DANCE 241: Modern Dance I  
M/W/F 10-11:50AM, ENS 200, Fall 2014  
Instructor: Leslie Seitzers ([seitzers@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:seitzers@mail.sdsu.edu))  
Office hours: M 12-2 or by appointment

“As Dancers, rather than seek control over our bodies, we learn to listen to this deep intelligence.” - Andrea Olsen, The Place of Dance

Course Description: 
This movement course is a context for your continued development in the practice of modern dance. Classes will consist of movement combinations and somatic explorations designed to give you a more embodied knowledge of your anatomy and what you are/what you can do. A kinesthetic understanding of efficient movement patterns can allow you to express yourself fully and safely while expanding your range of movement possibilities. We will cover basic biomechanics, use imagery, develop our senses, and build our neuromuscular coordination, while also taking time to let go of it all and enjoy dancing. Daily writing will be approached as a somatic process designed to help you deepen your understanding of class material, reflect on experience, and to use what you learn to further develop the lens through which you view the performing arts.

Course Objectives:
- Engage in a somatic approach to the process of dancing and cultivating awareness.
- Develop capacity to articulate questions and strategies for physical inquiry. (How to compose and be in questions.)
- Increase capacity to direct own learning by observing and reflecting on experience and allow those processes to influence your dancing
- Explore frontal orientation while maintaining three-dimensionality within your body and through space.
- Increase efficiency of movement (to broaden range and dance longer.)
- Continue “technical” training while becoming more responsive, receptive, and adaptable.
- Experience gravity, momentum, inertia, and other laws of physics, kinesthetically.
- Notice how verbal/touch feedback influences your experience.
- Play with different relationships to music.
- Practice communicating verbally and in writing, about contemporary modern dance, our experience of it and what we see as spectators/audience and members/witnesses in class as well as performance settings.
- Allow class experiences to influence and be influenced by life outside the dance studio.
- Recognize that we are learning as a community and consider how to dancing in relationship affects your own process.
- Disconnect from the internet, your cell phone, and other technology so you can focus on your physical experience in the present moment.

- Explore relationships between the following pairs: Mobility/stability, Function/expression, Vertical/off-vertical, Doing/allowing, Form/freedom, Parts/Whole, Weight/Lightness, Inner/Outer, Articulation/Integration, Linear/Voluminous (will expand “pairs” to become “trios” on first day.)

- Expand and cultivate lively definitions of technique, Contemporary Dance, Performance, Audience (will add to list on first day.)

**Requirements:**

- Regular attendance and promptness
- Attentive presence, participation and contributions to the class
- Completion of class assignments and daily writing
- Attendance to at least three (suggested) dance performances
- One day CHOSEN observation day
- Participation in **Buddy Project** including August 29th 12-1 meeting time, *and* documentation of one buddy project meeting (*will be discussed day 1 and details on blackboard.*)

**Evaluation Criteria:**

1. Participation/Proficiency (75%):
   Please be on time to class. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will have missed too much of the warmup to safely participate and must observe and take notes. Students will be awarded between 1 and 5 points weekly. Point values will reflect students’:
   - willingness to engage, physically and verbally
   - attitude toward moments of perceived failure and or competency
   - level of respect toward other students’ processes and progress
   - willingness to safely “try on” certain concepts physically before fully understanding them mentally
   - willingness to take responsibility to remain curious and interested in physical explorations
   - attentiveness to others when they speak
   - willingness to attempt to articulate their physical experience before it is totally understood
   - ability to articulate how experience in class affects or relates to their life outside of class
   - willingness to ask questions

4. Concert attendance (5%)
   Attend three of the recommended performances and bring ticket stubs to class. If you learn of a performance that you are interested in attending, please check to see if it is appropriate for this course. We will discuss these performances in class. (When viewing, what stands out to you about the performance of the work- what can you say about the *how*? How would you describe the performative style/s, choices, attitudes, states? What would you like to ask the performers about performing this work? What did you like?)

5. Daily Notes/Reflection summary (20%):
   Twice during the semester students will review daily notes and write a reflection summary to further integrate this learning and share with classmates and instructor. What ideas continue to be noteworthy? Are there recurring themes in your writing? In what ways are you finding permeability
between studio and life/studies outside studio? What have you learned from peers? What has surprised you? What seems important? What do you want to research further? *1-2 pages*

Due: Monday November 17th
And Monday December 15th

**Participation policy:**
You are allowed 3 absences. Each absence beyond the 3, no matter 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”. You may make up one 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.

*Students may not make up class in another instructors technique class*

**SDSU’s Definition of Grades for Undergraduate Students:**
Grade of A (outstanding achievement; available only for the highest accomplishment)
B (praiseworthy performance; definitely above average)
C (average; awarded for satisfactory performance; the most common undergraduate grade)
D (minimally passing; less than the typical undergraduate achievement)
F (failing)

Class Policies:
**Attire:**
Clothing that is acceptable will allow full range of motion and must not interfere with observation of your body, so that you can be properly corrected and guided. As there is a good deal of floor work, shorts are not advised. Long hair should be securely fastened before class begins.

**Class Conduct:**
Disruptions will not be tolerated: if a student is disruptive, they will be asked to leave class and be counted as absent for that class. Please be respectful of fellow classmates, the instructor, and the art by being attentive and following studio etiquette at all times during class. Ask relevant questions during class, but do not chat, socialize, or distract in other ways. Class time needs to be reserved for refining and improving our practice of contemporary dance. No eating or gum-chewing is allowed in the studio. Turn off or silence all cellular phones and other electronic devices. Bring a re-closable water bottle to class, and keep it accessible on the sidelines of the studio.

**Sexual harassment:**
There are occasions when the most efficient means of giving a correction is to touch the student. If you are uncomfortable receiving corrections in this manner please see the instructors.

**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. If you have not already done so, please visit Student Disability Services, http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds/

*Observation notes: 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. Notes should go beyond just listing what the class activities were. Pay attention to what the students are doing in relation to the instructor's feedback. 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? Observe in a way that contributes to the class and your own learning process.

Please sign/date below, print your goals below, and bring this page to the next class meeting.
I, ____________________, have read the syllabus for DANCE 241 and understand the course Requirements.

______________________________________________________________
Date                                      Signature