DNCE 022- DANCE IMPROVISATION

Spring 2013  2 Units  M, W SLN 1010 Dancespace  10:30-11:45am
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Office Hours-M, W 1p-2:00p or by appointment

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION
Exploration of the creation of movement through improvisation. Students will simultaneously explore and create, while spontaneously performing inner-directed movement without intellectual censorship.

This course provides the opportunity to explore dance improvisation forms, including contact improvisation. The sensibility we will develop involves the mover to be in the present, which means setting aside the notion of planning ahead, inventing, and guiding while also setting aside our evaluative nature that leads us to critically reflect on the recent past. Learning any kind of improvisation requires that we take charge of our own learning. It requires the desire and the ability to live each moment fully, without regard for the next or the last. Recognizing this sensibility within us and applying it to our dancing are the two primary learning goals for this class.

There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost. —Martha Graham

TEXT (Strongly recommended) - The Moment of Movement, Lynne Anne Blom and L. Tariin Chaplin
Handouts will be provided.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY
We will be exploring the concepts and improvisational techniques used by Ann Bogart, Della Davidson, Steve Paxton and his collaborators, Anna Halprin, William Forsythe and other notable artists in the field of Dance Improvisation.

Emphasis is placed on locating, trusting, and acting upon creative impulses alone, with a partner and/ or a group, with the goal of a more fully realized personal creative process. Improvisation can be aesthetically, intellectually, and physically satisfying in and of itself, but it is also central to the study of making dances, deepening personal style, and refining performance techniques. Improvisational forms require spontaneity and a beginner’s mind, but also knowledge of concepts and skills that will be integrated as kinesthetic understanding and responses in your intelligent body. We will work together as a class while respecting that even with the simplest exercises, new discoveries can be found. Students will gain facility in making in the moment compositional decisions in the midst of performance.

We will dance every class. Dancing will include standing, lying, stretching, rolling, breathing, swinging, jumping, and falling, often in partnership of touch and weight with another dancer or the floor. Students will be asked to investigate their movement preferences and explore unfamiliar territory- to push beyond their movement habits. In-class research will support occasional duet and group presentations. Viewing performances both live and on video will be an important aspect of the course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
The successful student will be able to:

- Understand and apply facility with basic improvisational vocabulary and skills, alone and with a partner and/or group, compositional forms and performance techniques and develop kinesthetic understanding.
- Demonstrate increased knowledge of improvisation and the creative process in relation to other art forms.
- Demonstrate expanded perceptions of what dance is and can be.
- Analyze, observe and critically analyze dance/ creative process in an informed and clear way (written and verbal.)
- Learn and apply the ability to use roving contact points, energy pathways, support weight and give weight to a partner. Explore a refined sense of our center of gravity
- Learn and apply collaboration skills to create original movement and public improvisational dance performances.
- Demonstrate a willingness to take creative risks. Develop an organized body in partnership with the floor for confidence with lifting, rolling, giving weight fully, being lifted and inverting the body, expanding all that is available to us as movers.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS/CONTENT/MATERIALS

- **Attend** all class meetings, participate and be engaged/present (80 pts). **Focused and active class participation** and an open mind for in class assignments and discussions, punctual.

**Rigorous Attendance Policy**

After the 2nd (2) absence, 15 points is deducted for each additional absence (7 absences is automatic fail.) Three lateness’s, after 10 min., or early departures equals one absence. **Two (2) class observations will be allowed during the semester with a handwritten one-page paper due the next class describing your insights gained through active viewing of the class. Contributions to discussions/oral critiques of classmates’ work.**

- Treat instructor, yourself and fellow classmates with **respect** to maintain a positive and productive environment. Disrespectful behavior includes—Cell phone usage, Text messaging, Computer use, Talking while another individual is speaking, Sleeping, Eating, Arriving late or leaving early and excessive chattiness. Any of these may be cause for early dismissal from class at the discretion of the professor. Upon repetition of disrespectful behavior, it will be suggested that you drop the course.

- Be **prepared** for all course work on due dates, taking responsibility for ones preparation. Missing an assignment due date is not acceptable (and if accepted by instructor, will lower grade.)

- **Loose fitting clothing** that allows for a large range of movement, bare feet. No jeans, chewing gum or dangerous jewelry, and hair must be tied back. **Kneepads are highly recommended!**

- **Classroom Environment**—As a member of this class, you are part of a community. Collaboration and an open approach to the work presented will be integral to your learning. Please come to class with an open mind and a supportive attitude to contribute to this collaborative space.

- **TOUCH**—Dance is a physical language and often includes communication through touch and weight. Contact Improvisation is based on human touch, sharing of weight, physical intimacy, trust and risk. Students will be expected to engage physically with other students, from holding hands to lifting and being lifted, to simply breathing together with backs touching. Also the instructor, in the practice of professional dance training, will occasionally touch students to demonstrate specific positions or principles. Please speak to me about any concerns you might have in this regard.

- Please let me know of any injuries (past and present) or disabilities that I should be aware of. We will be working toward freedom in our improvisational skills but we must always dance smart!

- Students will **attend two (@5 pts. Each) Non-Dance, art or performance events. These can be theatre, music, and/or art gallery events.** We will go over other appropriate events in class. You will write about each of these as a journal entry. Three points will be subtracted from journal grade for each missing journal entry. (The University Library Gallery -Tues.-Sat. 10am-5p, phone-916-278-4189)

- Students will **attend a minimum of two (@ 5 pts. Each) Dance Events.** You will write about these as journal entries regarding improvisation/class experiences. Points are deducted if not in Journal. You are strongly encouraged to see as many live performances as you can!!!

- **3- Ring Notebook/Journal**—(20 pts. =10 pts. mid-term, 10pts. End of semester)—Students will keep a notebook/journal of class readings, assignments, responses, ideas, and thoughts, triggered by this class. It should also include an entry for each class period and assigned entries regarding handouts as well as personal images, thoughts, notes. Journals will be collected mid-semester and again at the end of the semester.

- **Spring 2013 Choreography Showcase (10 pts.)—**Tuesday, May 21, 2013, from 5:30-7p for the final exam—Everyone will perform a class-created improvisation score in the public showing.
EVALUATION
80 points- Quality of work in class (positive attitude, commitment to process, willingness to take risks, verbal and physical contribution to group work, etc.) and class assignments. Participation/Improvement, In-Class Feedback and Discussion
20 points- Attendance (2) at non-dance art Events with follow-up journal reflections
20 points- Attendance (2) at Dance Events with follow-up journal reflections
20 points- 3-Ring Notebook/Binder/Journal containing entries for each class period, handouts, notes, etc.
10 points- Performance in Spring 2013 Choreography Showcase, Tues. May 15, 5:30-7:30p
150 points TOTAL

140-150 =A  130-140=A-  120-130=B+  110-120=B  100-110=B-
90-100=C+  80-90=C  70-80=C-  60-70=D+  50-60=D-
40-50=D-  0-40=F

In class performance/attitude is based on the performer’s ability relative to an absolute standard of excellence. This standard is reflected by class attendance, ability to assimilate suggestions, Individual growth, and willingness to take risks.

Additional Recommended Texts-
Dance Improvisation by Joyce Morgenroth
Contact Improvisation by Cheryl Pallant
Contact Improvisation and Body-Mind Centering by Ann Brook

*Handouts may be provided from above texts. Video will be used in class occasionally.

VIDEO TO BE USED-FALL AFTER NEWTON, ANNA HALPRIN SPARK EPISODE, WILLIAM FORSYTHE FROM A CLASSICAL POSITION AND JUST DANCING AROUND
(READINGS WILL BE ASSIGNED AND OTHER VIDEOS VIEWED THROUGHOUT SEMESTER)

*Please feel free to make an appointment with me for any questions or concerns you may have regarding this course and its requirements at any time during the semester.

*Student tutorial on how not to plagiarize:
http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353

*STUDENT MUST do the dropping of any course; please follow appropriate steps.

DNCE 022- DANCE IMPROVISATION Weekly Course Outline
FLEXIBLE DEPENDING ON CLASS NEEDS

Week 1- Jan. 28, 30

TIME
Week 2-Feb. 4, 6
Introduction to Basic Improvisational Techniques and Vocabulary. Group trust building. Begin learning body part initiation, strength, flexibility, and coordination. DELLA DAVIDSON CONCEPTS

SPACE
Week 3-Feb. 11, 13
Wed. Feb 13th, 6:30p SLN 1010-Senior Dance Concert Auditions! Go watch or take!

SHAPE
Week 4-Feb. 18, 20
Continue Building Technique/Vocabulary, Work with rhythm, pulse and dynamics.

ALVIN AILEY RESIDENCY FEB. 21-23
MOVEMENT INVENTION
Week 5-Feb. 25, 27
Anne Bogart Viewpoints

Week 6- Mar. 4, 6
William Forsythe concepts

Week 7- Mar. 11,13
Technique, Incorporate More Extensive Exercises, How does improvisation inform performance of set choreography?

March 12-17-American College Dance Festival Association Conference

Week 8- Mar. 18, 20
Improvisation Techniques, games, exercises; Prepare group collaborations, Notebook/Journal checked by Instructor

March 25-April 1 SPRING BREAK

Week 9- Apr. 3
Steve Paxton
Demonstrate expanded improvisation skills. Introduction to Contact Improv

Week 10-Apr. 8, 10
Contact Improv Skills

Week 11-Apr. 15, 17
Contact Improv skills
Begin Festival of the Arts (FOTA) Dancing and Discussion

Week 12 Apr. 22, 24
Demonstrate more physical strength and continue developing sensitivity skills. Score for Showcase.

Week 13 Apr. 29, May 1
Anna Halprin concepts and 60’s happenings
Site Specific Improvisation Work (Studio-your choice-my choice)

Week 14 May 6, 8
Site Specific Improvisation Work

Week 15 May 13, 15
Discussion-Senior Dance Concert and Open Improv Jam, engaged for full hour, enhanced performance quality and ability demonstrated. Notebook/Journal Checked by Instructor. Rehearse Movement Score for Showcase.

Week 16 May 20, 22
Finals Week- Showing site specific projects!
Performances in Spring 2013 Choreography Showcase-May 21, 5:30p-7p, SLN 1010

Always feel free to speak to me about any issues that come up in class. I'm here to help you meet your goals and your fullest potential in class!