

DANC 3301

Dance Theory and Composition

CRN 18874

Fall 2020

“Our point of departure must be the conception of an almost childlike play-sense expressing itself in various play-forms, some serious, some playful, but all rooted in ritual and productive of culture by allowing the innate human need of rhythm, harmony, change, alternation, contrast and climax, etc., to unfold in full richness.”

— **Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture**

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Melpignano

E-mail: mmelpignano@utep.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 3-4 PM. Just “walk in” through the Zoom link. Send an email if you need to schedule an appointment at another time (always indicate your preferred days/times and UID)

Topic: **Dr. Melissa Melpignano Virtual Office Hours**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/83656936945?pwd=bUorMm5CMjNaT3RkUjVpL2NKdklTQT09>

Meeting ID: 836 5693 6945

Passcode: 830052

Teaching Assistant: Cereza Strive

E-mail: jdhernandez13@miners.utep.edu

Contact Cereza for informal assistance with the assignments and for technology-related questions

Course format: Hybrid

Monday synchronous live on Zoom 1:30-2:50 PM (see link invitation in the box below)

Wednesday in autonomy (activities to do at home)

Topic: **Dance Theory and Composition Fall 2020 — Monday classes**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84242018298?pwd=NldUKzBXMPuNkJmdm9YbUNVOE5JUT09>

Meeting ID: 842 4201 8298

Passcode: 0YNHSU

Course Description

Dance Theory and Composition introduces the students to the creative practice of composing dances. With the tools and knowledge built up throughout the course, in the future students can enroll in Choreography I and II, collaborate as creative performers and co-creators in choreographic projects, widen their dance experience and training purposes, apply a dance creative and choreographic framework to other disciplinary realms, and expand their critical knowledge of dance and performance.

The compositional tools and theoretical knowledge processed in this course can be freely applied to and modified for different creative purposes, dance techniques/styles/genres, across disciplines.

This class conceives theory and practice as reciprocal, intertwining, different yet in partnership.

Students are required to be ready to move and engage in creative practices, and participate in discussions and activities with an open mind. For the synchronous class, make sure to wear comfortable clothes, try to find a space that allows you to move a bit and focus; have paper and pencil/pen/colors/etc. ready. In this class, students are also required to keep a journal (any format—paper or digital—is valid).

Students don't need to buy any textbook: all materials are uploaded by the instructor on Blackboard. You are required to have access to a computer (with video camera and microphone) and to Blackboard, and to check your UTEP email account *frequently*.

This course not only encourages an open, interactive, and energetic environment but wants to foster it and necessitates it. In this environment all participants, while working with commitment and rigor, can feel free to respectfully express curiosities, doubts, and questions. Participation and assignments will be performed according to the participants' possibilities, capabilities, and will. Always feel free to contact your instructors for any inquiry, thought, or information.

We start this course in the midst of a global pandemic. Health and safety are our priorities. Please, take care of yourselves and protect others. Get in touch if you need assistance and follow the UTEP [Temporary Health and Safety Policy](#).

Learning Goals

- Understanding the importance of *process* in creativity and demonstrating it through the practices set up during the course
- Understanding and applying the dance compositional tools explored in class
- Capacity to creatively explore compositional tools in class with the group as well as in autonomy
- Capacity to analytically observe and talk about process and compositional strategies in choreographic works (by others and self-authored)

After reading all the course's policies on the syllabus, look carefully at the **course map** and mark down all the **deadlines**.

Grading

Participation (25 points)

The participation grade rewards presence, work ethics, punctuality, engagement in class *and* on the Discussion, the necessary politeness and thoughtfulness in feedback and responses to classmates, and the capacity to create a conversation with your peers and nurture it throughout the course.

Discussion Board (DB) assignments (25 points)

There is a total of 5 practical assignments (max 5 points per assignment) to be posted in the class DB [on Weeks 2, 4, 6, 11, and 13](#). (Each assignment is explained in the Coursemap and will be further explained during the Monday lectures).

All DB assignments must be posted [by Saturday at 2 PM of the appropriate week](#), so to give time to peers and instructor to comment before the Monday lecture.

Mid-Term project (20 points)

A collaborative project, in pre-determined groups of 2 or 3 [due in class \(on Zoom\) on Monday, October 19 \(week 9\)](#). Groups will be announced by the instructor by Week 4. Each member of the group will be assigned the same grade, and in class we will discuss collaborative strategies, responsibility, and accountability in participatory work.

The assignment will be further discussed and brainstormed throughout the course. It will be possible to deliver it live or to pre-record it and screen-share it in class.

Final project (30 points)

The final project is an individual, two-part assignment: an individual choreographic-composition assignment [due in class \(on Zoom\) on Monday, November 30 \(week 15\)](#) (15 points) and a 3-page (double-spaced, font Times New Roman size 12) reflection on the composition process [due on Monday, December 7 by 11.59 PM \(finals week\)](#) (15 points). Further details will be given in class.

If you need an accommodation for an assignment, contact the instructor ASAP.

How to succeed in this course

- Follow the instructions and respect the deadlines. Something is not clear? A documented emergency happened? E-mail the instructor (the sooner, the better)!
- Assignment Submissions: You are responsible for making sure your assignments go through and upload properly to Blackboard by the due date and time. ALWAYS go back and double check that your submission went through—it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. If you are experiencing technical difficulties contact UTEP's helpdesk or Blackboard Help.
- Announcements and e-mails: Blackboard announcements are the main form of communication that I have with you as a class. Check them often and read them thoroughly. If there are any specifications, changes or alterations to assignments, dates or anything else regarding the class, they will be posted. You are responsible for the information shared there. Check your e-mail account (the one through which you're enrolled at UTEP which needs to be your miners.utep.edu account) at least once a day.
- **If you have questions: ASK!** The best way to get a hold of me is via email (please don't use Blackboard to send me a message, do it directly from your to my email address). Unless I announce otherwise, I should be able to get back to you within 48 hours. I work on my emails in the afternoon, especially Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you haven't heard from me after 48 hours from sending me a message, email me again, and contact our TA. If you have a question, please make sure you follow these guidelines:
 - 1) First, make sure that you have read thoroughly your syllabus and the instructions for the assignment or assessment you have a question about. Minimize the probability of asking something that is clearly stated somewhere.

2) If you don't find your answer by reading, formulate the question with as much detail as you can: What assignment do you have a question about (including what kind and from what module), what is unclear to you in the instructions, and how I can help you.

Netiquette

- Always consider audience. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading all postings on the DB.
 - Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
 - When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face to face situation.
 - Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. *Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).*
- Read this UTEP Netiquette document: <https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/cid/Files/docs/faculty-resources/student-orientation/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

All the materials—written, audio and visual—shared within this course remain within this course. You can share on your social media your own materials if the only person that appears or the only author is you. If you want to share content that includes or is co-authored with other classmates, you need to write them *and* the instructor to discuss the authorization.

Attendance Policy

In a course that meets twice a week, a student is allowed a maximum of **6** absences in an entire semester, **4** of which require no justification and result in no penalty. A student may use these absences based on personal necessity. The 5th and 6th absences will result in a drop of ½ letter each in the student's overall grade. At the 7th absence, regardless of the student's current course standing or grade, the student automatically fails the course.

Technology Requirements

Course content is delivered via the Internet through Zoom and the Blackboard learning management system (LMS). Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web. You may use any of the primary Web browsers—Explorer, Google Chrome, Firefox, Safari, etc. When having technical difficulties, try switching to another browser.

You will need to have or have access to a computer/laptop, printer, scanner, a webcam, and a microphone, or device (like a phone) that allows you to enter Blackboard, check the emails, record and watch audio-visual materials. Sometimes, if a video doesn't work or a page doesn't open, it's because you need to download or update Microsoft Office, Adobe, Flashplayer, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java or so. Also check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. If you encounter technical difficulties of any kind, contact the Help Desk at <https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/> and helpdesk@utep.edu.

If you cannot have access to technological means for whatever reasons, contact me ASAP and I will negotiate an accommodation.

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

Academic Dishonesty and Copyright

Any form of academic dishonesty: cheating, plagiarizing, or taking a test for another student is considered a very serious matter at UTEP. Our library webpage provides good information on what UTEP considers Academic Dishonesty and what steps the university takes in such cases. Please review this information at: <http://libraryweb.utep.edu/research/plagiarism.php>. Refer also to the [Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Affairs](#).

Some of the materials in this course are copyrighted. Copying of textbooks is not “fair use” under the Copyright Act. Your cooperation is expected. 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.

Students with Disabilities Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric special needs. If you have a disability and/or you need any accommodation, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

On-Campus Sources of Student support

- Center for Accommodations and Support Services <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>
- Student Success Helpdesk https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-helpdesk.html
- Miner Learning Center <https://www.utep.edu/mlc/>
- University Writing Center <https://www.utep.edu/uwc/>
- Counseling and Psychological Services <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/>

Students are encouraged to speak with professionals from UTEP’s Counseling and Psychological Services on a walk-in basis from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in Union Building West, Room 202. In addition, the Miners Talk Crisis Line at 915-747-5302 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- UTEP Title IX (Anti-Sexual Harassment and Anti-Sexual Violence) Office: <https://www.utep.edu/titleix/sb-212.html>