

DAA 3108 / CDP3: Contemporary Postmodern Practice

Spring 2026 | MW | 10:40a-12:15pm

Jan/Feb in the O'Dome + Mar/Apr in G10



with: Xan Burley (pronouns: she/her/hers)

email: xburley@arts.ufl.edu

office hours: to be announced

office: room 232

lab fees: <http://aa.ufl.edu/policies/material-and-supply-fees/>



→ quick guide + links

Course Description / Guiding Principles

Contemporary Dance Practice 3: Contemporary Postmodern Practice situates the study of contemporary dance within the framework of the postmodern era and subsequent trends in contemporary dance. Though we will be exploring a specific sub-genre within the genre of Contemporary Dance, all forms of dance training and experience support the student's work in this class and each student's previously obtained knowledge is relevant and significant. Each student is encouraged to embrace the idea of practice, not mastery. The learning process is ongoing. Technique in this context is the development of specific skills pertaining to the style of training. In-class work will include: improvisation; warm-up exercises; discussion and reflection; and performance of phrasework + repertory.

Studio Culture + Expectations

- Arrive on time and do not leave early. We gather at 10:40am in the circle. **You are allowed ONE freebie tardy or early departure. All other tardies or early departures count as half an absence.**
- Wear clothes that are comfortable to move in. Pants are highly recommended. **Dance barefoot!**
- Bring a notebook or other tool for writing, listing, and journaling.
- Turn off notifications on your wearable technology unless otherwise approved by the instructor.
- Be kind to yourself and your peers. Create a sense of belonging for all.
- Be open-minded, patient, and curious.

Assignments

- Deadlines are always 11:59pm unless otherwise noted.
- An automatic 48-hr extension may be granted for any assignments if you email before the deadline.

Attendance Policy

- Two (2) unexcused absences are allowed (take these days as needed!!!).
 - All unexcused absences after the 2nd will lower your grade by 5% each.
 - You will be able to make-up no more than two (2) unexcused absences on a case-by-case basis.
- For an absence to be excused, appropriate documentation must be provided in a timely manner (except for religious holidays).
- One (1) tardy or early dismissal is allowed. Each tardy or early dismissal after that will count as half an unexcused absence.

Statements, Resources, + Policies

CONTACT INFORMATION

COMMUNICATION

We will use Canvas (<http://elearning.ufl.edu>) as our home-base for communicating, compiling assignments, and collaborating. In addition, please only use your UFL.EDU for any email correspondence. Please be sure to communicate with me as the semester progresses. Knowing how you're doing in this class helps me support you!!! Also, to protect my time with my family, know that I will not respond to emails after 4pm during the week or on the weekend. If something is urgent, I will attend to it as quickly as possible.

MEETINGS + OFFICE HOURS – I will schedule one individual meeting mid-semester with each of you to discuss your progress in class. In addition, my office hours are to be announced and by appointment.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, I will offer physical practice, movement exploration, and reflective assignments that will broaden your experience of/in contemporary dance. A typical class starts with a few minutes to check-in with each other. This time, though we are not "dancing" yet, is an important part of our work together. As a valued member of our community, I ask that you please be on time to class to participate in this moment. Be in our opening circle AT 10:40am!!!

Once we begin moving, we will activate our creativity and bodies through improvisation, warm-up, grounding and precision exercises, choreographed phrase work, and repertory. In my class, I emphasize awareness of weight, employing momentum as a tool for both precise balance and fluid abandon. Through articulation and extension of the lower and upper body we will refine our capacity for efficient full-bodied movement. Phrase-work will focus on musical and rhythmic complexity, qualitative specificity, performance skill-building, and your creativity. We will enrich our understanding of dance practice through collaboration, deep listening, and rigor. I maintain the belief that simple is not the same as easy and it is your responsibility as a learner to meet class material with curiosity and self-motivation.

I will lead a movement practice and course of study influenced and informed by the following:

- My background in modern/postmodern/contemporary dance.
- My creative research as a choreographer in collaboration with Alex Springer.
- My training in related forms of dance including improvisation, contact improvisation/partnering, and ballet, and more.
- YOU! What you bring to our practice is essential and I will respond to your needs and interests to the best of my ability.

A typical class will include:

- IMPROVISATION – developing comfort and dynamic range; sourcing the self and the community; tuning to the body.
- WARM-UP / EXERCISES / EXPLORATIONS – ongoing and follow-along warm-up sequences; exercises that prepare us for phrase material and repertory by building on elements of momentum, grounding, strength, balance, efficiency, expansion, specificity, and more.
- COLLABORATION / DISCUSSION – opportunities to collaborate; time for reflection and discussion as a community.
- PHRASEWORK / REPERTORY – learning movement phrases from my creative research/repertory and Varone repertory.

NOTE ABOUT WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY: Wearable technology, like fit-bits and apple watches, create unnecessary distraction and draw from the focused and intentional practice I expect in this class. Please turn your notifications OFF and refrain from looking at your device during class. Should you need to be reached during our class time for any reason, you may turn on notifications on a case-by-case basis and should clear it with me first.

ATTIRE: Please wear comfortable clothing to dance in. Wear pants and bring layers. Knee pads are highly suggested. We dance **barefoot** in this class.

→ course objectives

In this course, we will:

- Learn about postmodern/contemporary dance and experience it personally.
- Develop our attention and curiosity.
- Utilize anatomical and kinesthetic awareness to execute movement efficiently and safely.
- Develop healthy alignment, strength, flexibility, range of motion, balance, and use of space.
- Practice learning material quickly and thoroughly.
- Cultivate performance confidence and range.
- Explore the expressive and qualitative range of movement.
- Become more analytical with regard to movement apprehension and performance.
- Collaborate with each other.

- Examine the role of dance in our current world and develop an informed view of the interaction of art and society in the 20/21st Century
- Give voice to your person/dancer/thinker/artist self!

As the facilitator of this course, I will:

- Share my expertise with you.
- Listen to your needs as an individual.
- Create opportunities for you to grow, improve, and be challenged.
- Ask you to be open to new and different ways of moving, thinking, and creating.
- Respect your values, expertise, and boundaries.
- Expand your knowledge of Contemporary Dance.

→ guiding principles + definitions

As I have outlined above, my experience and expertise as a dance performer and maker is primarily in Modern, Postmodern, and Contemporary Dance forms, with emphasis on Postmodern. I also draw from – knowingly and unknowingly – many other forms of dance. I believe fervently in many of the values, methods, and knowledges inherent in Postmodern dance. I also acknowledge that it is not the only or the best way to train. Postmodernism, which is considered a Euro-American dance form, is merely one way to practice and experience dance and together with you, I hope to explore, interrogate, and expand upon it.

DEFINITIONS TO CONSIDER

I believe that dance that is contemporary—of the “now” and the “new”—is a practice that builds on historical contexts to undergird current, relevant, and innovative methods of expressive embodiment. Contemporary dance is an evolving, fluid, and ever-shifting field and form. Contemporary Dance Practice is an invitation to explore the unknown and an opportunity to expand the field.

Practice, for me, is an ongoing state of being in which tremendous growth is possible. In service of fostering your and my own growth, I wish to emphasize that our practice is about cultivation rather than mastery. To that end, we will work with rigor, creativity, playfulness, and attention to detail AND find sources for joy and pleasure in our dancing.

→ respectful learning environment + community guidelines

STUDIO CULTURE

So that you are contributing to a **respectful learning environment** for all of us and practicing the full scope of what it means to be a dance artist, I expect you to do the following:

- Come into the studio, set your things down on the side, and come into the space. DO NOT congregate on the side of the studio.
 - Silence all devices and wearable technology.
- Stretch, warm-up, and chat quietly with a friend if you feel ready for that.
- Be in our circle, **barefoot** and standing, no later than 10:40am. 10:41am is LATE.
 - We will often check-in here, which is an important part of our time.

- During breaks for water and the bathroom, do not go to your bag and check your device. This is disruptive to your practice. Instead, stretch or rest.
 - Try not to leave the studio for breaks before I offer them, unless it is necessary.
- SPEAK UP! When I ask questions or for your feedback, please use your voice to communicate with me and the class.
 - DO NOT carry on side conversations that may be distracting to me or others.
- Bring a ready attitude to class.
- Be kind to yourself and your peers. Always. Create a sense of belonging for all.
- Do not leave class early unless approved by Xan before the start of class time.

A respectful learning environment is also sustained by making community guidelines, which we will do in the first few weeks of class.

→ course expectations

ATTENDANCE

It is imperative that you attend every class meeting for this course. A studio course is like a laboratory. Your best learning takes place *in* the dance space. Also, being present and supportive of your peers, and being engaged in our work together regularly is integral.

For classes that meet two (2) times a week, two (2) unexcused / undocumented absences are allowed. Beyond those absences, documentation is required to be considered excused. Each unexcused absence lowers your grade 5%. For example, if you your overall grade is an A- (90-92%), you would potentially drop to a B+ or B. **NOTE: Beyond your two unexcused/undocumented absences, you can expect the option to complete make-up work for up to 2 additional absences if that is needed.**

I will inform you of your 2nd and final unexcused absence when it occurs. Upon your 3rd unexcused absence, I will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your needs. At that point, we will determine how to best support your ability to attend class and maintain a rigorous course of study. As mentioned above, this may mean completing comparable make-up work. Once we have connected and made a plan, I will expect you to stay on course and communicate with me. In other words, I will not follow up if you continue to have unexcused absences and they will lower your grade as outlined above.

I recognize and respect that each person navigates self-care differently. If you feel sick at all, overwhelmed, or simply need to rest, you should stay home and take an absence. Being absent is not wrong. Excused absences are there to support your overall well-being. When you listen to and respect your body's needs, you are acting with maturity. COMMUNICATION IS KEY!!!

GROWTH + DEVELOPMENT (25% of your grade)

I will evaluate your work in this class in each of these areas at the end of the semester. I expect you to work toward meeting or exceeding the requirements in each area.

⇒ ARTISTRY

- Musicality and Rhythm: student demonstrates clear timing in movement and movement phrasing, demonstrates clarity of rhythmic patterning, demonstrates precise and appropriate response to musical stimulus.
- Performance Quality: student performs movement with confidence, demonstrate the ability to explore dynamic range with distinct clarity.

⇒ EMBODIMENT

- Kinesthetic Awareness: students are able to integrate a moderate level of anatomical/kinesiological approaches to the body and movement practice, including the use of proprioception, spatial awareness, healthful alignment, and range of motion. In addition, students are able to use a basic vocabulary in musculoskeletal description of self and other bodies.
- Movement Execution: Students are able to safely and accurately execute movement of moderate to high complexity, paying attention to weight transfer and detail.
- Energy and Conditioning: Students are able to utilize and develop a moderate to high level of strength, flexibility, endurance, and muscular stabilization and support, as well as energetic modulation and groundedness.

⇒ COMMUNICATION

- Student demonstrates an ability to articulate ideas with clarity and express critical thought.
- Student demonstrates an ability to listen to themselves and others, with respect for differing opinions.

⇒ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Student takes care of the space as outlined in handbook/syllabus;
- Students demonstrate commitment to a collaborative learning environment by expanding one's willingness to work with all classmates versus a select few as the course progresses;
- Student shows active engagement physically, including volunteering to show/demonstrate/lead;
- Student commits to individual and shared responsibility for class/group based work.

ASSIGNMENTS (75% of your grade)

All assignments time will be detailed on the Canvas page.

- ⇒ **Personal Goals Assignment (5 pts)**: To be completed in class and submitted via Canvas.
- ⇒ **Series Exams (5 pts each) and Self-Evaluations (2 pts each)**: Each of 5 series will have a culminating exam and a self-evaluation assignment. Series 4 - Contact Improvisation - has two reflection assignments instead of an exam and self-evaluation. **TOTAL 35 POINTS!**
- ⇒ **Midterm Self-Evaluation (10 pts)**: Using areas of growth and development and your personal goals, you will fill out an evaluation.
- ⇒ **Final Project (25 pts)**: You will propose a final project, present it to the class, and complete a final report and self-evaluation.

→ grading procedures

PERCENTAGES

Growth and Development	25 points
Assignments	75 points
TOTAL	100 points

[Link to the university grades and grading policies](#)

LETTER GRADES

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

A note about deadlines: let's face it, deadlines are both a burden and a necessity. The best learning you can do is ongoing, it's a process that has no outcome or due date. That said, I assign deadlines so that I have enough time to provide feedback on each assignment. I space out deadlines so that you can spend time putting meaningful thought into the assignments. But...LIFE HAPPENS and you may be delayed in completing work. If you email me before a deadline to communicate an assignment's lateness, you will be granted an automatic **48-hour extension**. Further extensions will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

[CDP3 Calendar Spring 2026.docx](#)

SPRING 2026 Dance Calendar

- Events in RED are required and mandatory. No substitutions are possible, unless they have an asterisk*.
- Events in BOLD – choose one at the Harn Museum and one at UFPA.
- Events in PURPLE are highly suggested but not required.

January

12	First Day of Classes / Welcome Meeting @ 6:30pm in G6
13	<i>Spring into Dance Auditions @ 6:30pm in G6</i>
14-19	Shakia Barron Residency
16	Drop/Add Deadline
19	No Classes
20-22	On site visit Assist Prof. Candidate
21	Dance Alive's Swan Lake at UFPA
26	Spring Senior UnShowing / 6:30pm in G6 + G10
26-27, 27-28	On site visit Assist Prof. Candidate 2
28-29	On site visit Assist Prof. Candidate 3
29	Andrea Ward (Ric Rose Alumni Award) 8:45 am lecture ballet combined & 10:40 am CAADDP 3
30	<i>Andrea Ward Master Class 10:40 am BAs & BFAs</i> & 6 pm Ric Rose Alumni Award Presentation (Faculty, staff, and DSC attending)

February

2-3	On site visit Lecturer Candidate #1
4-5	On site visit Lecturer Candidate #2 TBD
6	BFA Dance Area Auditions
6-15	F-Punk Junkies at SoTD*
7	SoundMoves at the Harn Museum (time TBD)
9-10	On site visit Lecturer Candidate #2 or #3
12-13	On site visit Lecturer Candidate #3 TBD

- 12 Harn Museum Africa Night
- 13 Possible Open Conversation during FMP, 10:40a-12:10p
- 17 Cirque FLIP Fabrique – BLIZZARD, 7:30pm at UFPA
- 18-22 BFA Senior Concert
- 21 Dance Alive's Romeo and Juliet, 7:30pm at UFPA
- 23 DARK DAY – No Dance Major classes all day
TINA – The Tina Turner Musical, 7:30pm at UFPA
- 25-Mar 1 ACDA Regional Conference at Brenau University

March

- 3-6 Rachel Tavernier Dunham Technique Residency
- 10-11 bang bang in the Squiteri Theater, 7:30pm at UFPA*
- 15-22 Spring Break / No Classes
- 24 Sa Dance Company – RISE, 7:30pm at UFPA
- 27 Midpoint Presentations during FMP, 10:30a-12:45p

April

- 9 Harn Museum night with Choreographer-in-Residence project
- 10 Critical Response Appointments/CRA's, 9:30a-4:30pm IN PERSON (with first-years, year 1 transfers, + sophomores)
- 16-19 Spring into Dance in the Black Box, various times
- 20 DARK DAY – No Dance major classes all day
The Music Man, 7:30pm at UFPA
- 21 CBP + CAADDP Class Culture Sharings (during class periods)
- 22 Last Day of Classes
CDP Class Culture Sharing (during class period)
Final UnShowing (creative classes; BA symposium; research presentations; WIPs; celebrations) @ 6:30pm in G6
- 23-24 Reading Days

A NOTE ON PHYSICAL TOUCH

The nature of our work as dancers involves an intimate relationship with our bodies and sometimes the bodies of dancers around us. We will be covering some basics of contact improvisation during which you will gain confidence in partnering, sharing weight, and sensing touch within certain parameters. In addition, although I will always attempt to offer corrections and guidance verbally, there may come a time when I need to use a physical correction to aid with positioning, alignment, or execution of a particular movement. If you are uncomfortable with ANY of the above, please speak with or email me so you and we can come up with a solution together.

CONTENT WARNING

In this course, we may cover content and materials that some might find difficult. It is important that in an artistic discipline course we do not shy away from engaging with materials that may be controversial or challenging. I encourage you to reach out to me if you are struggling with the course materials. In class, if you need to step away for a period of time as we are covering particular content, you may do so without penalty, but I ask that you remember that you are responsible for any information covered in your absence.

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>



THIS SYLLABUS AND COURSE CONTENT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

You will be notified in advance of important changes that could affect grading, assignments, etc.

Syllabi are posted here: <http://arts.ufl.edu/syllabi/>