis.
- Respond to a classmate’s question. Rubrics are available on Blackboard **Due Thursday, September 7th.**

Practical assessments 40% (20% each)

You will have two practical exams, in which you will combinations learned during the semester. You will know the material well before the tests. Your knowledge of class terminology will also be evaluated.

Dates: **Wednesday, October 18th and Wednesday December 6th.**

Performance reflection 10%

You will attend a live dance performance during the semester and post a short reflection (for one of the performances discussing the show following (up to 3 paragraphs). Guidelines available on Blackboard. (See performance list and ticket availability at the end of syllabus). **Due Sunday**

December 10th @ 11:59 pm

Journal

10%

You will work on 4 entries throughout the semester (no less than 4 sentences), focusing on goal setting, imagery, and self-assessment. Either upload it to Blackboard or provide a hard copy that you'll pick up at the main office after I grade it. **Sunday, November 26th @ 11:59 pm**

Dance Studies (3)

30%

You will record yourselves performing specific dance phrases in class (one duet, one solo and a final group piece). Upload video on Blackboard (you can use YouTube choosing the Unlisted option). You will provide feedback to a classmate's work on Blackboard. The final group dance piece will also be performed in class. **(Take a note of the deadlines below)**.

Total:**130%****Timeline: Dance Studies*****Week 2 (9/4)***

After learning a series of polyrhythms in class (or any other contrasting rhythm you find interesting) select one of the patterns and put it in your body. Next, create a conversation with a classmate **(32 counts)** using one clear contrasting movement between the two of you (strong/soft, sliding/vibrating, sad/happy, etc.), a call and response style. Make sure to include change of levels, directions). You will need to dance as if you are producing short sentences, one person dances and the other listens. Provide a clear beginning, middle and ending. Make sure the rhythm pattern shows clearly. You may use music or not. **(Due Thursday, September 7th)**

Week 4 (9/18)

Reflect on different breathing forms and their impact in your movement. Create a personal short study **(24 counts)** applying two contrasting types of breathing (such as deep breathing, panting, sudden exhalation, hiccups or convulsive gasps) Make sure you experiment with body parts you usually neglect. Find a good sense of beginning, middle and ending. Do not move until you are urged to do so organically by the breathing at the beginning of the phrase –include different levels and directions. **(Due Thursday, Sept. 21st)**

- ***Week 15 (11/27)*** Group Project: Inspired by the collaborative piece “Exquisite Corp” (see link below). You will create a “live” group piece based on continuity as you can see on the original piece (link below) but ending all together in a unison. Make sure to include movement choices including the spine and diverse body isolations making

sure to be in accordance with your topic. You can use a current social issues or any other theme you all agree on. That will determine your movement qualities. Discuss your ideas on blackboard, respond to other people's posts, work in partners and agree on a general order (who starts, who follows, and who finishes). **(Final presentation due Thursday, November 30th)**

- You will also perform the group piece and selected dance studies at UTEP Dance Factory, **Saturday, December 9th at 3:00pm** (location TBA)

Watch : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3pFxsYPLgU> Exquisite Corps

Grading scale:

A: 130-117 points, **B:** 116-104, **C:** 103-91, **D:** 90-78, **F:** 0-77

Grades will be based on your effort, improvement, development of technical skills, attendance as well as timely completion of assignments required. Effort (essential to this class) demonstrated by a positive attitude, focus on classwork, 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. 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.

Dress code:

- Dance clothes for class should be comfortable without hiding or distorting the lines of the body. Close fitting dance/athletic wear or similar is best. Jeans and similar kinds of pants are not acceptable.
- Excessively baggy clothing is not acceptable.
- Hair needs to be pulled back from the face and neck.
- Cell phones need to be turned off prior to class.

Technology Requirements

Some course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

Course Resources: Where you can go for assistance

Technology Resources

Help Desk: Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus. You can contact Help Desk via email, helpdesk@utep.edu, by phone 747-5257.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP [Help Desk](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

Academic Resources

- UTEP Library: Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- [RefWorks](#): A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

Individual Resources

- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#): Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.
- UTEP Title IX (Anti-Sexual Harassment and Anti-Sexual Violence) Office: <https://www.utep.edu/titleix>
- [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- Need more dance in your life? Join the UTEP student organization DESERT DANCE. E-mail desertdanceutep@gmail.com

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 number 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.

Attendance

In a course that meets four times a week, a student is allowed a maximum of 8 absences in an entire semester, 5 of which require no justification and result in no penalty. A student can use these absences based on personal necessity. The 6th, 7th and 8th absences will result in a drop of ½ a letter grade each in the student's overall grade. At the 9th absence, regardless of the student's current course standing or grade the student will automatically fail the course.

Exceptions:

- In the event of international bridge closures, exceptions may be made, and make-up work may be assigned.
- In case of an injury or extended illness, it is the student's responsibility to meet with their instructor to discuss possible solutions for course continuation or to consider dropping the class.
- In the event of highly unusual or extenuating circumstances, a student may petition the course instructor and department chair for permission to continue in a course.
- In case of injury, a student who is able to be present in the studio may observe class and complete alternative and equivalent assignments to be negotiated with the instructor.

Participation

Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to create a community of learners and is determined by your effort and involvement in the learning activities. You are expected to:

- To honor the traditions and methods of studio etiquette. I expect no other than, appropriate discipline, respect for the class, and mature behavior in a college environment. Excessive talking and class disruption will result in class expelling with repercussions in the student's final grade.
- 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 disruptive and dangerous for your body. Ideally, as a pre-professional, you are expected to arrive 10 minutes earlier to do your own warm-up.
- Participate in scheduled Blackboard assignments.
- Because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed.

Illness Precautions

Please stay home if you have symptoms of a communicable illness. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations.

Course Drop Policy

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 the Attendance policy above. 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.

Because every student's circumstance is unique, we encourage students to be as open and honest as possible when encountering unexpected challenges (job schedule change, family issues, etc, as well as to **communicate in advance** potential issues that could affect their commitment to class. E-mail me as soon as an issue comes up, this is the only way you can get help and possible accommodations while minimizing the impact on your academic progress. While every situation will be assessed by the instructor, the more a student is responsible to communicate in a clear and effective way, the easier it will be to find a positive solution.

Deadlines and late work

Be aware of all assignment's deadlines. No late work will be accepted if the reason is not considered excusable.

- Late work will be deducted a full letter grade or more (depending of the time elapsed from submission) with the only exception of a proven and documented emergency.

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.

Observing Class Policy / Submission Guidelines

If you are not able to participate during a class period due to illness or injury, you may avoid being counted absent for the day by observing the class and submitting an observation paper. This option may be used once, as two observations equal one absence. Below are guidelines to be followed in completing an observation paper.

- Bring pen/paper/laptop with you to the class you plan to observe. You should take detailed notes on the process/progress of the students in class, taking into consideration creative process, performance and other aspects from class that we are working on and you deem relevant.
- You should reflect upon your individual class process and submit a one-page paper comparing/contrasting your process with that of the other students in class.
- The observation paper must be submitted prior to the beginning of the next class period to avoid receiving an absence for the observed class.

Alternative Means of Submitting Work in Case of Technical Issues

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a backup. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through Blackboard, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me your backup document as a last resort.

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.

Accommodations Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

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 one's 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.

Guidance on Artificial Intelligence

The use of generative AI tools such as Chat GPT is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Summary/reflection from required article

Students must cite any borrowed content sources to comply with all applicable citation guidelines, copyright law, and avoid plagiarism. Instances that violate these guidelines will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

Plagiarism Detecting Software

Some of your course work and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

Important Dates:

- Labor Day, Sept. 4th – Observed

- Dance Studies (first 2): **Sept 7th and 21st**
- Reading Summary: **Due Sunday, September 10th**
- Practical Assessments: **Wednesday, October 18th and Wednesday, December 6th**
- Thanksgiving, Nov. 23rd – Observed
- Journal/Self-Reflection: **Thursday, November**
- Final Group Project: **Due Thursday, November 30th**
- Performance Reflection: **Due Sunday, December 10th**

Subject Matter

The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, and dance specifically has the characteristic to break your personal/cultural space. Note that occasionally, I will touch you to correct a movement here and there at times or you will have to physically interact with a classmate where body contact might be exchanged. **If you have concerns about any movement, physical touch or any specific subject 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.

Required attendance to departmental productions for the Fall:

- *postdata (or what I wish I said)*
- *Metamorphoses* [has a large dance component]

All info here: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/theatre-dance/about/prices.html>

If you cannot afford a ticket, there are ushering opportunities for departmental performances. Students can sign up to usher all departmental productions via the Theatre and Dance Audience Development office. Ushering opportunities open one month before opening night. Ushers will see the production for free and must commit to the full time they are needed. If an usher doesn't show up or leaves early, they will not receive credit for seeing the show and will not be allowed to usher for future events.

- Usher sign-up link
for *Posdata*: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/16eJ50efcSvtKPWQRCYJSirc8bhp0rlhHP6n85OT1RwQ/edit?usp=sharing>
- Usher sign-up link
for *Metamorphoses*: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HZ415HdTVbrMJ0y9ddGDWwc4UdNGZC2SUXzXtKg7NwK/edit?usp=sharing>

Also keep your emails checked for Tickets in Kind opportunities. Tickets in Kind are free tickets for students, donated by audience members and faculty.

Also consider this Fall musical of the Dinner Theatre, *Damn Yankees*. Note that the Dinner Theatre operates separately from our dept theatres and is not under Audience Development. For ushering opportunities, students should contact udt@utep.edu. Student price vary.

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