Course Description:

This is a dance studio practice course physically interrogates normative perceptions of culture by drawing from transcultural physicalities and philosophies. The class is grounded a methodology called Ritual-iD®: a choreographic, performance, and art-as-research methodology that has been in on-going development since 2013. The method focuses on the experience of movement. To understand beauty and aesthetics as a product of intentional somasensory experience. By taking pleasure in the effort, by reflexivity and contemplation, by relating to others through the concept of Cosmo-Ubuntu, we move together towards understanding dance as a technology that can be used toward transformation, contemplation, and healing. Rhythm, breath and sensation are the core of our practice. We will cultivate our experiences and understandings of strength, endurance, and power throughout the course. The lived experience of dance is central as class members hone their capacity for mindfulness and ‘bodyfulness.’ We contemplate dance’s agency as contingent on our awareness of our personal, political, and cultural subjectivity in relation to our bodies. The course will be guided by a variety of contemporary Africana forms and their philosophies alongside an eclectic array of Afrikan and non-Afrikan conceptual systems.

1 COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS: All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.
Course Objectives:

- Cultivate embodied understanding of rhythm, breath and sensation, endurance, strength, and polyrhythmic coordination.
- Basic understanding of the body as a percussive instrument and the difference between representational and embodied musicality.
- Focus on the lived experience of dance (surviving the dance moment) to inform our kinesthetic expression.
- Build participants’ vocabulary and observation skills in dance.
- Develop a personal understanding of subjectivity by drawing from African traditional forms, modern forms, diasporic forms, Africanist aesthetics, and contemporary Western dance practice.

COMMUNITY INTEGRITY SUPPORTY INFORMATION

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.

Physical Contact Statement:
Dance is a physical art form, which often requires physical contact with others. At times, the instructor may give corrections for alignment or muscular awareness through gentle, physical contact, so as to help the student understand proper placement and avoid injury. It might also be used in an artistic way when dancing with other students. If you are uncomfortable with physical contact on any level, tell the instructor immediately. These concerns are perfectly acceptable and will in no way affect a student’s grade.

Policy on Sensitive Subject Matter:
The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable seeing or experiencing. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects that may trigger specific emotions, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. As I will respect your individual’s rights to choose what performances and topics you can engage with, I expect all our discussions and reflections to be conducted in a respectful and professional matter.

Emotions, Thought and Feelings:
This course requires that you engage in deep contemplation and occasionally, meditation with regard to thoughts feelings and emotions. As we abide by principles of intention awareness and intimacy it will be important that participants cultivate awareness of their thoughts and emotions throughout the process, alongside physical sensation. Cultivating a habit of describing our experience will be central to our process. This is part of the reason for our process of our check-in and check-out in each class. To be able to find agency through verbal articulation of experience. Below is a tool to help catalyze the process. While incomplete, the Feelings Wheel I a useful place to begin this endeavor.
Where You Can Go for Help? ... Campus Resources

It's important to know where to reach out whenever needed during your university experience. If you feel you cannot address matter or an issue with your instructor directly never hesitate to reach out the chair, other faculty, student committees and to the university itself. Your safety and agency are very important to your educational experience.

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support: academic, personal, technology, individual, mental health, spiritual, and many more. Below a just a few of them. Always feel free to communicate your needs to your facilitator. They may have access to services you’re not aware of in the university.

- Hide Tsutsui, Dept. Chair; Head of Lighting and Sound
  Email: htsutsui2@utep.edu
  Phone: (915) 747-5146

- Dr. Melissa Melpignano: Director of Dance
  Email: mmelpignano@utep.edu
  Phone: (915) 747-5146

- Student Services
  Adriana Domínguez: Assistant Professor, Co-chair JEDI committee
  Email: adrianad@utep.edu

- 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.

- UTEP Library:
  Tessy Torres
  Email: mttorres3@utep.edu
  Tel: (915)747-5066
Contact Ms. Urbina for any questions concerning difficulties accessing the viewing material for the course, or finding reading resources.

- **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.
- **Military Student Success Center:** Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- **Center for Accommodations and Support Services:** Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- **Counseling and Psychological Services:** Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.
- **Student Success Helpdesk** [https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-helpdesk.html](https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-helpdesk.html)
- **Miner Learning Center** [https://www.utep.edu/mlc/](https://www.utep.edu/mlc/)
- **UTEP Food Pantry:** Non-perishable food items are available to students who are currently enrolled in classes. Bring a Miner Gold Card to Memorial Gym, Room 105, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Course Copyright:**

All the materials—written, audio, and visual—shared within this course remain within this course. To store, post, or share by any means and/or for personal use or public consumption any course material (assigned or produced within and for the course) without explicit authorization by the subjects involved is illegal. Make sure to ask for permission in case. 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 contact them and the instructor via e-mail (utilizing the UTEP account) to discuss the authorization.

**Policy on Copyright and Fair Use:**

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.

**Class Recordings**

Occasionally we may record/film class to allow you to have access to revise new choreography, class lectures, group discussions, and so on in the event you miss a synchronous or in-person class meeting due to illness or other extenuating circumstance. Our use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP’s acceptable-use policy. A recording of class sessions will be kept and stored by UTEP, in accordance with FERPA and UTEP policies. Your instructor will not share the recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, teaching assistants, or graduate assistants, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners with whom we may engage during a class session. You may not share recordings outside of this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

**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.

Netiquette:
There may be times we will meet online for various reasons or specific projects. Below are suggestions for our learning community concerning how we want to behave and treat each other when we are online.

Plagiarism Detecting Software
Some of your course work and assessments may submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase. WE are also aware of software such ChatGTP that can be used to generate text for you. We will also conscientiously learn how to mobilize technologies such as these to our advantage as a learning community as needed.

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Course Communication: How we will stay in touch with one another.
Because this is an online class, we will not see each other in the ways you may be accustomed to: during class time, small group meetings, and office hours. However, there are several ways we can keep the communication channels open:

- **Office Hours:** We will not be able to meet on campus, but I will still have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. My office hours will be held on Blackboard Collaborate using the “Office Hours” link in Blackboard and during the following times:
  Mondays and Wednesdays: 1 p.m. to 3p.m. Mountain Time; by appointment.
- **Email:** Blackboard message is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt. My UTEP e-mail (rtchabikwa@utep.edu) is the alternative in case of emergency. When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student 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.
- **Help Board:** If you have a question that you believe other students may also have, please post it in the Help Board of the discussion boards inside of Blackboard. Please respond to other students’ questions if you have a helpful response.
- **WhatsApp/GroupMe# student groups.** This is similar to the help board. The instructor will NOT be in these groups, but you can help each other more quickly there.
Announcements: Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

Excused Absences and/or Course Drop Policy
According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” See academic 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.

OR
I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the Registrar’s Office to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

A reminder that such policy is in place to guarantee consistency among courses and foster accountability and consistency for our students. It contains the necessary flexibility to account for possible students’ needs. Specific situations can be handled on a case-by-case basis, and discussed collectively in our meetings or with me and/or Hide. Please, abide by this to avoid confusion among students.

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.

In a course that meets twice a week, a student is allowed a maximum of 4 absences in an entire semester, 2 of which require no justification and result in no penalty. A student can use these absences based on personal necessity. The 3rd and 4th absences will result in a drop of ½ a letter grade each in the student’s overall grade. At the 5th 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 his or her 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.

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.

**COURSE CONTENT & PROCEDURES**

This course will revolve around dance, movement, and creative practice. It will, to a lesser extent, also integrate readings, viewings, and written feedback assignments. Required reading and viewing recourses will be available digitally on Blackboard or available free online. Because the course aims to engage with current artists, events, viewing assignments and some materials will be made available the week before they are due. All assignments Sundays at 11:59pm via Blackboard unless otherwise instructed.

Students are expected to consider the class material as cumulative rather than sectional. The topical outline is subject to change and student will be notified as this occurs.

Please Note: Because of the nature of the course material, your participation and attendance are essential. Missing more than 8 class periods will affect your grade. The course does distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.

**Grading**

60% => Attendance, Participation, Studio practice and Assignments.
25% => Self-designed Final Project
15% => Improvement in Technical proficiency: demonstrating markedly increased competence and visible improvement in movement concepts and skills taught. This includes the ability to improve based on correction and the extent to which the participant learns to self-correct.

**Ritual—iD Technique Rubric:**

Below is a grid that summarizes the central technical and philosophical concepts we’ll be learning, cultivating throughout our time together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healing</th>
<th>Contemplation</th>
<th>Transformation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breath, Vocalization, &amp; Audible Breath</td>
<td>Sensation &amp; Somasensory Acuity</td>
<td>Rhythm, Polyrhythm, &amp; Polymelody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circles, Power, &amp; Endurance</td>
<td>Inversions &amp; Relationship to the Ground</td>
<td>Isolations, Spinal Articulation, &amp; Breaking the Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exertion, Recuperation, and the Physics of Form</td>
<td>Neutral Position</td>
<td>Lyricism, Counterpoint, &amp; High-Affect Juxtaposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decolonial &amp; Anti-racist learning praxes</td>
<td>Practice-as-Research, Art Research, Creative Research</td>
<td>Transdisciplinary &amp; Intermedia praxes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Movement Evaluation Guidelines/Rubric:

This list gives a clearer understanding of the rubric used for evaluation in the class. Notable development must be seen on all fronts to attain top grades. Keep in mind that a large part of this requires that you take risks in the class, take ownership of your learning process, and make progress in physical practice. The class diverges quite drastically from classical Western aesthetics and modes learning. Be you are expected to challenge yourself and grow in this approach to dance. Do ask questions and arrange office hours by appointment. Evaluation will be based on the following:

**Participation & Improvement** – (10pt) Arriving before class to be warmed-up and ready for class to begin. Full engagement and thoughtful participation in feedback and discussion. Positive learning attitude. A willingness to demonstrate and volunteer for movement. Being physically engaged through the entire class. Visibly applying oneself fully in the process of presentation of the piece. This involves evaluated progress during the course of the semester along with participation in class. The class requires that you engage all class processes, which include volunteering, contributing to discussions, willingness take positive action and creative risk. Demonstrate a markedly increased competence and visible improvement in movement concepts and skills taught.

**Execution of movements** – (5pt) completing sequence incorporating all movements in a connected fluid manner with focus on the ‘quality’ of movement. Attention to the technique and movement principles you’ve learnt (groundedness, audible breath, circles etc.)

**Memory** – (5pt) remembering sequence and presenting it without reference to other dancers and being proactive in learning sequences using the resources available in the class i.e. instructor, other students, practice outside of class etc.

**Coordination** – (5pt) ability to integrate the whole body in the choreography as required by the sequences. Full embodiment of the relational elements of the movement technique (e.g., the relationship between impulse, breathe and balance, the body’s relationship to the ground, initiations of movements, and rhythmic acuity.

**Incorporation of corrections** – (5pt) acknowledging and applying corrections received during the course of the semester. Cultivating one’s ability to self-correct through observation. Recognizing inefficient habits and aesthetic tendencies/defaults and cultivating new modalities. The ability to improve based on feedback and corrections, and the extent to which the participant learns to self-correct.

**Individual interpretation** – (5pt) going further with the given movements by further animating them and allowing your body to explore and express your interpretation of the sequence. Building on and personalizing movement motifs given in class.

**Rhythm/Musicality** – (5pt) ability to keep in time with the music. Musicality is not optional in sequences focusing on rhythmic movement and use of the ‘body as percussive instrument’

**Proprioception** – (5pt) (awareness of the position of one’s body) ability to recognize the demonstrated movement motif and replicate it with one’s own body

**Meta-cognition** – (5pt) demonstrated understanding of how to approach the movements and the trans-cultural sensibilities approached in the class. Demonstrating awareness and presence to how you learn personally and taking agency in the process. The ability to make connections between different aspects of the class and allowing your ‘bodymind’ to be ‘enculturated’ through the class.
Mandatory performances
Students have opportunities to attend the shows for free (see below). Most of our classes don't require a textbook and are zero-cost classes. Student tickets are $12.
The mandatory departmental productions for the Fall are:
- **postdata (or what I wish I said)**
- **Metamorphoses** [which has a large dance component]
All info here: [https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/theatre-dance/about/prices.html](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/16eiJS0efcSvtKPQRCYJSrc8bhp0rIhHP6n85OT1RwQ/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16eiJS0efcSvtKPQRCYJSrc8bhp0rIhHP6n85OT1RwQ/edit?usp=sharing)
- Usher sign-up link
  for **Metamorphoses**: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HZ4l5HdTVbrMI0y9ddGDWwc4UdNGZC2SUx2tKg7NWk/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HZ4l5HdTVbrMI0y9ddGDWwc4UdNGZC2SUx2tKg7NWk/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.

Extra Credit Possibilities:
If you need extra credit assignments keep an eye out for opportunities to attend:
- Ruben Center Events
- Mountain Movement contact improvisation events
- Capoeira classes at Capoeira El Paso
Also feel free to suggest other possibilities to your instructor as needed.
Module ONE: Week 1 to 5

Keywords:
epistemology, identitarian categories, body schema, Afrikan, African, groundedness, fluidity, kinesthetic chain, movement signature, kinesphere, culture, Africanist Aesthetic senses, identity.

Key ideas:
Ritual -iD Technique Foundations
Decolonial and Anti-Racist Learning Praxes
Embodied Knowledge
Learning Community
Movement as Embodied Philosophy

Concepts:
Taking pleasure in the effort
Creating time through movement
Thoughts, feelings, and non-judgement
Breath, Sensation, and Rhythm

Questions:
How do I learn?
What are the relationships between my thoughts, emotions, and Body?
How do they affect my dancing, learning dance, and creating art?
What are the preconceived ideas I hold of my own body?
How does my self-concept influence my movement practice?
How would I characterize Ritual-iD as a technique if I were to describe it to another person?

Assignments:
Video Log #1
Record yourself performing the entirety of our Foundational Phrase completely. Though you are required to record the phase following its order correctly, feel free to be creative in your presentation of it to make it engaging to watch (e.g. adding graphics, it doesn’t have to be a single shot, choosing music that gives the phrase meaning to yourself etc.)

Reflection Post #1
Reflection your observations through the first module and try to go as deeply into the reflection as possible. In 500 words or more try to describe your experience in a much dept as possible: How have you felt? What have you learned? What are you finding difficult to learn? How do you learn? What do you notice about other members of our learning community and how they are moving through the course? What has been comfortable/uncomfortable/effortful/frightening/painful/satisfying etc.? And feel free to express other aspects of your experience not covered by these questions.
Module TWO: Week Six to Week Ten

Keywords:
Identitarian categories, contemporary, world dance, proscenium, site specific, embodied philosophy, aesthetics, body schema

Key ideas:
- Art Research
- Practice as Research
- Performance quality

Concepts:
- Improvisation and dance composition
- Spatial Realities
- Self-concept
- Relationality

Questions:
What is Contemporary Dance?
What experiences and ideas inform my definition of contemporary dance?
Where do I locate myself in the genre of contemporary dance?
Why Do I Dance?
How do I create?
Am I saying exactly want I want to say in/through my creative practice?

Moving Subject: focus on building a sustainable relationship to personal potentiality, building a relational intuition/awareness, group awareness, the lived experience of dance and connecting somatically to the inner messages of the body. Centering the concept of Composition.

- Site Specific Performance, Screen Dance, and Performance Art
- Begin Personal Final project

Assignments:
Video Logs/Reflection Post/Avant Garde Contemporary Viewings
Module THREE: Week Eleven to Fourteen

Keywords: contemplation; art as research; the work; self-knowledge, imperatives; PaR;

Key Ideas:
- Identity
- Body schema
- Creative impulse
- Practice as Research (PaR)

Concepts:
- Transformation
- Contemplation
- Healing

Questions:
What is Creative Research and how to do it?
What is my kinesthetic identity?
What does dance do for me?
What do I want to do with/through dance?

Performance and Ritual: focus on awareness of composition as a constant process, emotions as lived rather than “expressed”, shift from outward appearance to the inner authority of the dancer.

- Deepening and articulating personal meaning in one’s dance practice

Assignments:
Final Project/Performance Attendances

Instructor: R. Tawanda Chabikwa, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Theatre and Dance
African American Studies Program
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 1pm to 3pm or by appointment
Liberal Arts Building, Rm. 401.
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www.ndiniwako.org