

University of Florida
School of Theatre + Dance

DAA 2204 — Contemporary Ballet Practices 1

Day/Time: Tuesday & Thursday | 8:30–10:25 AM (meets 8:40–10:20 AM)

Location: Studio G-11, Nadine McGuire Pavilion

Instructor of Record: Tracy Julias Shields

Email: Tracyjuliasshields@ufl.edu

Office Hours: By appointment (before or after class)

Course Description

DAA 2204 — Contemporary Ballet Practices (2 Credits)

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

This course focuses on foundational ballet technique, emphasizing alignment, musicality, body awareness, terminology, and the historical context of ballet as an evolving art form.

Prerequisite:

DAA 1000 (C) or BFA Performance: Musical Theatre major, or instructor placement/audition.

Email Policy:

Use **ONLY** your **ufl.edu** email account for all course-related communication. Include your name and class in the subject line or body of the message.

Syllabus Disclaimer:

This syllabus reflects current course expectations. Adjustments may occur due to instructional needs or unforeseen circumstances. Any updates will be announced in class, posted on Canvas, and/or emailed.

Important Academic Dates (Sample Semester)

- First Day of Classes: **1/12**
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day (No Class): **1/19**
- Spring Break: **3/14–3/21**
- Final Exams: **April 25 – May 1**

(Confirm with the official UF Academic Calendar for the semester.)

Required & Recommended Texts

Required Readings

Provided digitally and free of charge via Canvas or email.

Recommended Texts

- *Inside Ballet Technique* — Valerie Greig
- *Classical Ballet Technique* — Gretchen Ward Warren
- *Basic Principles of Classical Ballet* — Agrippina Vaganova

Required Equipment

- Yoga mat

Purpose of the Course

This course aims to:

- Strengthen foundational knowledge of ballet mechanics, positions, and steps.
- Explore **why** movement is executed and how intention informs technique.
- Encourage curiosity, awareness, and personal engagement with ballet.

Program Context

The UF School of Theatre + Dance technique curriculum supports students in developing historical, aesthetic, and biomechanics understanding appropriate to the contemporary artist. All students — majors, minors, and non-majors — are expected to approach class with professionalism and motivation appropriate to their level.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Engage in ballet technique while integrating somatic and conditioning practices to enhance body awareness.
2. Identify key aspects of ballet history and its cultural evolution from European courts to present-day practice.
3. Build consistency in daily studio practice and technical development.

4. Apply anatomically informed alignment and core-connected movement, with attention to safe rotation and joint integrity.
5. Develop musicality, phrasing, rhythm, and spatial awareness in barre and center work.
6. Learn material efficiently and perform combinations with clarity and accuracy.
7. Build strength, confidence, and performance presence in ballet class.
8. Develop an appreciation for theory, criticism, and aesthetics in ballet as an art form.

Note: Entry into Level 1 assumes basic ballet proficiency via audition or placement.

Teaching Philosophy

This class values curiosity, safety, and individuality. Ballet is both athletic and expressive — we work to honor the body, build awareness, and explore technique with integrity, musicality, and artistry. We acknowledge that ballet is a historically codified and physically demanding form; our work in the studio centers adaptation, respect for each dancer's body, and sustainable practice.

Dress Code

Female-identifying students

- Leotard and tights or other fitted dance-wear
- Soft ballet shoes
- Pointe work by instructor permission only

Male-identifying students

- Fitted T-shirt or tank tucked in
- Leggings or yoga pants (or fitted shorts)
- Ballet shoes
- Dance belt recommended when wearing tights

General Guidelines

- Hair neatly secured away from the face.
- Warm-ups must be form-fitting and removed after warm-up.

- Skirts or belts may be worn for alignment.
- No oversized clothing.
- No loose jewelry, large earrings, watches, or accessories that could cause injury.
- No gum in the studio.

Studio Rules

- No gum (choking hazard).
- Only sealed water bottles are allowed in the studio.
- Silence and store all electronic devices before class.
- Inform the instructor of any emergency situation before class begins.

Attendance Policy

For courses meeting **twice weekly**:

- Up to **2 undocumented absences** with no grade penalty.
- **3rd unexcused absence**: 5% deduction from final grade.
- On the **3rd absence** (excused or unexcused), a meeting with the instructor (and/or area faculty) is required to assess continued participation.
- Each additional **unexcused absence** after the 3rd results in an additional **5% deduction** from the final grade.
- **4 unexcused absences** may result in automatic failure of the course.
- Makeup opportunities are at the instructor's discretion.

Communication is essential.

Make-Up Policy

- Students are responsible for all material covered during any absence.
- There are **no** makeup options for **unexcused** absences.

- Exams, quizzes, and written work may only be made up with **approved documentation**.

To receive credit for an **excused absence**:

1. Submit approved/legal documentation to the instructor immediately upon return to class (copies accepted if originals are needed elsewhere).
2. Complete any assigned make-up work **within two weeks** of the absence.

UF Attendance Policy:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Evaluation & Grading

Students are expected to complete online course evaluations:

<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu>

Grading Scale

- A: 94–100
- A-: 90–93
- B+: 87–89
- B: 84–86
- B-: 80–83
- C+: 77–79
- C: 74–76
- C-: 70–73
- D+: 67–69
- D: 64–66
- D-: 61–63
- F: 0–60

Weekly Course Overview (Sample Outline)

- **Week 1:** Syllabus review; barre and center introduction
- **Weeks 2–7:** Technique development — adagio, turns, petit allegro, grand allegro
- **Week 9:** Midterm assessment
- **Week 10:** Break (no class, according to UF calendar)
- **Weeks 11–14:** Expanded phrase work, refinement, integration of musicality and performance quality
- **Week 15:** Final assessment and reflections

(Specific combinations and repertory will be adjusted according to class needs and progression.)

Assignments & Points

- Event Attendance — **10 pts**
- Reflection — **20 pts**
- Midterm (Evaluation) — **20 pts**
- Participation & Engagement — **20 pts**
- Final (Written or In-Person) — **30 pts**

Total: 100 points

Details and rubrics for written work will be provided on Canvas.

Participation & Engagement

A detailed rubric (posted on Canvas) will address:

- Preparedness and punctuality
- Class etiquette and professionalism
- Willingness to receive and apply feedback
- Consistency of effort and engagement in all class activities

Technical Development Criteria

Technical development is assessed across several categories, including:

1. **Placement and Alignment**
2. **Core Support and Conditioning**
3. **Application of Rotation (Stationary and Locomotor)**
4. **Spatial Awareness and Full-Body Integration**
5. **Rhythmic Clarity and Musicality**
6. **Professionalism and Artistic Presence**

More specific descriptions will be provided on Canvas and discussed in class.

UF Policies, Support Resources & Injury Policy

All UF policies regarding accommodations, academic honesty, student conduct, wellness resources, and the SoTD Dance Injury & Illness Policy apply in this course.

Key resources include (but are not limited to):

- Disability Resource Center: <https://disability.ufl.edu/>
- Honor Code & Academic Misconduct: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>
- Counseling & Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
- U Matter, We Care: <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>

The SoTD Dance Injury & Illness Policy emphasizes:

- Prioritizing physical and mental well-being
- Prompt consultation with a healthcare provider when injured or ill
- Clear communication with instructors regarding limitations

- No participation in rehearsal/performance if the student cannot participate appropriately in class

Full policy details and additional academic resources will be posted on Canvas.

If you'd like, I can next:

- Turn this into a **Canvas-ready** version with headings and bullets formatted for Modules, or
- Make a **one-page student-facing overview** that you can hand out on the first day.