**dance theater lab** (danc 1022)

Friday, 3:00-5:20pm, or as needed

Fox Fine Arts 452

Fall 2015

Instructor: Lisa Smith

Office: Fox Fine Arts 200

Tel: 747-6509

Email: lisas@utep.edu

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 11:30 – 1:00

"Technical perfection is insufficient. It is an orphan without the true soul of the dancer."

*Sylvie Guillem*

**about the course**: Dance Theater Lab fulfills the technical, performance, and service requirements for a BA dance major. While there are multiple performing opportunities, the course also deals with other aspects of performance like front-of-house and backstage responsibilities, adjunct organizations (like Desert Dance), as well as other performance-related activities and service based work such as volunteering and interning. Students are assigned various projects and may also seek out opportunities, thus will not all work together in the same areas throughout the semester. Assignments are based on which students meet the needs for a specific project. This is not a course for casual performing; it is designed to be an intensive workshop course.

We will meet on Fridays at 3:00 in the early part of the semester. As your hours/rehearsals become scheduled it may not be necessary to meet every week. Children’s Traveling Company will rehearse at this time. You are expected to attend all meetings, rehearsals, demonstrations, and work assignments. Dancers in the teaching and professional performing fields exhibit a high degree of professional responsibility, and this course is part of your training in understanding and meeting these responsibilities. You will be graded on how you meet your responsibilities.

"To dance is to be out of yourself, larger, more powerful, more beautiful. This is power, it is glory on earth and it is yours for the taking." *Agnes de Mille*
This semester we will work on one major production: *The Firebird* and *My Mozart*, the faculty main stage performance scheduled for February 2015 as well as the *Children’s Traveling Company, Senior Capstone Performance*, and additional, smaller projects throughout the term. *Dinner Theatre* productions and crew work also count toward Dance Performance hours.

**Auditions** for the February concert will take place Friday, September 4 at 3:30 p.m. in 452. Auditions are mandatory for all Dance Theater Lab students. If you are not cast in one of the aforementioned shows, you should plan on earning most of your hours as a technician. With rare exceptions, new dance majors will not be cast in the main stage performance. You should plan on being a technician.

**Performers** are those students cast in a piece for an upcoming concert.

**Technicians** are those students not performing. You will be assigned a technical role. Technicians should meet one on one with the instructor to discuss technical placements.

Responsibilities during the term are divided as follows:

**Performers**
- must check email every day (both your UTEP email and Blackboard).
- are required to attend all rehearsals.
- must personally inform the choreographer or stage manager of any absences. Informing the stage manager through another dancer will result in the loss of one letter grade for the missing dancer.
- must complete 20 hours of technical work.* One may bargain for completion of these hours. You may earn additional hours as awarded through smaller semester projects (TBA) produced by faculty.

*Depending on how one is cast in the concert, more or less than twenty hours of technical work may be necessary. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis, and both student and choreographer will be in agreement.

**Technicians**
- must check email every day (both your UTEP email and Blackboard).
- must complete 50 hours of technical work. This may include lighting, stagecraft, costume construction, box office support, departmental recruiting, or work with Desert Dance.
- must be responsible for the documentation of your hours. This means keeping a consistent record, to be signed by the area coordinator, and delivered to the instructor.
"I do not try to dance better than anyone else. I only try to dance better than myself."

Mikhail Baryshnikov

**additional projects** Teaching and crewing opportunities will be available for High School Dance Day on November 14 from 10 – 2:30. Recruitment events and workshops for other classes are also ways to earn Performance Hours. Administrative duties such as writing and publishing a newsletter, designing and producing flyers for various activities, and facilitating program events are also ways to earn your hours. You will be notified of other performance opportunities as they arise.

**grading** is based on attendance, fulfillment of the required technical hours, and overall commitment to and participation in the performance or project.

For **performers**, grading is determined as follows;

Participation and attendance—70%. This is partially a subjective evaluation of the performer’s commitment to and participation in the rehearsal and performance process. Please see the Handbook for rehearsal guidelines.

Fulfillment of technical hours or additional performance hours—30% Each set of four fulfilled hours is worth one letter grade (for this portion of the grade). For example, if you complete only four hours, you will receive an F for this portion of the course grade. Completion of the required twenty hours will result in an “A” for this portion of the grade. 4 hours=F; 8 hours=D; 12 hours=C; 16 hours=B; 20 hours=A.

For **technicians**, grading is determined as follows:

Fulfillment of technical hours—70% Each set of ten fulfilled hours is worth one letter grade (for this portion of the grade). For example, if you complete only six hours, you will receive an F for this portion of the course grade. 20 hours=D; 40=C; 50=B; 60=A.

Participation and attendance—30% This is a subjective evaluation of the technician’s commitment to and participation in the technical process. Area coordinators will be contacted for their feedback.
**hour logs** - Both performers and technicians must keep track of their technical hours. Logs are always available in the manila folder on the bulletin board outside 452. If the folder is empty, let me know ASAP. All entries must be signed by the party in charge, be it the choreographer or the area coordinator.

Logs are due twice, on Friday, October 11, and, Monday, December 9.

**attendance policy** As this course serves as a training ground for the professional arena, your final grade will be assessed by how well you met the rehearsal and performance criteria previously agreed to by all parties. Your participation grade could easily be affected by an absence. Professionals do not miss rehearsals and are not late for rehearsals. You may be removed from any dance piece or production assignment if the choreographer/stage manager/area coordinator believes that your absence negatively impacts the rehearsal, performance, or production process, and your grade will be lowered to reflect this removal.

**important dates** (subject to change)

Friday, August 28 – First meeting 3:00 in 452  
Friday, September 4 – 3:30 Auditions for Mainstage Faculty Concert. Mandatory for all Dance Majors  
September 7 – 11 TBA – Tour of Dept. of Theatre and Dance and Dinner Theatre technical theatre facilities for new majors.  
Friday, October 11 – Mid-semester hour logs due in my office or my mailbox by 5:00 p.m.  
Saturday, November 14, – High School Dance Day  
Monday, December 7 – Final Hour logs due in my office or my mailbox by 5:00 p.m. ALL DANCE THEATER LAB STUDENTS MUST TURN IN A FINAL HOUR LOG FOR COURSE CREDIT!

“You have to love dancing to stick to it. It gives you nothing back, no manuscripts to store away, no paintings to show on walls and maybe hang in museums, no poems to be printed and sold, nothing but that single fleeting moment when you feel alive. It is not for unsteady souls.”

*Merce Cunningham*