

UF School of Theater and Dance

DAA 2680 First Year Dance Ensemble

I. COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: DAA 2680 First Year Dance Ensemble

Semester & Year: Fall 2023

Meeting Days and Times: MW 5:00p to 7:00p

Building and Room: G-6 Studio

II. INSTRUCTOR:

Name: Christa J. Sylla

Email: syllac@ufl.edu

Phone: 904-422-8754 (text preferable)

Office Hours: N/A

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To explore Africanist aesthetics while expanding the dancer's expressive and qualitative range of movement and performance in a cultural dance technique.
- To develop rhythmic comprehension, musicality, dynamics, clarity and articulation in time and space.
- To expose the student to fresh approaches to the creative processes involved in contemporary African and African Diasporic dance choreography.
- To provide the student with experiences that reinforce their discipline and strengthen their sense of responsibility to self and others within a pre-professional creative environment.
- To relate the student's work in technique class to a rehearsal situation.
- To gain experience and develop an understanding of how to work in an ensemble.
- To empower the person/dancer/ thinker/choreographer in each student.

CLASS DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to develop technical range and performance skills in neo traditional and contemporary African and African Diasporic dance practices through the study and production of dance repertoire to be performed in the annual 2022 Agbedidi production. Students will experience educational training opportunities about rehearsal and performance processes within an ensemble model.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

We will adhere to the Dance Program attendance policy. However, you are expected to treat this rehearsal process as preparation and practice for working as a professional in the field, where it is expected you attend all rehearsals.

- 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 the SoTD 2020-2021 Student Handbook (can be accessed on SoTD website).

Medical Withdrawal: A student with medical documentation may apply to UF for Medical Withdrawal. 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's physical and mental health resources: Please consult the following sites for <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)

Attendance Policy:

- Students may have two absences with no documentation, without penalty. • All undocumented absences are unexcused. Excused absences may include those related to illness/injury which 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.) • If the third absence is unexcused, it will reduce your grade one-letter grade (i.e., from B to C)
- On the third absence, excused or unexcused, a meeting is required with the instructor and/or area faculty to assess the student's continued participation in the course.
- Each subsequent unexcused absence lowers your grade by half letter grade (i.e., from C to C-).
- Requirements/opportunities to make up missed material are up to the instructor's discretion. Due to the participatory nature of the course that includes in-class collaboration along with partner and ensemble work, 4 unexcused absences may result in automatic failure of the course.
- After five unexcused absences the student may not return to class and result in automatic failure of the course.
- 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 submit a written/creative 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.

Participation:

Attendance does not equal participation. Participation involves being present. The goal of class sessions is to challenge and support your development as a dance artist, and to co-create a learning community where individual experiences and voices are respected and supported, and

each person is a collaborator in advancing the learning and development of the whole group. Ways to be present and participate fully include timeliness and preparation for class; removing potential distractions, such as cell phones and other devices; active listening; careful, on-point contributions to discussions; attending to fellow students' work, and offering relevant feedback and critical support; and paying attention to the dynamics of the room, and responding accordingly. At the college level, students are expected to take responsibility for behaving in a demeanor corresponding to the professional field. Specific responsibilities are aimed toward deepening individual and collective artistic development.

Observation:

When you observe class due to injury or illness, you must hand in an observation paper for that day at the end of class, or you will be marked absent. The subject of your observation will be determined by the instructor at the beginning of class.

DRESS POLICY:

Wear comfortable clothes that allow free/full range of movement but still keep the alignment of the body visible. It is recommended that you wear "soft" pants (no jeans or the like; no shorts). For safety reasons, do not wear eyeglasses or large jewelry. Socks are discouraged and may be worn only for protective purposes and with prior approval from the instructor. Since

your body temperature will change throughout class, it is recommended you wear and/or bring layers of clothing. It is recommended you have water available to drink during the class; please bring it in a closeable water bottle. Food is not permitted in the studio. Eating and chewing gum are not permitted in class.

GRADING POLICY**CONTRACT:**

Each student is required to sign a contract. This contract is a commitment of time and an agreement of responsibility. Forty-eight points of your grade is based on your ability to uphold the terms of the agreement in accordance with the quality of your conduct and performance during the semester. *(See contract below: read, sign and hand in during the first week of class).*

EVALUATION:

1. Upholding the terms of the **contract. 48 points due Wednesday, August 30** (3 points per week or 0.5 for each item)

2. **Attendance 32 points**

(1 point per class)

3. **Journal submission 20 points due Wednesdays: 8/30, 9/27, 10/25, 11/29** (4 entries at 5 points each)

TOTAL

100 points

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

ASSIGNMENTS

JOURNALS:

It is important for you to have a notebook or journal for documentation of your progress in the dance ensemble project and to jot down notes and feedback from the instructor. Bring your syllabus, journal and writing utensil with you to every class. This is your personal book. Use it as a diary, if you will, to connect your thoughts of the movement. I will not look at your journal. However, you are responsible for submitting 4” journal” entries (300-500 word typed, double-spaces, Times Roman font, size 12) to be evaluated for a total of 20 points (5 points per entry). **20 Points**

UF POLICIES

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams.

Accommodations are

not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>.

ETIQUETTE: COMMUNICATION COURTESY: All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats.

[<http://teach.ufl.edu/docs/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

GETTING HELP:

If applicable: For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Sakai, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2 • <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
 - Disability resources
 - Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
 - Library Help Desk support

COURSE SCHEDULE:

**This schedule is subject to change*

<p><u>Week 1</u> - Intro to syllabus & community - Create ensemble warm-up - Rhythm improv - Submit journal entry 1</p>	<p><u>Week 2</u> - Fundamental techniques & aesthetics - Rhythm improv - Learn movement phrase 1&2</p>	<p><u>Week 3</u> - Rhythm improv - Learn movement phrase 3&4 - Rehearse phrase/section 1&2</p>	<p><u>Week 4</u> - Rhythm improv - Learn movement phrase 5&6 - Rehearse phrase/section 1,2,3,4</p>
<p><u>Week 5</u> - Learn movement phrase 7&8 - Rehearse section 1,2,3,4,5&6</p>	<p><u>Week 6</u> - Rehearse section 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8 - Submit journal entry #2</p>	<p><u>Week 7</u> - Rehearse all sections - Begin casting - Begin staging</p>	<p><u>Week 8</u> - Rehearse all sections - Finalize casting - Staging</p>

Week 9 section 1-4
 - Rehearse staged

section 5-8

section 1-8

Walk through #1

Week 13

- Walk through #2

-Run Through #1

Week 10

- Rehearse staged

Week 14

- Run Through #2

Week 11

- Rehearse staged

- Submit journal entry 3

Week 15

Tech Week

Week 12

- Freeze show -

Week 16

Agbedidi Dec 1.2.3 -

Submit journal entry

#4

Contract

Our goal is to create a small performing ensemble designed to develop technical range and performance skills through the study and production of neo traditional and contemporary African and African Diasporic dance repertory within the company experience.

As a member of FIRST YEAR DANCE ENSEMBLE, I am willing and able to commit to the following ensemble policies and conditions:

I, _____ will do my utmost to fulfill my commitment to this project. I will approach my participation as a job in which communication with my peers, directors, and collaborators is of the utmost importance. I will approach the job with an openness and: Be energetic and enthusiastic, be available and approachable, give information freely, be humorous, be fair, display interest, be decisive, be humble, be patient and calm, be tough, and make the most of this creative process of learning.

I will commit to participating in and contributing to a professional dance ensemble mindset*

I will show up for EVERY scheduled rehearsal and performance on time and prepared to work**

I will care for my body (my instrument), prepare for performance, and perform choreographic work***

I will bring my syllabus, a notebook, and writing utensil(s) to every class. I will enter the studio dressed appropriately and ready to dance****

I will pay attention and focus on the physical and/or creative tasks at hand with a positive and inquisitive attitude and a genuine desire to investigate ideas and exercises***** I will allow and create opportunities for others to speak and respond to class discussions by volunteering your own experiences, discoveries, and ideas*****

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Ensemble Policies and Conditions

- **The Ensemble Mindset***: By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate ability to participate in and contribute to a professional dance company/ensemble. The course trains each student to work and practice as a part of a cohort of peers and as a professional in the field. This requires each student to come to class with the mindset that they are a part of an ensemble (something bigger than themselves). While working towards individual refinement in artistry and technique, each student is expected to contribute with a good attitude, full dancing, and work ethic that contributes to the company overall. This course encourages relating with challenges as opportunities, and failure as a chance to learn; embraces all feedback as an opportunity to improve; values purposeful effort over perfection; takes creative risks rather than staying small, safe, or the same; faces obstacles by experimenting and problem-solving rather than giving up; actively believing that abilities, intelligence, and talent are not innate or fixed, but instead are developed through effort, learning, and perseverance; and approaches work and life as a journey of continual learning and growth.

- **The Rehearsal Process****: By the end of the course, students will be able to actively engage in the rehearsal process by embodying new movement, refining their technique, and honing their approaches as a dance artist. A supportive and focused work environment in the studio is of the utmost importance for the success of each dancer and the choreographic work. Professionalism ranges from showing up to each rehearsal on time and prepared to work; to demonstrating support and respect towards other students both in and out of rehearsal; to making use of time in rehearsal by reviewing material and keeping the body warm when not dancing; to being fully present during the rehearsal process. Students are expected to create space for a meaningful and productive choreographic process; learn how to contribute appropriately to an artist's work; and become a dancer that is physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared for performance. Presence, collaboration, and mindful effort are tools learned and practiced for professional training.

- **The Performance*****: By the end of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to care for their body (their instrument), prepare for performance, and perform choreographic work. Each student is expected to care for their mind/body outside of rehearsal by participating in consistent technique classes, reviewing choreography, bringing awareness and developing healthy practices around nutrition and sleeping habits, and participating in other wellbeing practice that is necessary for each individual to achieve peak performance and readiness in time for the Faculty Dance Concert. These habits will contribute to a student's success and sustainability in the professional field of dance.

- **Thorough Preparation for Class******: Bring to every class: your syllabus, a notebook, and writing utensil(s); take individual measures necessary for you to understand course concepts and movement material; complete and submit written journal assignments by the time they are due; and dress appropriately for class.

- **Attentiveness and Focus*******: Paying attention and focusing on the physical and/or creative task at

hand; a positive and inquisitive attitude; genuine investigation of ideas and exercises; active observation and documentation; ask questions when you do not understand material or need assistance in your practice; respond to and support classmates' questions and requests for assistance. (Note: If you do not feel well or are experiencing an illness, listen to your body to determine how it is best for you to participate in class. If you are ill with something contagious, please take measures to prevent other people's exposure. If you aren't feeling well but are not contagious, you are encouraged to come to class and participate physically to degrees that are appropriate for your state of health, or conduct an observation.)

- **Active Listening and Focused Speaking** Allow and create opportunities for others to speak; take notes and write questions to document and respond to class discussions; volunteer your own experiences, discoveries, and ideas; ground your comments in class activities, discussions, performances, and texts; thoughtfully support fellow students' comments; respectfully provide differing or divergent perspectives on fellow students' comments; formulate relevant questions; connect experiences and ideas to other studies and subjects