

# DAA 2611 DANCE COMPOSITION II

2 Credits

Tuesday / Thursday 12:50 – 2:20, Spring Semester 2016

McGuire G6

**INSTRUCTOR:** DR. NITA LITTLE

*MCGUIRE PAVILION room 236*

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*352-273-0522*

**OFFICE HOURS:** MON AND WEDNESDAY 9:30 – 10:30

*Instructor is available by appointment. Please contact the instructor whenever you have a question. Email or leave a phone message with your name and the course along with your preferred means of contact. If you are seeking office time, then leave your preferred time on Mondays or Wednesday between 12:40 and 2:40. Instructor will return your call/email to confirm.*

**COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:** *Please contact instructor through above email or phone number. Please include name, course, and issue with each communication.*

**REQUIRED TEXT:** Our Primary texts are *Trust the Process* by Shaun McNiff and *A Choreographer's Handbook*, by Jonathan Burrows. Additional readings will be provided for this course in the form of selected articles that pertain to specific areas of concern. Suggested readings are provided from the texts listed below. These are significant texts that you may wish to have in your own library to support your continuing education.

## **Suggested Readings**

Anaheim, Rudolf; *Visual Thinking*.

Bel, Jerome. Catalogue Raisonné, <http://www.catalogueraisonne-jeromebel.com/>>.

Bogart, Anne. *The Director Prepares*.

Buckwalter, Melinda; *Composing while Dancing: An Improviser's Companion*.

Burrows, Jonathan. *A Choreographer's Handbook*.

Foster, Susan Leigh. *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*.

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Forsythe, William; *Improvisation Technologies*.

Gere, Ann Cooper Albright and David, ed. *Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader*.

Morgenroth, Joyce. *Speaking of Dance: Twelve Contemporary Choreographers on Their Craft*.

Norah Zuniga Shaw, Maria Palazzi, William Forsythe. "Synchronous Objects: Interactive Media Connecting Dance, Science, and Discourse ".  
<[synchronousobjects.osu.edu/](http://synchronousobjects.osu.edu/)>.

Spain, Kent de. *Landscapes of the Now*. New York.

Shahn, Ben (1974) *The Shape of Content*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Tharp, Twyla; *The Creative Habit*.

Thomas, Helen; *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*.

Students will be expected to make good use of the dance area in the library stacks as background in response to particular writing assignments.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** Dancers will be guided to view choreographic materials on the internet and attend the new Museum of Dance Film Festival on March 19. (It should be noted that dancers will be making work for The Museum of Dance event.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** As dancers change in their conditioning and possibility, western choreographers are also changing. They have moved away from an interest in discovery of what is essentially human, a modernist concern, to a post modern dismantlement of clean lines and set forms, the fracturing of cultural idealism. This has developed into an interest in finding and making difference which effects the composition of dance companies, dancers and their skills, and the form, content, methodologies and concern of dances and dance making. To keep up with these exciting times, this class will knit theory with practice. Our purpose is to help unique choreographers locate themselves within a larger discourse so that they can adequately determine, speak to, and with, their developing artistic voices. Choreographers will learn to clarify not only the artistic message or concept that they choose to make, but also ensure that their choreographic practices are congruent with those messages. They will gain empirical insight into themselves as artists, ultimately giving themselves greater choice.

This is beginning/intermediate course in dance composition for dance BFA majors. Through reading, in class research, viewing dance online, in video, film, and live performance, and through assigned studies/compositions, its purpose is to continue the development of student's choreographic skills, advance their creative practice, and establish compositional knowledge. We will study and practice the relationship of form and content while shifting the variables in which they approach the practice of

choreography. By investigating structure in relation to the materials of composition, we will develop linguistic tools that support our creative practice, and allow us to reflect upon and respond to dance as an expanding art form. To do this we will consider the compositional concerns of related fine arts, including visual, sound, performing and performance art. Moving past choreographing solos, we will investigate duet, trio and when possible, ensemble works.

This course will look at composition on a variety of scales, from the particularity of the meaning of a single action (i.e. the detailing of what we call body-language) to the relational significance of individuals and collectives including their impact on their environments. It will consider time and space as elastic materials that the student will be asked to modulate and purpose within their creative exercises. It will consider the variety of ways dances are constructed, allowing students to make dances through both didactic and democratic models<sup>1</sup>. Through assigned exercises and in class practice, students will be asked to make studies that elucidate particular choreographic concerns. They will also be responsible for making two works: a mid term and a final piece. These works will support their own investigations while also practicing the skills developed in class. Using contemporary choreographers works as models for dance making, this course will challenge the student to extend beyond their current concepts of beauty, order, relationship, and performance. It will ask the student to develop improvisational skills that will inform their dance making and further teach them the meaning of creative practice as research.

**PURPOSE OF COURSE:** The primary goal of this course is to support each student in developing his/her own particular choreographic voice. While this course will be teaching the flexibility of artistic perspectives, it will not be determinative of one above others, but rather will train young artists to notice the practical results of their particular point(s) of view. Students will practice giving feedback by learning to speak with evaluative logic about their result. In particular students will learn to self-evaluate. Students will be broadening their creative vocabulary through studies designed to put that vocabulary into practice. Therefore, some studies will allow them to determine the form by which they meet its criterion. Through their text students will investigate creative process and practices. Supplemental readings will initiate them into the international conversations about choreography and dance making.

**TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:** Students learn when the actions they make are integral to their lives, and when what they learn in class become practices that further their

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<sup>1</sup> Butterworth, J (2009). Too Many Cooks, *Contemporary Choreography: A Critical Reader*. Abindon, UK: Routledge. Pgs. 177-194.

personal goals. Making dance relevant to my student's lives is essential to my teaching. When students live in the physicality of inquiry, asking questions of their lived moments, their current experience is brought into their art making, enriching it with meaning. Connecting their artistic inquiry to a broader field of dance action – the international conversations about dance and its making, offers them connectivity to and participation in a world of dance makers. Students need to come to class with their most open willingness to grow and by growing, willing to discover themselves to be newly different because of what they learn.

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:** Our work will be both in class and outside of class. Class work will be given appropriate to our progress and area of study. These will include small assignments, reading, writing both in our journal and as more formal papers. Participation in class discussions is critical.

Students should attend four required performances and all departmental "UnShowings." Be prepared to view 4 dance performances (noted below) as well as view choreographic works on the internet. Plan to arrive 15-30 minutes early for all shows since late seating may not be available. (If you are performing in the show, you will get the credit for "viewing" the show.)

Your primary assignments will be a mid-term dance piece and a final dance (which may be a continuation and completion of the mid-term. These may be formed by any number of dancers (although solo works are not encouraged without strong reasoning). Dancers may come from your classmates or from outside as long as they are available for in-class showings prior to and for performances. Please see dates below.

There will be short writing assignments associated with your viewing and a mid-term and final paper that accompany your in-class performances. You will receive an in-class verbal or a written rubric (final paper) for these papers.

You should bring a journal to all classes. It will record your process, materials that influence you (including your reading), ideas about the choreographic process that we develop in class. It offers you practice in making artistic statements that will eventually turn into your final artistic statement.

## COURSE POLICIES:

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Attendance is required at all classes and all "unshowings" in addition to the required performances. Should you miss any class, you MUST inform the instructor in writing prior to missing. Do not expect to be able to make up a missed

composition class. In the case of injury and if the situation allows, Dr. Little may be able to make accommodations for you so you do not fall behind. Communicate clearly with Dr. Little so that she may become aware to try to help you.

In the case of any absence, it is your responsibility to email Dr. Little in advance so that the class structure can be changed as needed. Should you fail to email prior, you are to email her explaining your unanticipated absence within 24 hours. Religious holidays are excused upon prior notification as per UF policy, for details, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx> Further, all dance policies apply.

**QUIZ/EXAM POLICY:** All written portions of the mid-term and the final exam must be emailed to [nlittle@arts.ufl.edu](mailto:nlittle@arts.ufl.edu) by 6:00 pm on the day the assignment is due. **Please bring a hard copy to class. Mid term exam will take place on Feb 23 and 25. The Final exam is on April 12 and 14.** Anything emailed to me MUST contain your name and the assignment name in the subject line.

**MAKE-UP POLICY:** You are fully responsible for all material missed due to any absence. An exam may be made up upon submission of documentation for the illness preventing attendance.

#### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Student assignments will be developed in class as suits our process. They will include readings, viewings, research and journal entries in your ongoing journal of process. Most important are the particular choreographic studies that we will develop over the course of the term.

Mid term and finals will develop from in-class studies and will be performed in class with an option to show your work in an UnShowing. Mid-Terms may be further developed for performance at the Harn Museum of Dance on March 19. Mid Term performance dates are **Feb 23 and 25**. Final Performance dates are **April 13 and 18**. Your performances (mid-term and final) are to be accompanied by a paper. It will speak to the process of the solo's conception and its particular choreographic concerns. A rubric for these papers will be handed out in class. Papers should be handed in as hard copies. Mid-Terms will be developed with the Harn Museum of Dance Event in mind. Sound, costumes etc. are to be considered in this light. Finals are to be finished products including costume, design, sound and any other elements that are critical to its making. Design ideas

will accompany preparatory sectional showings which will happen within the context of class.

Journal of Process: This journal will be maintained in an ongoing fashion. It will be turned in on **February 2, March 7 and April 13** for final grading. The journal has multiple functions. This class has an ongoing agenda of developing its own choreographic text through studying compositional language used in other arts. The journal will also contain the information you have personally researched as well as record information learned in class. It will delineate your process and may include ideas and materials that inform or inspire your work.

Viewing: BFA Majors are required to attend the following performances: Spill or The House of Atreus, Dance 2016, and The Dance Showcase, and TWO of the Phillips Center Performances listed below: ALVIN AILEY DANCE THEATER and BODYTRAFFIC. These are in addition to required class attendance.

#### REQUIRED PERFORMANCE AND EVENT PARTICIPATION

Of the required performances one BFA Showcase Performance (A or B) and the one PCPA (Phillips Center for the Performing Arts) professional concert will require written work in addition to a ticket stub. **Your proof of viewing is the ticket stub. It should be shown to me in class with your name written on the back (but you may then leave me with a signed Xeroxed copy of the front and back of the ticket) along with a short written description/critique of the performance.** These will be one page, 250 word statements. A rubric will be handed out in class. Please provide these papers as hard copies **within one week** after viewing the production. You may then use these same performances and their ticket stubs for technique classes.

TWO specific “coupons” \* are available for the Constans performances (one is optional), and one for the Black Box (Dance 2016)

Important Box Office Changes: 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).

UF Box Office #: (352) 392-1653 UF Performing Arts (Phillips Center) #: (352) 392-2787  
SFC Fine Arts Hall Theatre #: (352) 395-4181

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 assigned SoTD productions with instructions of how to use it to get discount tickets. Viewing of SoTD plays is highly recommended, but not required.

### UNSHOWINGS

January 7      *Spring Showcase (Comp 4)/MOD Auditions, Thursday*      6:30-8:30, G-6  
January 11      UnShowing/Meeting 6:30-8:30, G-6  
January 25      UnShowing #2 6:30-8:30, G-6  
February 1      UnShowing #3 6:30-8:30, G-6  
**DANCE 2016** • February 12-21, 2016 at TBA      Location: McGuire Black Box Theatre, UF  
February 22      UnShowing #4 6:30-8:30, G-6  
March 7      UnShowing #5 6:30-8:30, G-6  
March 21      UnShowing #6 Adjudication #1 (Senior Solos, etc)  
March 28      UnShowing #7 Adjudication #2 (Final Comp 4) 6:30-9:30, G-6  
April 4      UnShowing #8 Designers Showing 6:30-9:30, G-6  
**BFA SPRING DANCE SHOWCASE** • April 13-17, 2016 Location: McGuire Studio Theatre  
April 18      UnShowing #9 Final UnShowing!

### PHILLIPS CENTER EVENTS

**OF THE FOLLOWING EVENTS, ALVIN AILEY AND BODYTRAFFIC ARE REQUIRED VIEWING FOR THIS COURSE. WE WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THE HARN MUSEUM OF DANCE.**

- **BLAZE** • January 29, 2016 at 7:30 pm Location: Phillips Center
- **MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM – Dance Alive National Ballet** • February 6, 2016 Location: Phillips Center
- **\*ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER** • February 16, 2016 at 7:30 pm Location: Phillips Center
- **THE WIZ – Dancompany (G'ville)** • March 12, 2016 at 1:30/7:00 pm Location: Phillips Center
- **CARMINA BURANA – Dance Alive National Ballet** • March 18 & 19, 2016 Location: Phillips Center
- **Events at HARN MUSEUM OF ART DANCE** • March 19, 2016 Location: Harn Museum of Art
- **ELEMENTS OF STYLE** • March 25-26, 2016 at 7:30 pm Location: Santa Fe College FAH Theatre
- **\* BODYTRAFFIC** • April 9, 2016 at 7:30 pm Location: Phillips Center

### SIGNIFICANT Assignment Due Dates:

Feb 2: Journal Due

Feb 23: Mid Term #1

Feb 25: Mid Term #2

April 13: Final Exam Performances #1, Journal Due

April 18: Final Exam Performances #2\*

April 20: We will discuss works, review the choreographic text we developed, and party.

*Please note that Mid-Term and Final Exams are by group. Group #1 has exams on day 1 and finals on day 2. Group #2 is the reverse.*

### GRADING POLICIES:

On-going assessment of quality of participation, preparation, in-class assignments.	40
Journal	20
Mid-Term Exam and paper	15
Final Exam and paper	25

### GRADING SCALE:

**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



Your overall score may be affected by your attendance record.

For more information, see: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html/>

This syllabus represents my 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.

## 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>.

**\*\*NETIQUETTE: COMMUNICATION COURTESY:** All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. [Describe what is expected and what will occur as a result of improper behavior [See Sample Netiquette Document](#)]

## GETTING HELP:

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

- [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto: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

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.