

Fall 2023
Don Wright Faculty of Music
Western University

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INDEPENDENT STUDY: DANCE COMPOSITION & PRODUCTION DANCE 4492A

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Individual creative movement exploration and problem-solving using the elements of dance to express ideas, feelings and/or images in the finished product of a dance composition. Half course. 1hour lecture, 3hour lab; In-Person Format.

Prerequisite: Enrolment by Special Permission.

COURSE CONTENT

Dance composition concerns itself with the elements of dance (time, space, motion, shape) and the exploration of ways in which these elements can be segregated and manipulated to become expressive acts for communication of ideas, feelings and/or images. The purposes of this course are firstly to increase the student's understanding of human movement and expression on a non-verbal level, secondly to study and to explore the processes of creativity, thereby making it possible for them to articulate on a non-verbal level.

The sources from which the instructor has drawn her content for the topics are from the course readings and secondly, the instructor's background of study with choreographers and as a choreographer.

The following material will be covered at a rate of approximately two assignments each week. Where the student compositions indicate that the topic is not yet understood, it will be repeated. Where the student compositions indicate the topic is easily accessible, some of the composition problems will be skipped. The progression can apply to the individual student and/or to the class as a whole.

Discussion topics:

- a. Introduction and discussion of course outline. What is composition and what is not?
- b. The elements of dance: shape, space, motion, time. Evaluation of a dance composition.
- c. What is improvisation and how is it used. Improvisational problems
- d. Building the composition
- e. The movement phrase; thematic material; Theme; Movement Theme; Theme & Variation.

List of Possible Compositional Problems

1. Composition based on "Shape":
 - a) still body shapes (angular and curved)
 - b) body shapes in motion (angular and curved)
 - c) shape with a prop
 - d) group shape problem
2. Compositions based on "Space":
 - a) direction and level (high, wide and deep)
 - b) moving through space – locomotor patterns
 - c) manipulation of space
 - d) Intimate, Personal, Social and Distant: Spatial distinctions/defining social distancing
3. Compositions based on "Motion" -
 - a) focus on points on the body, movements from point to point
 - b) joint articulation; movement between joints
 - c) drawing lines in space with the ends of body parts; motion initiated by a body part
 - d) movement around a focal point
 - e) throwing the focus through space (axial and locomotor)
 - f) movement qualities / movement dynamics

swing	suspended	sustained
vibratory	percussive	collapse
4. Compositions based on "Time":
 - a) rhythm problems
 - axial movement
 - locomotor sequences
 - b) discussion of how to use time

Time will be considered in its relationship to each compositional problem involving motion, space and shape.
5. Compositions based on "Effort" in relation to time, space, weight and flow
6. Compositions based on "A Movement Phrase"
7. Compositions based on "The Use of a Prop or Costume."
8. A discussion of compositions based on "State of Being or Story Line":
 - a) emotional state
 - b) state of being from a poem, picture, sculpture or story

REQUIRED READINGS

- A. Selected Readings to be assigned
- B. Handouts: Students will be given handouts that relate to understanding, developing or criticizing compositions.

COURSE FORMAT

The course may vary somewhat in content and progression because of two unpredictable factors, first the size of the class and second, the movement background of the students in the class.

Early sessions of the class will be devoted to defining and discussing what dance composition is and how the students should approach movement-solving problems. In general, the students will progress through a series of specific compositional problems at the approximate rate of two per week. A very important part of this learning process is allowing the students in the class to observe each other and listen to the evaluation of the compositions, given by the instructor. As the course progresses, the students will be expected to take more responsibility in the evaluation process. Because the medium for problem-solving is movement, evaluation cannot be done strictly by written form. The students are expected to develop an "eye" for judging the merit of a composition.

September 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin movement pattern building; class work will focus on constructing compositional sequences
Sept 12 - 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating SHAPE Dance Compositions
Sept 21 - 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating SPACE Dance Compositions
Oct 3 - 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating MOTION Dance Compositions
Oct 12 - 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating TIME Dance Compositions
Oct 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating EFFORT Dance Compositions
Oct 24 - 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating PHRASE Dance Compositions <p style="text-align: right;">Reading Week: October 30 – November 5</p>
Nov 7 - 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating PROP and COSTUME Dance Compositions
Nov 14 - 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating "STATE of BEING & STORYLINE" Dance Compositions
Nov 21 – Dec 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating & Performing Final Compositions!

The reading assignments will be discussed in conjunction with the compositional problems as they are assigned and presented. The course does not break down into separate lecture periods and lab periods as might normally be expected.

The class will meet 4 hours per week. Students are expected to do outside work on their compositions. Where possible, studio time will be made available.

It is mandatory to attend classes.

Instructor's policy on attendance and late assignments: If you are unable to attend a class, please make every effort to let the instructor know in advance by email (preferably). Full attendance at all classes is expected and medical documentation is required unless you have the instructor's permission to be absent. Unexplained absences will result in a reduction in your participation grade. Students with medical documentation or an acceptable excuse for an absence will not be penalized. Late written assignments will only be accepted and graded if permission has been granted by the instructor in advance of the deadline.

EVALUATION & GRADING

1. Students will be expected to set and present solutions for each compositional problem assigned from list (1 - 8).
2. Students will be expected to participate in the evaluation periods.
3. Students will be expected to read the handouts and specific reading assignments.
4. Each student will be twined with a classmate.
 - a) The process will start with an interview to establish a profile of the classmate's movement/dance background, likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, impressions, etc. This should be summarized in writing. Outline form can be used.
 - b) Each student will be expected to keep an ongoing written evaluation of the classmate's creative work in the course. Anecdotal reporting can be used.
 - c) The process will culminate in a final written summary evaluation of the progress that the classmate has made in the course. (No more than 4 double spaced typed pages. Due at the end of the course.)
6. Each student will be given two compositional problems as the final evaluation of their work. These will be presented on assigned dates prior to the final class of the term.
 - a) One Duet or Trio composition - to be set on other dancers
 - b) One Group composition (4+ dancers) to be determined in consultation with the instructor.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

40%	Compositional problems and class work	
10%	classmate evaluations	
15%	final written twin summary evaluation	
35%	final composition problems:	
	Duet or Trio composition	15%
	Group composition	20%

Important information to consider...ponder

Students must turn their cell phones off during class presentations/performances. No pictures or videos can be taken without the permission of the instructor and the participant(s).

Important Notes:

i) **Course Prerequisites:** Special Permission.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

ii) **Grading scale:** A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

iii) **Academic Consideration for Student Absence & Missing Work (≥10%):** Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210), together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. Students are directed to read the Senate policy on accommodation for medical illness at the following website for further details regarding requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

*Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty. For the Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

iv) **Academic Consideration for Missing Work (<10%):** In cases where students miss work that is worth less than 10% of the total course grade (two or fewer assignments) due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if documentation is voluntarily submitted to the Associate Dean's office and the Associate Dean grants an accommodation, then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(zes) will be discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course. If documentation is not voluntarily submitted then the missed assignment(s) will receive a grade of zero. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the Associate Dean's office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

v) **Academic Offences:** Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

vi) **Mental Health & Wellness:** Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in UCC room 76. **Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in UC11 or to click on the green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.**

vii) **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students work with Accessible Education Western (AEW, formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

viii) **Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.
<http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

ix) **Contingency Plan:** Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 restrictions may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

x) **Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:** Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca or call 519 661-3568.

Additional applicable statements

i) **Evaluation Policy Exemption:** This course has received an exemption from the requirement in the Senate Policy on Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Performance that stipulates “At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a 1000- or 2000-level course without academic penalty, students will receive assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade.”

ii) **Examinations & Attendance:** Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

iii) **Electronic Devices in Exams:** Electronic devices of any type will not be permitted during the Midterm Test and/or Final Exam in this course (unless required for accessibility reasons based on an approved accommodation request from Accessible Education).

iv) **Electronic Devices in Classrooms:** The in-class use of electronic devices (other than for instructor-approved in-class uses) is expressly prohibited. Students found guilty of disrupting the class with electronic devices will be asked to leave the class and may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

v) **Plagiarism Detection Software Usage:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).