

**I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

A. Department Information:

Division: Humanities and Social Science  
Department: Speech and Performing Arts  
Course ID: DANCE 203  
Course Title: Choreography  
Units: 3  
Lecture: 2 Hours  
Laboratory: 2 Hours  
Prerequisite: None

B. Catalog and Schedule Description:

An introduction and analysis of the elements of dance composition. A comprehensive survey of theories, techniques, and historical perspectives of dance composition, as well as the practical application of these elements through the actual physical activity of creating and teaching dance compositions.

**II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One**

**III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:**

Upon completion of the course the student should be able to:

- A. Identify the basic elements of dance: Kinesthesia space, time, shape, energy and motion;
- B. Analyze the choreographic structure in a given dance;
- C. Choreograph a one-minute dance based on theme and variation;
- D. Recognize a motif in a choreographic study;
- E. Create her or his own impressionistic or expressionistic response to a poem, painting, music composition, or sculpture;
- F. Explore (examine) a movement idea fully;
- G. Propose a theme for a dance study;
- H. Assess her or his own choreographic studies;
- I. Critique a dance;
- J. Compare and contrast the principles of choreography;
- K. Discuss his or her own creative impulse;
- L. Formulate a personal dance aesthetic;
- M. Demonstrate a beginning choreographic voice;
- N. Examine the origins and history of the study of dance as a choreographic art, then categorize their own emerging choreographic style.

**IV. COURSE CONTENT:**

A. Choreography explained

1. Theory of Choreography
2. Choreographic practices during the 20<sup>th</sup> century
  - a) Expressionism
  - b) Non-Literal dance: movement is the meaning and the raison d'etre
  - c) Choreography based on musical forms
  - d) Other

B. Structure versus freedom

1. Need for form
  - a) Artistic principles
  - b) Ability to communicate to an audience
  - c) Intentionally
2. Freedom to explore fully
  - a) Authenticity, developing a personal voice
  - b) Developing trust
    - i) In self

- ii) In classmates
- iii) In instructor
- C. Safety in the dance space
  - 1. Developmental stages of the choreographer
    - a) Spontaneity
    - b) Organization
    - c) Unity
    - d) Unique expression
  - 2. Looking at professional choreographers
    - a) Their philosophy
    - b) Their dances
- D. Developing an aesthetic
  - 1. How to "see"
  - 2. Trusting personal responses, views, ideas
  - 3. Knowing why one responds to what one responds to
  - 4. Literal and non-literal dances
  - 5. Performer-audience connection
  - 6. Understanding form and function
- E. Kinesthesia
  - 1. Definition
  - 2. Its place in remembering movement and knowing where the body is in space and related to itself
- F. Motion
  - 1. Exploring how bodies move
    - a) Axial
    - b) Locomotor
    - c) Combinations of these
    - e) Other ways of seeing movement
    - f) Movements in the environment
      - i) Animate
      - ii) Inanimate
- G. Space
  - 1. Performance
    - a) Studio
    - b) Room
    - d) Outdoors
    - e) Confined and open
    - f) Inner and outer
    - g) Theatre
    - h) Audience-performer distance
  - 2. Dancers
    - a) Kinesphere
      - i) Level
      - ii) Direction
      - iii) Reach
    - b) Design
      - i) Individual body
      - ii) More than one body
      - iii) Symmetry and asymmetry
      - iv) Opposition and succession
      - v) Positive and negative
      - vi) Dimensionality
    - c) Focus
    - d) Space words:
      - i) over
      - ii) under

- iii) through
- iv) between
- v) around

H. Time

- 1. Duration
- 2. Timing
- 3. Pulse and Beat
- 4. Rhythm
- 5. Real time vs., perceived time
- 6. Tempo
- 7. Musical notation (optional)
- 8. Time as image such as Seasons, lifetime, in the blink of an eye

I. Energy

- 1. Dynamics of dance
- 2. Traditional words used in choreography
  - a) Sustained
  - b) Suspended
  - c) Collapsing
  - d) Vibratory
  - e) Swinging
  - f) Percussive

J. Other elements, which may be explored as inspiration for choreographic ideas

- 1. Prop
- 2. Costumes
- 3. Music
- 4. Ideas
- 5. Poetry
- 6. Painting
- 7. Images
- 8. Animals studies
- 9. Nature studies
- 10. Life situations
- 11. Words
- 12. Musical forms
- 13. Student choice

K. Principles of choreography

- 1. Function
  - a) Intent of the dance, theme and purpose
  - b) Movements appropriate to the function
  - c) Directions of indirectness of intent
- 2. Simplicity
  - a) Economic use of movement material
  - b) Does every movement belong?
  - c) Essentiality
- 3. Form
  - a) Gives order and wholeness to the dance
  - b) Organic
  - c) Reveals the intent of the dance
- 4. Characteristics
  - a) Unity
  - b) Variety
  - c) Continuity
  - d) Climax
  - e) Repetition
  - f) Harmony
  - g) Balance

- L. Looking at the dances of established choreographers
  - 1. Analysis
  - 2. Critique
  - 3. Appreciation
- M. Looking at live performances - Analysis of all the elements
  - 1. Choreographic
  - 2. Design
    - a) Lighting
    - b) Costume
    - c) Sets
    - d) Music
  - 3. Unity of aesthetic experience

**V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

- A. Lecture
- B. Videotapes of choreographed productions
- C. Guided group explorations of principle concepts
- D. Individual movement studies by students based on the concepts of expressionism or impressionism
- E. Small group problem solving, movement explorations, and/or studies on theme and variation
- F. Modeling of movements and style

**VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

- A. Reading Assignments
  - 1. Read about an important choreographer in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Afterwards write a summary of this artist's contributions to the art of dance.
  - 2. Draw in your choreographer's notebook/journal all the rhythms you see in your daily life. Use your own system for notating, drawing, illuminating, showing these rhythms.
- B. Writing Assignments
  - 1. Watch a dance concert. Choose a dance that moves you from this concert. Analyze the ways in which space, time, shape, energy and motion are used. Write your analysis in a 3-5-page paper.
  - 2. Synthesize your understanding of the history of the study of dance as an art into a 2-3-page essay
- C. Performance
  - 1. After reading about the creative impulse, discuss your understanding of it in a small group. After all members of the group have shared, decide what you would like to share with the entire class about your group's discussion and discoveries.
  - 2. Create a one-minute dance study on "motion".
  - 3. With 1 or 2 other students, explore the spatial concepts of over, under, through, around and in between. After doing this explorations for at least one half hour, begin to codify this exploration into a dance, which you can share with the class. Inherent in this assignment is the ability to remember what you have created and to repeat it if asked to do it more than once.

**VII. EVALUATION:**

- B. Methods of evaluation:
  - 1. Ongoing assessment of student's development in explorations of course material
  - 2. Review of choreographic notebook/journal for application of course content
  - 3. Examinations. Typical Exam Question: Discuss the significance of space and time as choreographic concerns.
  - 4. Choreographic studies, individual and group, performed in class
  - 5. Group oral and or written analysis of choreography in video presentations
  - 6. Final dance compositions, which are performed in class

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- B. Frequency of Evaluation
  - 1. Two examinations
  - 2. At least 3 dance compositions
  - 3. One critical analysis of a production

**VIII. TYPICAL TEXTS:**

Hawkins, Alma. Moving from Within: A New Method for Dance Making. A Cappella Books Publishers, 1991.

Smith-Autard, Jacqueline. Dance Composition. Routledge Publishers, 2000.

Minton, Sandra Cerney. Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation. Human Kinetics Publishers, 1997.

**IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None**