

## BASIC MODERN DANCE: DAA 2104 - 08GH

University of Florida School of Theatre + Dance  
McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion G-6  
M/W/F 10:40AM-12:10PM  
Fall 2016

### SYLLABUS

#### Contact Information

**Instructor:** Melissa Canto Brenner

**Email:** [Mbrenner@arts.ufl.edu](mailto:Mbrenner@arts.ufl.edu)

**Office Hours:** By appointment only

**Email Policy:** Use CANVAS account for e-mail correspondence.

**Other Instructors:** Elizabeth Johnson [ejohnson@arts.ufl.edu](mailto:ejohnson@arts.ufl.edu) Trent D. Williams, Jr. [trentw@ufl.edu](mailto:trentw@ufl.edu)

Syllabi are posted at CFA website under Student Life:

<http://www.arts.ufl.edu/students/syllabi.aspx>

**ALL DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THIS COURSE CAN BE FOUND ON CANVAS**

**Lab Fees** can be located at: <http://registrar.ufl.edu/soc/201608/all/theadanc.htm>

#### Text

Required

Prime Movers: The Makers of Modern Dance in America

ISBN: 0871272113

Suggested Reading

Studying Dance: A guide for Campus and Beyond by Karen Schupp

ISBN: 9781450437165

*The New York Times* / Arts Section / Current Events

#### **BASIC MODERN DAA 2104 COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Experience in beginning level technique, readings, observations and movement exploration.

*Credits: 2; can be repeated with change in content up to 6 credits. Prereq: DAA 1000 with minimum grade of C, or audition.*

#### **GUIDELINES FOR LEVEL PROGRESSION IN MODERN DANCE TECHNIQUE:**

##### ***Student progression in modern dance technique***

Classes maximize each instructor's unique professional orientation to guide you in the dance program's intentionally eclectic approach to contemporary dance. Using the objectives stated in this syllabus, the dance program assesses student progress through three levels of modern dance

technique: basic, intermediate, and advanced. You are graded and considered for the next level according to your achievement of the criteria as determined by your instructor.

### **Course Objectives for Modern Technique**

SoTD's modern technique curriculum is designed to focus the intellectual and physical abilities of students—majors, minors, and non-majors—to embrace the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century artist. Each of the three levels builds the required historical, aesthetic, and biomechanical foundations for graduating as a major in our dance degree programs. Likewise, the minor or non-major must recognize the classes as a pre-professional training ground by meeting the objectives at the appropriate level. When every student brings into every class their discipline and motivation, they will be ready to meet and greet the following goals common to each respective level of technique:

#### **BASIC MODERN COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- To learn the essentials of contemporary dance and to experience it personally.
- To understand the major traditional aesthetic premises and development of contemporary dance.
- To develop an informed view of the interaction of art and society in the 20/21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- To develop fundamental technique and performance skills.
- Demonstrate growth and progression within the following five areas of evaluation:
  - PLACEMENT AND ALIGNMENT*
  - CORE SUPPORT AND CONDITIONING*
  - SPATIAL AWARENESS AND FULL BODY INTEGRATION*
  - RHYTHMIC CLARITY/MUSICALITY*
  - PROFESSIONALISM*
- To explore the expressive and qualitative range of movement and performance.
- To empower the person/dancer/thinker/choreographer in each student.
- To get hands on experience with the creative process & production of contemporary dance.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **COURSE POLICIES:**

#### **SOTD DANCE ATTENDANCE:**

##### **Dance Technique Class Attendance Guide**

- Mindful participation in each class meeting is the only way to meet the objectives of this course.
- Attendance, which is mandatory, means that when you enter the classroom, you are present, alert, and contributing to the progress of the class every second.
- If you are not present when attendance is taken or class begins you are marked absent.
- In the case of extended health issues, refer to the Injury and Illness Policy in this
- syllabus.

### **Dance Technique Class Absence Policy**

- Five (5) or more absences (excused or unexcused) result in automatic failure.
- All undocumented absences are unexcused: each unexcused absence = 5 point deduction. Excused absences may include those related to illness/injury that are documented by a medical professional. Events related to family emergencies or professional obligations should be discussed with your instructor. (See *Make-up Policy* for more information on excused absences.)
- For your safety and the focus of the class, you may not join class if it has already started. You are late and counted absent; with instructor permission, you may observe.
- If you should leave class early, 3 points are deducted from your grade.
- If unable to dance but still attend, with instructor permission, you may ‘actively’ observe for full class credit, onetime. You will complete an assignment as assigned by the instructor due at the end of class.
- UF approved religious days are excused and do not need to be made-up. (Travel time not included.)
- You are responsible for material covered during your absence.
- A MEDICAL WITHDRAWAL will not be supported without approved documentation. An Incomplete is only considered by UF Dance in extreme cases and is not available in technique classes.

### **UF Absence Policy**

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies, as follows:

**Source:** <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

- Students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. Absences count from the first class meeting.
- In general, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. Other reasons also may be approved.
- You cannot participate in classes unless you are registered officially or approved to audit with evidence of having paid audit fees. The Office of the University Registrar provides official class rolls to instructors.

- If you do not participate in at least one of the first two class meetings of a course or laboratory in which you are registered, and you have not contacted the department to indicate your intent, you can be dropped from the course. You must not assume that you will be dropped, however.
- The university recognizes the right of the individual professor to make attendance mandatory. After due warning, professors can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.

## **MAKE-UP POLICY:**

### **Dance Technique Class – Makeup Policy**

- You are responsible for all material covered during any absence
- There are no makeup options for unexcused absences
- Absences from Written Exams, Quizzes, Mid-Terms, and/or Finals may only be made up with approved documentation
- To earn credit (amount of credit determined by the instructor) for an excused absence you must do two things:
  - 1) Immediately upon your return to class, turn in approved/legal documentation to instructor. If you need the original documentation or need the document for other classes, the instructor will accept copies.
  - 2) Make-up the class with an approved assignment submitted on the required date. If the assignment is to attend another class as a make-up, it must be the same technical level, or lower; student must request permission of that instructor.

In the UF Dance Program, three unexcused absences will reduce your grade one-letter grade (i.e., from B to C). Each subsequent unexcused absence lowers your grade by half letter grade (i.e., from C to C-). After five unexcused absences the student may not return to class and result in automatic failure of the course. A student with medical documentation may apply to UF for Medical Withdrawal.

Please consult the following sites for UF's physical and mental health resources:

<http://shcc.ufl.edu/> (Student Health Care Center)

<http://shcc.ufl.edu/forms-records/excuse-notes/> (excuse note policy)

<http://dso.ufl.edu/> (Dean of Students)

## **1. CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT 25 points**

These following areas are used by faculty to assess student progress throughout the semester:

- Self-awareness—the student demonstrates an ability to retain an awareness of self while integrating their movement into spatial relationships with other persons and groups.
- Transitional Skills—demonstrates an understanding and dynamic use of different types of phrasing with an ability to sequence a variety of movements into an extended phrase:

recognizing and moving through transitions and demonstrating follow - through of movement impulses as appropriate.

- Performance Quality—observable growth as a performing artist both in class and on stage.
- Creative Risk-taking—student dares to explore new territory.
- Overall Improvement—student demonstrates a clear positive progression throughout the semester.

## **2. EVENT ATTENDANCE 15 points**

- Attendance to the events (listed below) is required for all majors.
- An entry, VIA CANVAS, is required for each event under the correct module.
- **Event entries** can be in the form of photos, videos, written entries or any other ‘upload-able’ method for proof of attendance. Think of these entries as an online journal, documenting your experiences. Creative entries are welcomed and best received!

## **3. PROOF OF ACHIEVING TECHNICAL APTITUDE**

### **Midterm Evaluations 15 points - Wednesday October 5th**

- PLACEMENT AND ALIGNMENT
- CORE SUPPORT AND CONDITIONING
- SPATIAL AWARENESS AND FULL BODY INTEGRATION
- RHYTHMIC CLARITY/MUSICALITY
- PROFESSIONALISM (all categories are outlined in the larger syllabus)

## **4. PROOF OF ACHIEVING TECHNICAL APTITUDE**

### **Final Evaluations 15 points - Wednesday, November 30th**

- PLACEMENT AND ALIGNMENT
- CORE SUPPORT AND CONDITIONING
- SPATIAL AWARENESS AND FULL BODY INTEGRATION
- RHYTHMIC CLARITY/MUSICALITY
- PROFESSIONALISM (all categories are outlined in the larger syllabus)

## **5. HISTORICAL PROJECT**

- **Presentation 10 points** - Various Dates (Full details can be found in CANVAS)  
With a partner, you will present a modern dance pioneer studied in *Prime Movers*.
- **Written Exam 10 points** - Wednesday, November 16th  
A written exam will be given, in class, and will cover historical information from *Prime Movers* and class presentations.

## **6. COMMUNITY IN MOTION 10 points**

Majors (BFA/BA) = 10 hours, Non-Majors = 5 hours

- Status report after hours are completed via CANVAS. Last day to submit: December 7.
- Include specific details about the assignments. Requirement outlined at the end of syllabus

## **Grading Policy**

<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>DATE DUE</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
Technique Assessment	Continuous	25 points
Event Attendance	Continuous	15 points
Midterm Evaluation	10/5/16	15 points
Final Evaluation	11/30/16	15 points
Historical Project		
Presentation	Various Dates	10 points
Written Exam	11/16/16	10 points
Community In Motion	Continuous	10 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 Points</b>

## **Grading Scale**

A 93-100	B+ 86-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	E 59 and below
A- 90-92	B 83-85	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

\*Your overall score may be affected by your attendance record.

\***Disclaimer:** This syllabus represents current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected. Any changes in technique exam dates due to unseen circumstances will be announced in class and posted on the dance board in a timely fashion.

## **Required Performance and Event Participation**

*To help you to “think outside the box,” you must venture outside the studio!*

BFA/BA Majors: In addition to attending all classes, attendance is required at the following events plus 1 outside professional show. You will provide proof of attendance to the instructor who is the teacher of record of your course within one week after viewing production. Depending on your technique schedule, you may use these same events/performances for other technique classes, as well.

Non-Majors: Required = BFA Fall Dance Showcase audition, two of the UnShowings, *Agbedidi*, one BFA Fall Dance Showcase Performance, one outside professional show. You will provide proof of attendance to the instructor who is the teacher of record of your course within one week after viewing production. Depending on your technique schedule, you may use these same events/performances for other technique classes, as well.

The (McGuire) University Box Office will open 45 minutes prior to the opening of each Constans Theatre or McGuire Black Box production. All primary box office activity will now be handled at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center (Gate 1) Hours: Tuesday thru Friday Noon- 5:00, Saturday 10:00am-2:00pm (No Mondays)

Performance Behavior/Decorum:

- Yes, please dress nice!
- No cell phones/texting at all, ever, never during a performance
- Represent the SoTD at the show!

### **Required Performance and Event Dates**

Dates/times subject to change – please check dance bulletin board and/or contact appropriate box office. You will receive a voucher (coupon) at the beginning of the semester for designated SoTD productions with instructions of how to use it to get your ticket. Viewing of SoTD plays (such as a play or musical) is highly recommended, but not required.

Non-majors: please verify event schedule with instructor, as you may not be required for attendance at all events.

### **UnShowings and SoTD Required Dance Performances**

- UnShowing – Organizational, G-6, Monday August 29, 6:30
- UnShowing #1, G-6, Monday September 12, 6:30-8:30
- UnShowing #2, G-6, Monday September 26, 6:30-8:30
- UnShowing #3, G-6, Monday October 3, 6:30-8:30
- UnShowing #4, G-6, Monday October 10, 6:30-9:30 Adjudication #1 (ACDA, Senior Solos, non-senior projects, etc.)
- UnShowing #5, G-6, Monday October 17, 6:30-finish Adjudication #2
- UnShowing #6, G-6, Monday October 24, 6:30-finish Program Showing
- ***BFA Fall Dance Showcase*** (SoTD Dance), G-6, November 2-6
- UnShowing #7 – Faculty Works in Progress, G-6, Monday November 14, 6:30-8:30
- ***Agbedidi*** (SoTD Dance), Constans Theatre, December 2-4
- UnShowing #8 - Final, G-6, Monday December 5, 6:30-8:30

### **Dance Productions**

- ***Dorrance Dance***, September 9, UFPA, 7:30
- ***Alonzo King Lines Ballet***, September 29, UFPA, 7:30
- ***Trisha Brown Dance (site specific)***, October 22, TBA
- ***Young Dancer's Workshop***, October 28/29, Performances at Santa Fe Fine Arts Hall

### **Other SoTD Theatre Event Options**

- ***Stage Kiss*** (Hipp/SoTD play) Hippodrome State Theatre, Opens September 2

- *The New Mrs. Tesman* (SoTD play) Opens September 23
- *Spring Awakening* (SoTD musical) Opens October 28

UF Box Office #: (352) 392-1653

UF Performing Arts (Phillips Center) #: (352) 392-2787

SFC Fine Arts Hall Theatre (352) 395-4181

### **Fall Semester Juries**

BFA seniors graduating anytime this academic year/summer 2017, ALL new BFA majors, new BA majors are required to attend a mid-year conference (Jury) December 8/9 with the dance faculty during Reading Days (the two days following end of classes). Do not make travel plans at this time— grade points will be deducted. It is your responsibility to know your schedule. Check your (UF) email & the dance studio bulletin boards regularly.

### **Dress Policy:**

- Attire which is form fitting & suitable for movement
- No oversized clothing
- No gym shorts
- Your ankles must be visible
- Hair needs to be confined, out of the dancer's face; essentially not a distraction to the dancer, instructor or the class (no hats)
- No large jewelry, including all non-stud earrings, necklaces & watches
- No chewing gum

**Students not in compliance with the above requirements will be considered absent from class or points deducted at instructor's discretion.**

- KNEE PADS should be available for use for EVERY class

**Please Note:** Our work in the studios is designed to be challenging; physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Dance classes often involve touching. Physical contact may range from simple touch, to correcting alignment and/or relaxation massage. Students may also be asked to experiment with exercises that involve weight exchange. If you have a related medical consideration or touch makes you uncomfortable, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor at the start of the semester.

### **ESSENTIALS OF ACHIEVING TECHNICAL APTITUDE**

Advancement to a higher level is determined by the dance faculty as based on two determining factors:

- 1) Successful fulfillment of the criteria for technical development and guiding concepts as outlined below and as determined by the dance faculty.
- 2) A grade of "A-" or better. (Please be aware that the grade of an "A" does not guarantee approval to move to a higher level.)

These aspects of technical development are divided into five (5) categories and are the basis both for grading and for any consideration toward promotion to a higher modern dance technique levels:

- **PLACEMENT AND ALIGNMENT**
- **CORE SUPPORT AND CONDITIONING**
- **SPATIAL AWARENESS AND FULL BODY INTEGRATION**
- **RHYTHMIC CLARITY/MUSICALITY**
- **PROFESSIONALISM**

### **PLACEMENT AND ALIGNMENT**

*A priority is placed on alignment, which includes an awareness and integration of skeletal structure in shaping the body in place and in motion, as to increase the efficiency of movement, and reduce, if not eliminate, the potential for injury. This intrinsic understanding should be evident in all exercises, improvisations, and phrase work.*

- **Excellent /Advanced**

Consistently maintains alignment of torso/spine, pelvis, & limbs while stationary and moving. Articulates limbs with excellent precision and clarity.

- **Good/Sufficient**

Demonstrates a consistent application of principles of alignment. Demonstrates consistent clarity during articulation of limbs.

- **Limited/Deficient**

Demonstration of correct personal alignment is not observable. Precision and clarity not demonstrated during exercises or movement through space.

- **Unsatisfactory**

Fails to demonstrate an understanding of basics of alignment and body fundamentals.

### **CORE SUPPORT AND CONDITIONING**

*Coupled with developing a proper sense of alignment and placement as applied to dance (and life) is a separate and equal area referred to as Core Support/Strength. It is necessary to list it as its own category to emphasize its importance to movement and promote awareness of its connection to the safety of the individual as they move through various positions and through all levels and into space. Development of strength to safely perform movements that require weight bearing on arms, including inverted movements. Conditioning is included in this section to insure that strength is not over emphasized and that the student finds a personal practice that enforces this aspect of their training.*

- **Excellent /Advanced**

Connects core and whole body conditioning to how the whole body moves through space and consistently moves with power and control through space and all levels.

- **Good/Sufficient**

Demonstrates movements competently with an adequate application of core support. Overall body strength and conditioning is adequate, with room for improvement.

- **Limited/Deficient**

Work in class indicates weakness in core strength and movement control. Demonstrates limited power to safely propel self through space.

- **Unsatisfactory**

Demonstrates lack of sufficient core support, conditioning and total body strength. Lacks power and control to safely propel self through space.

## **SPATIAL AWARENESS AND FULL BODY INTEGRATION**

*Necessary to the training of a contemporary dancer is the understanding of the movement of the body as a unit, and in relation to specific body parts (upper and lower body halves, and right and left body halves in motion), as well as a sense of spatial awareness.*

- **Excellent /Advanced**

Student consistently moves through space with full commitment and knowledge of level and direction changes Demonstrates highly refined understanding of movement of body parts in relation to personal center of gravity. Integration of body in motion through space is clear and precise.

- **Good/Sufficient**

Demonstrates a development towards the sensitivity to moving the body as a whole unit and an ability to experiment with the body in motion through time and space. Continues to demonstrate a developing understanding of the relationship between body parts and center of gravity.

- **Limited/Deficient**

Demonstrates limited awareness of the connection between strength of center and total body movement; minimal ability to integrate the body in movement.

- **Unsatisfactory**

Demonstrates lack of understanding of the concept of full body integration, as well as an adequate understanding of spatial awareness. Demonstrates a lack of understanding of the connection between upper body and lower body, and between body halves.

## **RHYTHMIC CLARITY / MUSICALITY**

*A student's progress through the technique sequence should also yield both a practical and intrinsic understanding of how rhythm and musicality are applied to an exercise, a phrase, and dance performance. Musicality is the ability to perform movement phrases informed by music and imagined sound. Rhythmic clarity is the ability to understand the relationship of the moving body to time.*

- **Excellent /Advanced**

Student consistently moves with knowledge of beat/meter, accents, tempo, and rhythmic patterning. Student demonstrates an intrinsic understanding of how the music and movement are united. Consistent awareness of sound demonstrated through accurate response to instructions and to musical cueing.

- **Good/Sufficient**

Student is consciously working towards the application of beat/meter, accents, tempo, and rhythmic patterning and applies these musical basics to exercises, phrases, and repertoire. Generally appears to sense music deeply and to allow the nature of the music to affect the interpretation of movement phrases.

- **Limited/Deficient**

Inconsistently demonstrates beat/meter, accents, tempo, and rhythmic patterning. Insufficiently developed sense of internal timing or a passive approach to dance phrasing. Student may show depend on other dancers, instructor counting, or obvious musical cues, rather than intrinsic musical responses.

- **Unsatisfactory**

Student rarely moves with using beat/meter, accents, tempo, and rhythmic patterning; or fails to invest in developing skills in this area.

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

The student consistently demonstrates an attitude that is teachable, mature, attentive, supportive, open, and welcomes and integrates corrections. The importance of attendance is emphasized and part of the final grading process, as noted in the syllabus.

- **Excellent /Advanced**

Student shows a high level of a mature and professional approach to all aspects of course work.

- **Good/Sufficient**

Student shows a consistent and growing awareness of the profession through classroom behavior and peer interaction.

- **Limited/Deficient**

Student demonstrates limited interest or ability in understanding and expressing a professional attitude. May resist corrections and/or what is being taught. Fails to heed instruction and/or demonstrates other behaviors unbecoming a professional dancer.

- **Unsatisfactory**

Student rarely demonstrates an attitude that is teachable, mature, attentive, supportive, open, and does not integrate corrections.

## **GUIDING CONCEPTS**

These following general concepts are applied to all areas of technical development and used by faculty to assess student progress:

### ***“Self” Awareness and Ensemble Skills***

The student demonstrates an ability to retain an awareness of self while integrating their movement into spatial relationships with other persons and groups. The student should also demonstrate clarity in three-dimensional movements and an ability to sustain directionality in exercises and in phrases of substantial length.

### ***Transitional Skills (Continuity of Flow)***

Exercises should be performed with an understanding and dynamic use of different types of phrasing. Students should demonstrate an ability to sequence a variety of movements into an extended phrase: recognizing and moving through transitions and demonstrating follow-through of movement impulses as appropriate.

## ***PERFORMANCE QUALITY (DYNAMIC AWARENESS)***

Each instructor will provide the class with specific movement and performance goals that delineate for the student: suitable use of energy, range of dynamics and movement qualities, the images or mind-set to evoke expressive and/or stylistic qualities and functional details

### **Community In Motion Project:**

As a member of the UF School of Theatre & Dance community, you will take part in one or more of the following projects and complete a minimum of 10 hours of work that will be documented and submitted via email to the following instructor. This includes all BFA and BA majors. Non-majors are responsible for a minimum of five (5) hours. Examples of CIM projects:

- Spring Dance Showcase – tech support
- Video taping a show
- Crew on a showcase
- Your duties may include assisting faculty with organization, production, or as a community liaison.

***EACH STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING HER/HIS OWN PROGRESS***

**Evaluations:**

Midterm and Final evaluations occur during the class. You will be observed by the instructor and perhaps other members of the dance faculty, and grades will be assigned based on the technical proficiencies listed above. If there is rotation in the instructors, all participating instructors will contribute to your final grade. For the BFA major, application of your technique work to concert/performance work will be factored into your technique grade.

**Instructor Biography:**

A native of Florida, **Melissa Brenner** attended Douglas Anderson School of the Arts followed by the University of Florida, where she received her B.F.A. in dance performance and choreography in 2003. Melissa holds an M.F.A. from Arizona State University and a Pilates certification from Pilates Sports Center. As a performer, Melissa has danced with Mary Fitzgerald Dance, Karen Schupp Dance, Ann Ludwig Dance Theatre and has performed the works of Ashleigh Leite, Shapiro and Smith Dance, and Elina Mooney. While studying in Arizona, Melissa served on the board of the Arizona Dance Educators Organization, the University Graduate Council, was the President of the Graduate Dance Organization, and taught a number of classes at Arizona State including Modern, Ballet, Pilates/Yoga, and Introduction to Dance. Her choreography has been selected and presented on stages and site-specific locations throughout the U.S. since 2001. Melissa spends most summers performing and participating in festivals such as American Dance Festival, Bates Dance Festival, Strictly Seattle and La Alternativa in San Francisco. Currently, Melissa is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Florida and Santa Fe College and is Assistant Director of Dance Theatre Santa Fe.