

Eastern Connecticut State University

Contemporary Styles Dance —Spring 2018

Performing Arts, DNC 365

Location: Fine Arts Instructional Center, 219

Professor: Nichola Johnson Email: johnsonnicho@easternct.edu

Class Hours: T/TH 12:30 – 1:45

Syllabus

Course Description

Contemporary Styles Dance will expose students to the beginning foundations of American Jazz Dance Vernacular and aesthetic. Contemporary Styles will trace the history of what we now refer to as Contemporary Dance. The course will focus on Jazz Dance Technique, Musical Theatre/Broadway Jazz and Contemporary Jazz Dance. Students will focus on the history and evolution of this style, body placement, alignment, proper technical and stylistic execution, terminology, strength, and endurance. This course will reveal the connections between physical executions and theoretical teachings.

Course Objectives

Through class participation, assigned readings, research, peer/self evaluations, various viewings of historical and contemporary work, choreographic exploration and discussions, students will achieve:

1. A greater understanding of Jazz Vernacular and mastery of beginner/intermediate technical work
2. Increased knowledge of Jazz Dance history and evolution
3. Critical awareness of body alignment, flexibility, endurance and core strength
4. Coordination and musicality demonstrated in warm-up, isolations, traveling progressions and choreography
5. Increased individual creativity through exploration of choreography and critical analysis

Learning Goals and Expectations

Theory:

1. Develop a strong awareness of Jazz Style and Aesthetic
2. Trace the history of Contemporary Dance
3. Understand Center of Gravity
4. Precisely execute Isolations of the Body
5. Develop a strong awareness of influential figures in the Jazz Dance Lineage
6. Enhance Coordination and Endurance
7. Develop a stronger sense of Body Awareness
8. Learn and understand Basic Terminology
9. Be able to demonstrate all areas of Jazz/Musical Theatre/Contemporary Dance Choreography

Class Structure:

Each class will consist of theoretical lectures and/or physical classes exploring Jazz Dance Styles

Course Requirements:

Dress Code: Each student is required to wear dance (leotard, tights, leggings) or close fitting yoga/workout clothes. Street Clothes are not permitted. No jewelry, belts, zippers, etc may be worn. Hair should be securely

fastened off face. Bare feet.

Journal: All students should keep a journal for Contemporary Styles and should bring it with them to every class.

Textbook: Jazz Dance Class by Marshall and Jean Stearns

Contemporary Dance Styles Semester Breakdown

Jazz Technique, Musical Theatre/Broadway Dance, Commercial Dance, Contemporary Dance

Week 1. Course Introduction

Theory:

What is Jazz Dance?

The Connection to Jazz Music

Origins of Jazz Dance, the African American Influence and Contribution

Before it was Jazz it wasTap??

Cakewalk, Black Bottom, Charleston, Jitterbug, Boogie Woogie, Swing Dance

The Minstrel Show and the connection to Jazz Dance

Video excerpts of Jazz Dance Vernacular 1920's-1940's

Read Chapters 1 through 3 and complete response paper for videos viewed

Practicum:

Where is our body in space?

Placement and alignment

Learn a Jazz warm-up

The Isolation of Movement

The Jazz Center of Gravity

Week 2 and 3: The Transformation from African American Vernacular to the origination of Jazz Dance

Theory:

Katherine Dunham and Jack Cole

Explore Early American Jazz Dance through Videos and Readings

"Living ST Louis, Katherine Dunham"

"Jack Cole: Beginnings of a Hollywood Jazz Dance Legend" | Jacob's Pillow Dance

Excerpts of work by Dunham and Cole

Exploration of Caribbean and Afro-Cuban Dance

Read Chapters 4 and 5 and complete response paper of videos viewed

Practicum:

Continue work on Placement and Alignment through set Jazz Warm-up and theoretical discussion of body placement

Continue development of the Isolation and Center of Gravity

Introduce Charleston and Swing Dance Styles

Introduce Caribbean Dance

Begin traveling Progression work

Learn excerpts of Jazz Choreography

Week 4: The Second Generation of Jazz Dancers

Theory:

Introduce, discuss and look at the work of Ruth Walton, Gus Giordano, Joe Tremaine, Frank Hatchet and Broadway Dance Center
Jazz Dance takes on the technical ideologies of Ballet
Modern Dance Influences
“Old School Jazz Dance”
The Presence of Jazz Dance in Music Videos and Film
Read Chapters 7 through 10

Practicum:

Continue work on Placement and Alignment through set Jazz Warm-up and theoretical discussion of body
Continue development of the Isolation and Center of Gravity
Begin to develop Jazz Technique
Continue Traveling Progression work
Learn excerpts of Jazz Choreography
Begin work on Jazz Dance Style and the development of personal Jazz Style

Week 5: Test on Information from weeks 1- 4

Week 5: JAZZ STYLE

Choreography project utilizing personal jazz dance style and learned techniques

Week 6 and 7: Jazz and The Broadway Stage

Theory:

How is Jazz Dance connected to Broadway?
Seymour Felix
Bob Fosse, Jerome Robbins, Gwen Verdon, Michael Bennet, Michael Kidd, Gower Champion, Busby Berkley
View and Discuss: All That Jazz, Steam Heat, Prologue from West Side Story, Easy Street, One, Who's Got the Pain, Hey Big Spender, Rich Man's Frug, I Got Rhythm
Read Chapters 11 and 12 and complete response paper of videos viewed

Practicum:

Continue work on Placement and Alignment through set Jazz Warm-up and theoretical discussion of body
Continue development of the Isolation and Center of Gravity
Continue development of Jazz Technique
Continue Traveling Progression work
Learn excerpts of Jazz Choreography
Begin work on Jazz Dance Style and the development of personal Jazz Style
Learn Excerpts of All That Jazz, Rich Man's Frug, and One

Week 8 and 9: Musical Theatre Jazz Dance 1990's to Today

Theory:

What does 'Jazz Dance' in Musical Theatre look like today?
The Evolution and Fusion of Movement Styles
View and discuss the work of Kathleen Mitchell, Susan Stroman, Garth Fagan, Andy Blankenbuehler and Bill T. Jones
Read Chapter 13 and complete response paper on videos viewed

Practicum:

Continue work on Placement and Alignment through set Jazz Warm-up and theoretical discussion of body
Continue development of the Isolation and Center of Gravity
Continue Development of Jazz Technique
Continue Traveling Progression work
Learn excerpts of Jazz Choreography
Continue work on Jazz Dance Style and the development of personal Jazz Style
Learn Excerpt from The Lion King Choreography

Week 10: Test on information from weeks 6 through 9**Week 10: Musical Theatre Choreography**

Choreography project utilizing selected pieces of music from Musicals

Week 11 and 12: Contemporary Dance**Theory:**

Where are we now?
How has Jazz Dance Vernacular Evolved?
Commercialism and Dance
Dance and Reality TV
Various Readings and Videos pertinent to the discussion of today's Contemporary Dance

Practicum:

Continue work on Placement and Alignment through set Jazz Warm-up and theoretical discussion of body
Continue development of the Isolation and Center of Gravity
Continue Development of Jazz Technique
Continue Traveling Progression work
Learn Contemporary Choreography

Week 13 : PAPER: Expose, Discuss, Analyze, and Respond to the Evolution of Jazz Dance Vernacular, including Musical Theatre and Contemporary Dance, as revealed from this course. Choose one area or figure of Contemporary Styles to lead the content.
5 Pages. Typed. Double Spaced. Cite all sources

Week 13 and 14: Narrative and Contemporary Movement**Theory: Storytelling and the Body**

Influence and Inspiration of Music/Pop Culture

Practicum: Final Project: Create a piece of narrative choreography that embodies the style of Contemporary Jazz Dance. Group or solo projects to be shared in class (or as part of Spring Performance). One minute in length

Week 15: Final Wrap-up

In Class Showings of Final Project Choreography

Attendance

Participation is achieved during class time, which makes attendance vital. Regular class participation is the only way to develop and maintain dance technique. Absences result in poor performance, and thus are automatically reflected in course grade. There are no excused absences.

Make- Up Policies

There are limited opportunities for make-up classes. Only one class may be made up. This is accomplished by taking another class approved by the professor or by observing a class and taking notes to be handed in at the end of the class. In the event of extended illness or injury contact the professor as soon as possible. Regular class participation is the only way to develop and maintain dance technique. Tardiness and absences result in poor performance thus are reflected in course grades.

Evaluation

Participation Grade...50%

The success of a student in Contemporary Styles Dance Class is heavily weighted on their participation in class.. All students are expected to be FULLY present and participating in each class. Students will be graded on a 4 Point scale for participation each day. *To be excused from physical participation, a note from a doctor is required. However, you will still be expected to be an active learner.

Point System:

- *4 Points: Excellent attitude and physical effort. Fully prepared for class with ballet shoes and ready for discussion and participation.
- *3 Points: Good attitude and effort. Prepared for class, not fully engaged in discussion or learning goals
- *2 Points: Satisfactory behavior, below average effort. Not fully prepared for class (EX: missing ballet attire/shoes)
- *1 Point: Minimal effort, not prepared for class
- *0 Points: No effort made, not prepared for class

Assignments/Assessments...40%

The outline below, in conjunction with your participation grade and final project will determine your grade for this class.

1. Students will be required to read provided materiel each week and be ready to discuss/interact with material.
2. Students will have 2 to 3 terminology/history/theory tests per term
3. Students will keep a journal for Class. This journal should be brought to all classes. Any notes, new concepts, discussions should be entered into this journal and students should write a separate journal entry after each class, summarizing the experience in class that day, material learned, future goals, challenges, etc... In addition to

summary entries, students will be given specific journal assignments that must be completed. The journal will be collected randomly throughout semester and will be evaluated based on number of entries and quality of entries

4. Peer Projects/Evaluations

Final Project

Choreography Project...10%