

DANC 2301 CEL* - Improvisation

Fall 2022

MW 3:00 – 4:20 PM

FOX M201

(Please note that whenever possible, we will have class outdoors)

Instructor: S. Paola López Ramírez

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Office hours: Tuesdays 9:30 – 11:30 am or by appointment.

This syllabus is subject to change, I will notify you promptly if the changes will affect assignments in any way.

Course Description:

Movement improvisation is a broad art form that has a rich and complex history. In the contemporary dance world in the past decades, being able to improvise has become a required skill for any aspiring artist in the field. Whether you use it as a tool for making dances, a performance form, a cultural practice, a tool for resistance, or “just” for the joy of moving, delving into the rigor of physical improvisation will open a wondrous journey into awareness, self-discovery, and creativity. We will deeply investigate our body, how it moves and how it relates to others and the environment. Given the relational and democratic nature of the practice, we will also spend time discussing and practicing the ethical implications of improvisation as engaged citizen-artists both in the classroom and in community settings.

**The “CEL” designation for this course stands for “Community Engagement & Leadership” and is part of a new certificate program in the College of Liberal Arts. The purpose of this CEL course is to strengthen students’ understanding of their role in society as engaged citizens and to build the knowledge and competencies that will enable them to be socially responsible and participating community leaders. Accordingly, course assignments and assessments are developed in line with the CEL Program mission in Liberal Arts, as well as within the broader framework and mission of UTEP’s “Edge Advantages” goals.*

CEL work for this course:

The CEL component for this class will be an immersive experience in [Experiencing the Bosque](#), a multigenerational project radically integrating community organizing, art-making and environmental stewardship through the activity of creating performances together. This project is a deep investigation of the [Rio Bosque Wetlands Park](#)— a 372-acre ecological restoration project of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo valley ecosystem, where you will spend much of your time doing our assignments outside of class. Throughout the semester we will work towards a performance at the Park along side community members giving you a hands-on experience of how improvisation and performance-making can be used to engage social and environmental issues.

Course Topics:

This course is divided into 3 main sections that will guide the focus of our work throughout the semester. *The dates given below are approximate* and they might change as the course progresses.

Section 1: Solo body (8/22 – 9/19)

We will begin by listening to our body and acknowledging all the information it stores (dance related and otherwise). From here, we will begin a diligent investigation of our instrument taking one element at a time to diversify our movement palette. A big component of this section will be learning to work with and create improvisational scores for performance. Prepare to be excited, bored, surprised, and exhausted.

Section 2: Site-specific explorations (9/21 – 10/19)

Site-specific dance offers a platform for us to investigate and honor the connection between our body and the spaces we move through. We will explore how our body responds to constructed space and natural landscape through performance scores and will create individual scores for Experiencing the Bosque's performance.

Section 3: Ensemble work (10/24 – 11/18)

Learning about our body through our relationships is fundamental to embodied practice. Ensemble improvisation is an extraordinary way to deepen understanding of our movement tendencies and desires. We will work on building together, developing deep listening and increasing our awareness of compositional form.

Throughout the semester we will weave in discussions through our embodied practice of the ethical implications of improvisation and our responsibilities as body-based artists in our communities.

Course Objectives:

- ✓ To develop new movement language as we become aware of our own tendencies and preferences
- ✓ To expand our conception of aesthetics in dance
- ✓ To develop sensitivity and intelligence when improvising in an ensemble
- ✓ To increase our kinesthetic awareness and our understanding of interconnection to others and our environment
- ✓ To learn about improvisation as performance practice through embodied experience and research of practitioners in the field
- ✓ To increase social justice and social responsibility awareness, specifically as body-based artists
- ✓ To articulate and practice the team-building skills of improvisation

- ✓ To organize, participate and reflect on rehearsals and a performance at the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park as part of the interdisciplinary project Experiencing the Bosque

Assignments and Grading Criteria:

- Participation (270 points, 10 points per class): To succeed in this course you must, above all, show up and practice. Improvisation is a diligent research form that requires absolute physical, emotional, and spiritual focus. If you come and do the work each class, you will be awarded all 10 points. Please refer to the attendance policy below for further information.
- Journal (50 points): You are required to bring a notebook/journal to class every day to have as your companion during the semester. You will need it for multiple assignments and reflection in and outside class. You will turn it in on **November 28th**.
- Score Assignments (120 points total, 30 points each): As we learn about scores and craft our own for use in the community performance, you will have four (4) assignments to do outside of class. These will be handed out to you with the deadlines throughout the semester.
- Mandatory Performances (60 points total, 30 points each): The Department requires that each student enrolled in a dance class attends 2 shows of the departmental season within the semester. You will need to sign-in after the performance using the QR code provided at the venue and upload to blackboard a one to two-minute improvisation responding to the show. Please refer to the **Performance Schedule** and the **Important Dates** at the end of the syllabus to see performance options and due dates.
- Community rehearsals (150 points total, 50 points each): In preparation for the Experiencing the Bosque performance, you will attend three workshop/rehearsals at the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. **Rehearsals will be on Saturdays: October 8th, 22nd and 29th from 3-6 pm.** These are MANDATORY. If you have a conflict with any of these dates, please let me know **ASAP**.
- Site-specific performance (150 points): **On Saturday November 5th** is Experiencing the Bosque's performance. Expect to be at the park all day (arriving no later than 9 am and staying until about 6 pm). **Show times are at 11 am and 3 pm.** This is MANDATORY and an incredibly important part of the course. If you have a conflict with this date, please let me know **ASAP**. Please reserve Saturday November 12th as our "rain date" in case of inclement weather on the 5th.
- Community process reflection (100 points): After the November 5th performance you will write a 5 to 7-page reflection paper on the community process of

Experiencing the Bosque. Guidelines will be made available to you by November 1st.
Due on November 14th.

- Group presentations (100 points): The last two weeks of class will be devoted to researching and presenting on prominent improvisers on the field of dance performance. Your group and research assignments will be given to you by November 9th. **Presentations will be held during class on November 30th.**

Total possible points: 1000

A= 100-90% (900-1000)

B= 89-80% (800-899)

C= 79-70% (700-799)

D= 69-60% (600-699)

F= 59% and below (599 <)

Attendance Policy:

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.

COVID -19 PRECAUTION STATEMENT

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID -19 or are experiencing COVID -19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID -19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID -19 testing.

Please follow [the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines](#) for masking, quarantine and isolation if you develop COVID -19 symptoms and/or have a known exposure at any point during the semester.

Important Dates

October 8th - Rehearsal @ Rio Bosque

October 22nd - Rehearsal @ Rio Bosque

October 29th - Rehearsal @ Rio Bosque

November 3rd – Responses to BORDERLINE and THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW due on blackboard

November 5th – Site-Specific Performance @ Rio Bosque

November 12th – Rain date for Nov 5th performance

November 14th – Reflection paper on community process due in class

November 28th – Journal due in class

November 30th – Group presentations in class

December 7th - Responses to ZOOT SUIT due on blackboard

Departmental Performances:

The Department of Theatre and Dance requires that each student enrolled in a dance class attends 2 shows of the departmental season within the semester.

Students must choose 1 performance from List A & 1 performance from List B

List A

BORDERLINE - The June

October 21,22,27,28,29 @ 7:30pm

October 23,30 @2:30pm

*Student Matinees: October 25,26

ZOOT SUIT – The Wise

November 17,18,19,25,26 @7:30pm

December 2,3 @ 7:30

November 20,27 @ 2:30pm

December 4 @2:30pm

*Student Matinees: November 29,30 December 1

List B

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW – LIVE ON STAGE! (Dinner Theater)

October 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 2022

Special “Audience Participation” Performances

October 28, 30, 31, 2022

EXPERIENCING THE BOSQUE’S Performance @ the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

Saturday, November 5th: There are two shows @ 11am and 3pm* Free

*The afternoon performance will have free transportation provided from UTEP campus to the Park and back.

If you cannot pay for a ticket, there are ushering opportunities for theatre performances. Students can sign up to usher all of our productions in the audience development office (lobby of the Wise Theatre in Fox Fine Arts level 2).

Extra Credit Events:

- For events hosted by the Dinner Theater

check: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/udt/index.html>. Check out the Departmental Events for more information and tickets: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/theatre-dance/events/index.html>

- Dance @ Chalk the Block, Downtown El Paso

Saturday, October 8 and Sunday, October 9 (Specific time-frames for the dance performances TBA)

Free

- Homecoming Week Site-Specific Dance Performances, Across the UTEP campus (map and calendar TBA)

Week 10, October 24 – 28

Free

- Campus Museums

Visit the current exhibits at the [Rubin Center for the Visual Arts](#) and the [Centennial Museum](#) and/or attend any of their events throughout the semester

To get credit, submit a 300-word written response for each event you attend by December 2nd

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](#).

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 [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

Student 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.
- [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.
- [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- [Math Tutoring Center \(MaRCS\)](#): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- [History Tutoring Center \(HTC\)](#): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
- [Military Student Success Center](#): UTEP welcomes military-affiliated students to its degree programs, and the Military Student Success Center and its dedicated staff (many of whom are veterans and students themselves) are here to help personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- [RefWorks](#): A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.