THEA 1304 – Movement for Actors I
CRN 29222

Spring 2020
MW 9:00 – 10:20 AM
FOX M404

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This syllabus is subject to change, I will notify you promptly if and when it does.

Course Description:
This course is designed to expand actors’ physical awareness and deepen their understanding of their bodies. Grounded on somatic practices and the improvisation training method of Action Theater, we will work on developing our entire bodies as the expressive and malleable instruments they can be. This will be a rigorous physical study that will reshape students’ understanding of the body and movement in acting while increasing body strength, flexibility and stamina.

Dress code:
In order to increase your ease, promote safe movement and aid my ability to make corrections, you are required to wear clothes that 'hug' your body and have bare feet. I need to see your body clearly, specifically your knees, pelvis and spine to instruct proper alignment. Even though you are not required to wear tights and leotards, you DO need to make sure that you comply with the specifications above. You will NOT be allowed to take class in baggy or oversized clothes, with dangly jewelry or chewing gum. This is for YOUR safety. If you are unsure if what you have to wear is acceptable, please check with me the first week of class.

Course Objectives:
- √ To increase body coordination, strength and flexibility
- √ To expand physical awareness by noticing bodily sensations
- √ To increase and sharpen detail and specificity of the body
- √ To improve presence and performance quality
- √ To integrate the entire body (including eyes and face) into our expressive palette
- √ To challenge conventional aesthetics in theater
- √ To engage with the socio-political implications of movement and performance

Late-work Policy: I do NOT accept late work. Please plan ahead and give yourself plenty of time to turn in assignments on time. If something extraordinary comes up that will prevent you from turning in an assignment (accident, death in the family, severe illness, etc.) you must let me know (if at all possible) BEFORE the due date to request an extension.
Attendance Policy: Your presence is of utmost importance for your success in the course. Therefore, you only have two (2) absences permitted during the semester without penalty. After that, your grade will be lowered 1/2 a letter grade for each day missed. Keep in mind that coming to class late or leaving early will be considered as 1/2 an absence. Be advised that the only absences that are excused are UTEP sponsored events and that you will need to submit official documentation in order to be excused.

Students missing more than six classes should drop the course. Please make sure you are aware of the course drop deadline, dropping the class is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

NOTE: In certain extreme circumstances, I will allow you to make up absences. If you want to do this, please schedule an appointment with me to discuss it further.

Criteria for Grading

Effort (200 points): Each day I will take into consideration your class participation, attitude, attire, and energy. Please be advised that this is in addition to the department’s attendance policy. If you are not present, you can’t get effort points.

Midterm Movement Exam (100 points): For this exam you will demonstrate concepts learned in the first part of the semester. You will perform these in small groups, and I will give you a breakdown of the points before the exam. Exam date: March 9th.

Journal Reflections (60 points, 30 points each) From day one, you will be required to bring a journal or notebook to class to write notes, reflections and questions. Even though you are not expected to write every day, you are required to do so at least once a week. Please keep all your notes in the same book (not multiple ones or on loose paper), write legibly and date every single entry you make. The journals are meant to be a tool to help you keep track of what you are discovering or what you want clarification on during class. We will take time at least once every two weeks for you to get questions answered, although you are encouraged to ask anytime! You will turn in your journals twice in the semester: March 9th and May 6th.

Performance Response (50 points):
You are required to see a theater or dance performance from the Department of Theater and Dance at UTEP and create a response by following the guidelines at the end of this syllabus. All extra shows, including the Dinner Theatre or performances in the greater El Paso/Juarez community will be counted as extra credit (please see below for extra credit guidelines). Please keep in mind that you MUST be an audience member in the performance you respond to. You MAY NOT respond to performances you are part of (whether it is in the cast or crew). Due date: May 4th.
PLEASE NOTE FOR ALL REQUIRED SHOWS AND EXTRA CREDIT SHOWS AT UTEP:

You are **required** to sign an attendance sheet at the **end of the performance** you attend. If you do not sign this sheet you **will not get credit for attendance, your response will not be accepted**, and you will receive a **0** for the assignment. The house manager will have the sign-in sheet available at the end of each performance.

**SUBJECT MATTER:**
The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable seeing on stage. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. As I will respect your individual right to choose what shows you want to see, I expect all our discussions—including any that may occur outside of class—to be conducted in a respectful and professional manner.

**Final Movement Exam (100 points):** For this exam you will demonstrate concepts learned throughout the semester. You will perform these in small groups, and I will give you a breakdown of the points before the exam. Exam date: **May 6th**

Total points possible: 510

- **A** = 100-90% (510-459)
- **B** = 89-80% (458-408)
- **C** = 79-70% (407-357)
- **D** = 69-60% (356-306)
- **F** = 59% and below (305<)

**Remember that the number of absences you have may lower your final grade!!!**

**EXTRA CREDIT:** You can get up to 25 points of extra credit by attending extra events or performances that relate to our subject matter. Each extra credit event is 5 points unless otherwise noted. **To get credit you MUST do the following:**

- Get **prior** approval from your instructor on the event you want to attend.
- Turn in proof of attendance (e.g. ticket stub, program)
- If the show is from the UTEP Department of Theater and Dance, sign the sheet at the end of the event.
- Turn in all proof of extra credit **before the end of the day on May 8th.**

**Important Dates:**

- **2/12 – 2/16; Monsters we Create** showing at the Studio Theater in Fox Fine Arts
- Monday **3/9; Midterm movement exam**
- **Journal reflections #1 DUE**
Wednesday 3/11; NO CLASS DUE TO ACDA

Saturday 3/14; American College Dance Association: An Evening with Guest Artists showing at the Wise Family Theater in Fox Fine Arts

3/16 – 3/22; SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES

4/24 – 5/3; Into the Beautiful North at the Wise Family Theater in Fox Fine Arts

Monday 5/4; Performance response DUE

Wednesday 5/6; Final movement exam

Journal reflections #2 DUE

Friday 5/8; Last day to turn in extra credit

**Academic Dishonesty:**
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/copy_plag.php](http://libraryweb.utep.edu/research/copy_plag.php)

**Copyright and Fair Use:**
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.

**ADA:**
The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, 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.

**Technology Problems:**
Technology problems are NOT an excuse for work that is late or missing. Students need to complete assignments for this course well before the due date to allow time for dealing with technology problems. Contact IT for technological problems and remember that Atlas lab in the UGLC or LACIT in the Liberal Arts building provide assistance with using Blackboard.
**University Writing Center:**
Located in the library room 227, UTEP’s University Writing Center (UWC) offers free tutoring assistance in writing for all UTEP students. The tutors are undergraduate and graduate students who can help with all parts of a writing assignment, including prewriting, organizing, revising, and editing. They can also help you understand any writing assignment and will work with you to aid you in comprehending difficult material.

**Performance Response Guidelines**

**Due date:** May 4th

REMEMBER that you MUST be an audience member in the performance you respond to. You MAY NOT respond to performances you are part of (whether it is in the cast or crew).

****KEEP YOUR TICKET STUB!!!**
You’ll be required to turn it in with your response

**Guidelines:**
It is very important for me that you take the time to interpret and respond thoughtfully to the performances you watch. If you don’t know where to start, asking yourself the questions below AFTER you watch the performance might be helpful. Please DO NOT take notes during the show as that distracts you from being fully present in the experience.

1. What stayed with you after the performance ended?
2. Think about the movement, plot, music, costumes and/or lighting... what drew you?
3. What colors, images, bodies, characters grabbed your attention? (this can be either in a “positive” or “negative” way)
4. How did the experience make you feel?
5. How did you interpret what you saw?
6. What kind of impact did the environment have on your experience?

For the assignment, I want to you respond in an unconventional and/or artistic way. Here are some ideas:

- A poem or script
- A drawing, collage, etc.
- A short dance/movement piece
- A song
- A short video
- A short story
- A website
- A cake or recipe
**NOTE:** **DO NOT** take pictures and/or videotape during the performance for your response. If you do so, this will result in a 0 for the assignment.

This assignment is worth **50 points** and it will be divided as follows:

**Effort and thoughtfulness in your work (15 points):** I don’t grade you on how “good” the artistic quality of your response is, but I will grade the time and effort you put into it. For example: smudged stick figures drawn in pencil in a ripped notebook page does not show as much effort as a neat drawing or sketch done on a paper board.

**Clear connections and thorough exposition (25 points):** You will share your work with the rest of the class and will be expected to draw clear connections from your object/response to the performance. How do the medium, colors, texture, flavors, images you chose, reflect your experience watching the performance?

**Proof of Attendance (10 points):** Turn in your **signed** ticket stub on the due date.

**REMEMBER:**

You are **required** to sign the attendance sheet after the show you attend. If you do not sign this sheet at the end of the performance **you will not get credit for attendance, and you will receive a 0 for the assignment.** The house manager will have the sign-in sheet available at the end of each performance.