

HPK 380 Choreography

COURSE SYLLABUS

2:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.; Whitley Gym 205

**Instructor: Dr. Betty A. Block, Ed.D., Professor of Kinesiology and Dance Movement Therapist
Registered**

Office Location: Field House 211

Office Hours: Virtually and By Appointment

Main Office Phone: 903.886.5549

University Email Address: Betty.Block@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

As the bulk of this course will be focused on movement and choreography in a studio workshop format, there is no required textbook. **Course notes provided by the professor.**

Required Special Supplies:

Throughout the course, you will be required to bring in materials for activities that we will use in class to stimulate movement expression. Additional information regarding parameters will be outlined during the semester for these activities, but please plan for these minimal expenses now.

Course Description:

This course is designed to equip students with the skills necessary to create movement sequences for individuals and groups of actors on stage. Choreographic techniques related to body movements, space, timing, positioning, and dance will be explored.

Note: Please consider yourself a member of a workshop rather than a classroom. Although there is a lecture/discussion component to this course, by nature dance training requires substantial studio work – both inside and outside of the classroom. This course is designed as community for learners. You will be actively participating with the other members of the learning community. Please adopt an attitude of openness and willingness to participate fully in movement activities as they are essential to successful completion of the course.

Student Learning Outcomes

Develop a movement and choreographic vocabulary by analyzing paintings, animals and characters using Laban analysis.

Demonstrate an understanding of body movements related to character development using transformation through animal and anthropomorphic studies.

Display an understanding of body movements as a tool for expression through activities directed inside and outside of class.

Develop a solo dance using the steps identified in class, write a character synopsis of it, perform it, and analyze the dance using Laban analysis.

Develop a sense of bodily awareness, core strength, balance, control, and coordination while participating in group composition activities, and creating and teaching dances.

Work with others to create a group choreography based on solo dances, write a dancer's synopsis of it, and analyze the dance using Laban analysis.

Course Schedule and Activities Overview

Module 1 Breathwork, Bartenieff Fundamentals, Introduction to Laban

Module 2 Laban Movement Analysis and Choreography

1. Effort actions (active, passive weight; Indirect and direct space; timing, using intuition and sense of timing when committing to action; free and bound flow).
2. Shape (basic forms/shapes; shape flow support; modes of shape change; shape flow; directional movement; carving, shape qualities; spatial pulls related to dimensional matrix in space)
3. Kinesphere (opposite poles – vertical plane, sagittal plane, horizontal plane).
4. Direction and stage movement

Homework – Observation, Analysis, and Depiction of Paintings, Animals, and Characters using Laban's Movement Language

Module 3 Group Composition Activities

1. Spatial Awareness (Concrete and Abstract)
2. Body Flow and Character Development
3. Phrasing and Punctuation
4. Adaptation to a partner and to a group
5. Instrumental use of the body and technique
6. Movement Scene Development

Homework – Transformation: Animal Study and Anthropomorphic Study

Animal Study Elements: high curiosity, low curiosity with props, real time and condensed time, breath rhythm, weight and breath, distribution of weight, center of gravity, how it resists or gives into gravity, eating patterns, how the animal uses the space, where in the space it is comfortable, relationship between the backbone and tail, what motivates, what attracts its attention, balance of senses (sound over sight, etc.),
Anthropomorphic Study Elements: transitioning levels 10 = full animal and 1 equals the character using animal elements.

Group animals exercises – lawyers, burglars, surgeons, art critics at an art show, congregation in a church, and models.

Animal as inspiration for a scripted character.

Solo Dance: Creating a character's emotional journey – working with emotion in movement. The solo dance (no less than 5 minutes in length) is self-created material, expressing the inner life and emotional journey of a character from a novel set to a

piece of edited classical music. Do not think of this as dance theatre, but the development of a particular aspect of expression. Through the movement of the dance, the inner life of a human is revealed in a physically owned and real manner. This dance enables you to embody the felt experience of a character.

- a. Research and choose the novel (must be a novel because a novel provides immediate and intimate access to character). Extract key words and phrases.
- b. Instinctively create the material. Key points: get onto your feet and move, do not attempt to “clean up or “accomplish” a movement, trust your emotional instincts and bodily responses. Create a who? What? Where? Why? And When? scenario. Attend to breath. Video or use an observer to record your exploration in this step. It will help you with the next step.

Module 4 Choreography

- c. Identifying and Crafting Choices. Tease out the movement choices that you want to keep by viewing the video or talking to an observer. Commit the whole body including face and physical expression. The solo dance will be made up of formed and unformed ideas. Investigate the formed idea and reveal the unconscious elements of the unformed idea. Impose an opposite quality using breath, weight, time, and space. Perform the unfinished solo dance to an audience. Audience members will give feedback on what they observed without giving praise or criticism.
- d. Fine-tune the quality of the movements. Select music that has a direct relationship with the emotional journey of the character in the novel. Attend to the style which will transfer to the dance from the book. It is revealed in the rhythm, dynamics and flavors of the dance. Work on staging the solo dance – attend to perspective, emotion that is translated to the body and space as part of the dance. Preparing for performance will include only the actor, the space and the audience. Write an actor’s synopsis for the character depicted in your solo dance for the audience.

Module 5 Group Choreography Building upon solo dances, stage the movements of your solo dance with the solo dances of others to create a story line, original choreography, classical music excerpt, actors’ synopsis, and staged performance. Use Laban analysis to describe your group dance choreography.

Course Requirements

Instructional Methods/Activities and Assessments

PARTICIPATION AND GROWTH (50%): Note that attendance alone does not constitute participation. Participation and Growth is a *very large* portion of your grade for an important reason. You must participate to *put the information into your body* not just your brain. As mentioned above, participation is vital to the completion of this class. The interactive environment demands full participation in all physical activities. It is up to you to modify activities to fit your body composition and fitness level, after all, that is what dancers of varying sizes must do on stage. Please inform me if you have a physical disability that I need to know about. I will help you with accommodations.

Previous acting, dance, or movement experience will not earn you a good grade in this course. Significant growth and a genuine attempt within the class will. This is a class that regards personal growth as a goal. You and your peers will most likely arrive at various levels of ability, and you will leave at different levels. I will evaluate growth from the beginning to the end of the semester. Challenge

yourself to succeed and grow. I wish to help you develop *your* skills to the best of *your* ability within an atmosphere of support. This class is highly interactive; therefore, it is my hope that you will help others develop to the best of their ability by being equally supportive.

Participation and Growth grades will be calculated daily and tabulated at the end of the semester. Note: Points will vary depending on the activities and assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS (50%): You will be required to prepare and offer movement analysis/explanation, homework, choreography, and creative interpretation exercises throughout the class for which you will receive points. More information regarding parameters will be offered later as these may be assigned in advance (see above) or happen *in the moment*, depending on the ability and skill levels of you and your peers.

Technology Requirements

eCollege and email Requirement: It is a course expectation that you have a computer with Internet capabilities. I will email the members of the class from the eCollege email link. I will also be posting information in eCollege for you to print out or save on your own. I will not provide handouts as I expect you to have downloaded materials prior to class. There will be times that I need to contact you with important information and email is often the most efficient way to contact you. Please make certain that you have a working email account.

Communication and Support

Contacting Dr. Block: Please email me if you would like to set up an appointment. I will make myself available in the Field House should you wish to meet with me – just let me know by email. Please do not think it is an imposition to call on me if you need to talk to me. I will make myself available to you should you have any questions or difficulties in the class.

Course and University Procedures/Policies

ATTENDANCE: Because of the nature of this course and its highly interactive nature, you will be expected to attend class.

CELL PHONES AND LAPTOPS: Please turn off all cell phones upon entering the classroom. I will give you message breaks throughout the day so that you can check your messages.

CLOTHING: Students should come dressed for activity each day. Avoid tight clothing or clothing that inhibits your freedom of movement – come dressed to move and possibly get dirty as you might be asked to sit or perform movements on the floor.

University Specific Policies and Procedures:

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: This course adheres strictly to the college's guidelines for Academic Dishonesty printed in the Student's Guide Handbook. Plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise representing another's work or ideas as your own without proper attribution will not be tolerated. All work must be new and created for this class during this semester by you. It is your responsibility to assure that you understand the definition of Academic Dishonesty at Texas A&M-Commerce. If such an instance occurs, the student will receive an automatic zero for the work in question, and I will immediately report the incident to the

Head of the Department. (You should be aware that this could result in dismissal from school without credit for the semester.)

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services Texas A&M University-Commerce James G. Gee
Library Room 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

*Note: Please be aware that under no circumstances can I implement any disability accommodations without official documentation from the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services at Texas A&M University - Commerce.

STUDENT CONDUCT: All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct.)

NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE: Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement Texas Senate Bill – 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et.al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University–Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M– Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer. Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf> Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

