UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS EL PASO  
FALL SEMESTER, 2020  
Improvisation | DANC 2301  
Hybrid: 50-85% Online Instructional Method  

INSTRUCTOR: VALERIA Y. GONZALEZ  

Meeting Times: T, TH  
1:30pm - 2:50pm  

Email: vygonzalez2@utep.edu  

Cellphone: (917) 929-8057  

Office hours: M, W  
12:00PM-3:00PM  

*other office hours and meetings available upon request.  

Course Content:  

This class will provide the dancers with a variety of improvisational methods inspired by contemporary dance and acting techniques through a structure of task oriented classes, movement research, movement phrase material, and weekly discussions. Students will be introduced to a movement-based practice through body awareness, movement exploration, and relationship to self, others and to the environment. The instructor will offer diverse methodologies for movement improvisation on camera in multiple settings to enhance the virtual learning experience/process. Every week the dancers will be challenged with new questions to research and to be curious about- they will be encouraged to discuss them in the group. This class will use discussion, demonstration, performance, video, reading, and writing. Additionally the students will be creating and performing a solo for the end of the semester.  

Course Objectives:  

● To awaken and explore physical sensations applied to movement and physical awareness.  
● To develop improvisational methods and apply them.  
● To engage in new ways of thinking, moving and relating to the body and the space.
● To learn and retain movement phrase material.
● To research and learn about performance artists and their work.
● To decentralize the body, and find unlimited possibilities to move the body.

Requirements:

● A new journal for this class. My class is process oriented, and I highly encourage my students to write down their thoughts, ideas and memories from each day so they can revisit this information later in the semester- or later in life.

● Attendance is crucial for the process. I care about you showing up to class more than anything. Communication is key. If you are dealing with a complex situation please communicate with me and we will figure it out.

● My class is a phone-free environment (including i-watch): Please refrain from using cell phones unless the professor requests you to complete an activity on one of these devices during the class period.

● Bring your bottle of water. (suggested)

● I suggest wearing comfortable clothing layers.

● Assignments are due every Tuesday.

● A whatsapp group will be made specifically for this class. - I highly suggest you are part of it.

Attendance, and Punctuality:

This class requires a significant amount of commitment to the process. Therefore, your attendance and punctuality are crucial. You are entitled to 6 absences. The 4 th and 5 the absences result in the lowering of the overall course grade by ½ letter. At the 11 th absence, the student fails the course regardless of course average. (See Absence Policy in detail below.)

Grading:

60% Attendance and Discussions– Be fully present and active in the process. (Discussions/Class reflections will be posted on the discussion board.)
25% Solo Process and Final solo
15% Reflection paper
Extra points- TBA
Notes:
- All rights regarding this syllabus, items and dates are susceptible to change by the creator/instructor.
- Because of the nature of this class, subjects like race, gender, identity and other will come up throughout the semester.

**FALL 2020 CALENDAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates: Week 1: Aug 24-28</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Assignment + Due Date (Placed the week before they are due.)</th>
<th>Additional Info</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>September 1st: In your home, or patio observe the space around you, and the people around you, notice the impulse.</td>
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<td>Syllabus review</td>
<td>- Discussion board reflection.</td>
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<td>Discuss: Impulse. Notice basic movement actions. (ACTION)</td>
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<td>Discuss: Movement alphabet.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dates: Week 2: Aug 31 – Sept 4</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Assignment + Due Date (Placed the week before they are due.)</th>
<th>Additional Info</th>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Discuss three conditions of energy:</strong> tension, relaxation, and release.</td>
<td>September 8th : Choose one work of Daniel Jalet to discuss on. Notice the conditions of energy.</td>
<td>Town Hall meeting: 3:00-4:30pm</td>
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<td>- Upload to discussion board your reflection.</td>
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<th>Dates: Week 3: Sept 7-12</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Assignment + Due Date (Placed the week before they are due.)</th>
<th>Additional Info</th>
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<td><strong>Discuss:</strong> Stasis and motion. <strong>Motion:</strong> Dance is the art of motion. Motion illuminates the moving body.</td>
<td>September 15: What is BUTOH? Check out videos depicting Butoh technique.</td>
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<td>- Upload to Discussion board your thoughts and</td>
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| Week 4: Sept 14-18 | **BODY**: folding parts.  
- Distinguish bones, flesh, muscles, articulations,  
- Breath, and relationship with self. | discoveries.  
Assignment due William Forsythe  
September 22nd: Research Improvisation Technologies by Choreographer William Forsythe. |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Week 5: Sept 21-25 | **Discuss**: time and geometry.  
- Only through time we compute action.  
**INTENTION**: Motion & Destination | Assignment due October 6th: Anne Theresa Dekeersmaeker- who is she?  
- Learn “Rosas” Material. |
| Week 6: Sept 28-Oct 2 | **Discuss**: space and dynamics.  
**SPACE**: Pathways, directions and dimension.  
**DYNAMICS**. | Assignment due October 6th: What is DADA? What are your thoughts and discoveries?  
- Discussion board. |
| Week 7: Oct 5-9 | **Discuss**: Relationships, Relating to self, space, props and others. | Assignment due October 13th: Check out Sidra Bell work and her MODULE sessions.  
- In the Discussion board write down your discoveries.  
October 10th: Texas Improvisation Festival  
Extra points  
- Reflection paper. (3-4 pages) |
| Week 8: Oct 12-16 | **Discuss**: Human condition and interpretation. | Assignment due October 20th: Watch Mr. Gaga  
- Reflect your discoveries on the discussion board.  
Town Hall Meeting: 3:00pm-4:30pm |
| Week 9: Oct 19-23 | **Discuss:** Decentralizing the body.  
- Break, dismantle, disassemble, disjoint. | Assignment due October 27th: Send a 1 min solo for feedback. (Solo part 1) |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 10: Oct 26-30 | **Discuss:** Becoming, unnaming and undoing.  
- Our lens.  
- Bringing the outside in | Assignment due November 3rd: Record yourself “becoming” an object. (it can be several objects.)  
5 min. |
| Week 11: Nov 2-6 | **Discuss:** Inside out.  
- How do you view the world?  
- Your individuality. | Assignment due November 10th: Write an “unsent” letter to a loved one.  
- Write down in discussion board your thoughts and discoveries. What showed up for you? | Extra points opportunity:  
- November 6 and 7 Utep will stream the Dance Capstones.  
- Paper 2-3 pages with your reflection. |
| Week 12: Nov 9-13 | **Discuss:** Sound and rhythm of breath. | Assignment due November 17th: Turn in solo part 2 with feedback. |
| Week 13: Nov 16-20 | Durational- improvisation. Recorded. | Assignment due November 23rd: Turn in solo part 3 with feedback. | Town Hall Meeting: 3:00-4:30pm |
Week 14: Nov 23-27
No class - Thanksgiving

Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 15: Nov 29-Dec 1
Present final solos (part 4) presentations. Possible open to the public.
DUE December 8th: Hand in reflection paper!

Weekly ZOOM classes:

1. 1:35pm-1:45pm Check ins.

2. 1:45pm-2:50pm class
   - Even though we have a specific calendar, class might slightly change each time. MINUS the assignments. The assignments stay the same throughout the semester.
   - Some days we will NOT have check-ins, or discussions and we will go directly into class.
   - I will be taking some pauses during the virtual class to observe you and give you corrections, either in the moment, or I will write them down and then send them individually to you.
   - I will 95% of the time record the class. FYI if you have any concern with this please let me know. This video WON'T be published via social media or in any other media outlet. They will be specifically there for us to possibly observe, and for myself to be able to give you corrections.
   - There will be some classes where we will observe the same video (I will share my screen.) and then we will have a moment at the end of the class to discuss what we observed and how it relates to our class.
   - Please make sure you don't have any distractions during my class, and please mute your mic- unless I indicate the contrary.
**The Solo:**

The reason why we create a solo is to apply all the information into our bodies and our own interpretation about what we learned throughout the semester, and most importantly to apply feedback from your peers and professor. This solo process will be divided into 4 parts.

1- presenting the idea and the movement.

2- editing/decentralizing the body. (applying feedback.)

3- editing, and incorporating costumes and props. (applying feedback.)

4- final solo (with feedback applied, and final costumes/shown LIVE.)

**Reflection Paper:**

This paper will be handed on the last day of class. Your reflection paper should summarize your experience during this semester. Please include references such as, choreographers, performance artists, quotes by your teacher, and more. Anything that helps me understand clearly what you learned and what is next for you.

**Community Yoga Classes:** Every Tuesday 5-6 pm HIGHLY ENCOURAGED!

**Desert Dance:** I encourage all dance major students to join Desert Dance. The interim President is Kaelin Walker. Please reach out to her for more information: desertdanceutep@gmail.com

**UTEP COVID-19 Policies + Student responsibilities (for face to face meetings.)**

- Complete self-screening (screening.utep.edu) prior to every campus visit.
- Complete COVID-19 student training at this site.
Contact instructor if temporary accommodations due to COVID-19 are needed (i.e., due to positive COVID-19 test, symptoms, or exposure).

If unable to wear a face covering (e.g., medical reasons), the best course of action is to enroll in courses that are entirely online or to work with academic advisors, if necessary, to identify alternative courses. If this is not possible, request an accommodation from Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) prior to coming to campus for in-person activities. Students who receive an accommodation to not wear a face covering must share this with the professor and work to minimize contact with others in the class.

**When in the studio:**

- Class will be dismissed by rows or sections to avoid bottlenecks at the exits.
- There will be specific procedures for leaving and re-entering the classroom *during the class* so all attendees know what to expect regarding student movement in the classroom (e.g., not lingering close to another individual while moving through the classroom).
- Wear a face covering at all times.
- Maintain 6 feet of separation at all times, including when talking with other students.
- Follow signage indicating specific entry and exit doors and pathways.
- Do not cluster in groups and keep hallways open.
- Wash hands and/or apply hand sanitizer prior to entering the classroom and after leaving a classroom. Do not touch face until after hands are washed/sanitized.
- Use an alcohol wipe, provided outside of classrooms, to sanitize the desk, chair, or table.
- Follow faculty protocols for leaving and re-entering the classroom.

**Lab/Studio Guidelines**

- Leave doors open to promote airflow if feasible, unless advised not to do so by Environmental Health and Safety.
- Clear the room of non-essential tools and equipment.
- Ensure no more than one person at a time is working in a limited space such as a hood, glove box, sink area, safety cabinet, or small room.
- Clean/sanitize shared tools, equipment, and materials with CDC-approved solutions.
- Contact department chair or appropriate classroom/lab/space/studio
manager if additional cleaning supplies are required.

**COVID-19 Precautions:**
You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at screening.utep.edu. If you know anyone who should report any of these three criteria, encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to COVIDaction@utep.edu.

*(all classes)* Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present. You must wear a face covering over your nose and mouth at all times in this class. If you choose not to wear a face covering, you may not enter the classroom. If you remove your face covering, you will be asked to put it on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear a face covering and follow preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 Health and Safety.

**UTEP 2020 Calendar:**
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15E7TbgwkbM2r-Q9c1opPldqHqGrz5oGqSPDuaxc/edit#gid=1794555296](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15E7TbgwkbM2r-Q9c1opPldqHqGrz5oGqSPDuaxc/edit#gid=1794555296)

**UTEP DANCE Absence Policy**
- COVID update, August 2020

To succeed in any course, but especially a dance course where students can often only learn by experiential participation, a student must first and above all be present. Therefore, the Absence Policy of the UTEP Dance Program prioritizes class attendance and participation at the top of the grading process.

However, due to the unforeseen circumstances dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we, as faculty, want to recognize and honor the challenges of online learning (both synchronous and asynchronous), and the difficulties in accessing an appropriate space to move, dance, rehearse, and create dance work.

Because every student’s circumstance is unique, we encourage students to be as open and honest
as possible when encountering unexpected challenges, as well as to communicate in advance potential issues that could affect their commitment to a class (child care, elder care, shifting work schedule…).

E-mail your instructors (and TAs if any) as soon as an issue comes up: this is the only way you can get help and possible accommodations while minimizing the impact on your academic progress. While every situation will be assessed by the instructor of record, the more a student is responsible to communicate in a clear and effective way, the easier it will be to find a positive solution. Make up classes might be an option to discuss with your instructor of record.

The following guideline is intended for ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS OR HYBRID CLASSES

**Technique/Theory/Creative Classes that meet twice or three times a week**

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.

For courses that meet three times a week, the allowance is 8 absences. The course grade is reduced by ½ letter each for the 7th, 8th, and the student automatically fails at the 9th absence.

**Technique classes meeting 4 and 5 times a week**

For courses that meet four and five times a week, the maximum allowance for an entire semester is 10 absences. The 9th and 10th absences result in the lowering of the overall course grade by ½ letter. At the 11th absence, the student fails the course regardless of course average.

Exceptions:

- In the event of international bridge closures, exceptions may be made and make-up course work 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.

**Resources:** 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. The University Counseling Center is located at 202 Union West, (915) 747-5302, for walk-in appointments, workshops, career and study skills. For more information, visit https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/.

The Center for Accommodation and Support Services: If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, 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 https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/

Writing Center: The University Writing Center is located in the UTEP library room 227 for drop-in tutoring and assistance with your writing assignments and final papers. For more information, visit https://www.utep.edu/uwc/.

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.