DANCE 290: Body Modalities

from dictionary.com:
mo·dal·i·ty[moh-dal-i-tee] Show IPA noun, plural -ties.
1. the quality or state of being modal.
2. an attribute or circumstance that denotes mode or manner.
3. Also called mode, Logic . the classification of propositions according to whether they are contingently true or false, possible, impossible, or necessary.
4. Medicine/Medical . the application of a therapeutic agent, usually a physical therapeutic agent.
5. one of the primary forms of sensation, as vision or touch.

T/Th 2:00-3:15PM ⛵ ENS 380 ⛵ Fall 2013
Instructor: Jess Humphrey (jess@jesshumphrey.com)
Office hours: by appointment
Additional resources: Sensing, Feeling and Action by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Somatics: Reawakening the mind’s control of movement, flexibility, and health by Thomas Hanna, Body Learning by Michael Gelb (This is a book on Alexander Technique), Ideokinesis: A Creative Approach to Human Movement and Body Alignment by Andre Bernard, Wolfgang Steinmuller, and Ursula Stricker.

Course Objectives:
1. Experience introductions to several modalities that can help us take care of, develop and more clearly express ourselves.
2. Become familiar with the field of Somatics and the philosophical underpinnings of somatic approaches to learning.
3. Gain strength through increased biomechanical efficiency. In other words, embody some of the basics of the science of movement so we can work “smarter not harder” AND learn to work hard softly.
4. Learn to notice our body-minds as they change each day, track those changes, and allow those observations to influence us.
5. Ask questions and move in a way that allows our questions to remain.
6. Notice how touch influences our experience.
7. Practice communicating verbally, orally and in writing, about our kinesthetic experiences including what we see in class, performance settings, and in the world at large.
8. Practice qualities of mind and movement that are less habitual to increase the range of what is available to us as performers.
10. Recognize that we are learning in community and consider how exploring this work in relationship to others influences our process.
11. Practice what we learn in class during everyday life.
12. Experience stillness and consider its role in dancing/living.
13. Disconnect from the internet, your cell phone, and other digital technology so you can focus on your experience in the present moment.

Course Description:
This course is designed to introduce the practice and theory of several different body modalities and somatic methodologies. Classes will consist of discussions and explorations of the human body/your unique soma. Experiences, readings and lectures in the areas of breathing, meditation, Body-Mind Centering®, The Feldenkrais Method®, Bartenieff Fundamentals™, The Pilates Method, Authentic Movement, and other embodied anatomy explorations will be the main content of the course. We will use the polarities listed at the beginning of Making Connections (Inner Connectivity/Outer Expressivity, inner/outer, function/expression, parts/whole, exertion/recuperation, and stability/mobility) as tools to assess our tendencies and increase our dynamic range. A kinesthetic understanding of efficient movement patterns can enable you to express yourself more fully and safely. We will cover basic biomechanics, use imagery, hone our senses, and build our neuromuscular coordination. Writing will be approached as a somatic process designed to help you deepen your understanding of class material, use what you learn to further develop the lens through which you view
movement, and enrich your embodied experience. Reading assignments will allow students to take in information at their own pace and to situate themselves within these somatic lineages.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

1. **Proficiency (10%)**:
   Evaluation will be of students’ improvement in the areas described in the *Course Objectives*.

2. **Participation (35%)**:  
   **A. Physical (20%)**:  
   Evaluation in this area will be of students’:
   a. willingness to engage physically.  
   b. attitude toward moments of perceived failure.  
   c. level of respect toward other students’ processes and progress.  
   d. willingness to “try on” (when it is safe to do so) certain concepts physically before fully understanding them mentally.

   **B. Oral (15%)**:  
   Evaluation in this area will be of students’:
   a. willingness to engage verbally.  
   b. attentiveness to others when they speak.  
   c. willingness to attempt to articulate their physical experience before it is totally understood.  
   d. ability to articulate how experience in class affects or relates to their life outside of class.  
   e. participation in discussions about assigned reading.

3. **Process log (30%)**:
   The process log is a binder that you will create throughout the semester. You must have an entry for every class. Details are important. Experiences, opinions and ideas that you might perceive as negative or neutral are just as important as recording or processing what you enjoy. I will give you prompts and readings to address in certain entries. Please engage as many senses as possible when creating this log. Your *Process Log* is due twice. The first due date is on **Tuesday, October 8th** and the second, final due date for your completed *Process Log* is due **Tuesday, December 3rd**.

   • **Your process log must be a flexible, 1-inch, 3-ring binder with a folder in it or I will not accept it.**  
   • **All process logs must include the following ongoing lists:**  
     Subjective and Objective details about your soma/body  
     Things I do to take care of myself  
     Somatic Sayings  
     So Many Influences, So Little Time...  
   • **All entries must include:**  
     a question  
     both subjective and objective information  
   • **You must have at least three of the following in your log:**  
     theory  
     details about what theory yields in practice  
     images  
     stories  
     lessons  
     creative ideas  
     responses to readings and discussions  
     feelings  
     observations of performances  
     quotes that inspire you  
   • **Ideas for media:** magazine clippings and/or photos glued to pages, handwriting or printing, typed material, drawings, sketches, mind maps, free writes, word clouds.

4. **Exams (25%)**:
   Both exams will be take-home. The midterm should be included in your *Process Log* once it is graded and returned.
A. Midterm (15%)
B. Final (10%)

Attendance policy

Absences: You are allowed 2 absences. Each absence beyond the 2, no matter what the excuse, will result in lowering of final grade 1/3 of step, i.e., A to A-. Situations such as serious illness, long-term injury, or family emergencies may be dealt with immediately on an individual basis. In some cases, students will be given an Incomplete to be made up within the next semester. In other cases, I may recommend withdrawal from the course. If you stop attending the course without following procedure you will receive a “U” which calculates as an “F”. Lastly, you are expected to be present in both mind and body. If you are physically present, but your attention is elsewhere in a way that effects the class, I may mark you absent.

Tardies: Please be on time to class. 3 tardies equals 1 absence! If you are more than 10 minutes late, you will have missed too much of the warmup to safely participate and must observe and take notes.

Observation: If you are ill or injured, you may observe class two times with instructor’s consent. See me prior to class if possible. Detailed notes (typed) about the class and your observations must be submitted at the next class or you will be marked absent!

Important considerations for those observing:

• Notes should go beyond listing class activities. Pay attention to what the students are doing in relation to the instructor’s directions. Make correlations between what you see, what you hear, and what you personally experience when you are physically participating in the class. How does observing class further enrich your kinesthetic and cognitive understanding of dance?
• Please be aware that your presence as a witness greatly influences the class. How can you observe in a way that contributes rather than detracts from what’s happening in the room?
• Observe from different locations in the room, paying attention with respect and generosity. It’s a great opportunity to practice these qualities of mind. How does this kind of attention effect what you notice?
• Participate in class discussions. What is your experience?
• If you check your phone or open your computer or tablet, you will be asked to leave and you will be marked absent.

Make-up classes: You may make up only 1 absence by attending the contact improvisation class/jam at Stage 7 in North Park, Monday nights at 7pm. Class is from 7pm until 8pm and the jam is from 8pm until 10pm. The class costs $10, cash only. For more information: http://jesshumphrey.com/wordpress/project/contact-improvisation-class-jam/

Another option is to take a Saturday morning ATM® (Awareness Through Movement®) class in Hillcrest. For more information: http://www.feldenkraisresources.com/about_the_institute.html

Grading:

Definition of Grades for Undergraduate Students at SDSU:

• Grade of A (outstanding achievement; available only for the highest accomplishment), 4 points;
• B (praiseworthy performance; definitely above average), 3 points;
• C (average; awarded for satisfactory performance; the most common undergraduate grade), 2 points;
• D (minimally passing; less than the typical undergraduate achievement), 1 point;
• F (failing), 0 points;

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>93-100%</td>
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<td>90-93%</td>
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<td>Below 60%</td>
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University Policies

Please check the Class Schedule for add and drop deadlines!

Pass/No Pass:
This class may be taken for Pass/No Pass. Check with your Counselor first; then fill out the proper form. To Pass, a student must earn at least 70 percent of the points possible in the class.

**Students with Disabilities:**
If you have a hidden or visible disability, which may require classroom or test accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during a scheduled office hour. This must happen at the beginning of the semester! If you have not already done so, please visit Student Disability Services, http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds/

**Other expectations:**
This list is meant to give you a better idea of what I expect from each of you.

- Get the amount of rest, eat the kind of foods, wear the type of clothes and fix your hair in ways that will allow you to fully participate in class.
- Begin preparing for class by 1:55PM, or as soon as you enter the room, by physically reviewing what you learned in previous classes.
- Check the syllabus before you email me! If the answer is in the syllabus, I won’t respond to your email.
- Keep an electronic copy of everything you turn in.
- If you are absent, learn the material you missed from your fellow students before the next class.
- If I give you something to work on in class, keep practicing, even if you feel you have it down. There is always more to find in any given movement! You also have the option of offering support to other students who might need help, or making notes about your experience in your process log.
- If the Pilates Reformers are out, someone MUST be practicing on each one of them. They must never sit empty! They are very expensive machines and we are so lucky to have them. Take advantage of every opportunity you have to practice with them.
- Take responsibility for your own education. Be curious, look things up on your own time, and ask questions.

**Open Door Policy:**
Please do not hesitate to contact me or set up a time during my office hours to discuss any questions or concerns you have about the class or the material covered in class. Please note, however, that office hours are not the place to learn what you missed if you are absent from class!

**Please sign/date below and bring this page to the next class meeting.**

I, ____________________________, have read the syllabus for DANCE 290 and understand the course requirements.

[Signature]

_________________________  __________________________
Date                         Signature