Class Description

Ballet I is designed for dance majors and minors. The course will develop progressively on basic precepts of dance, overall, and their application in ballet. Fundamental ballet vocabulary will be explored in barre work and then applied to centre work. Strong focus will be given to underlying concepts and strategies that link ballet technique to other dance disciplines.

While some dance majors may already have previous training in ballet, reexamining foundational principles from the perspective of adult dancers (as versus child/teen dancers) is a major purpose of this course. It will emphasize replacing rote repetition of formulaic exercises with the practice of strategic, consciously chosen movements that use the DNA of ballet to solve problems.

Course Objectives

A. To define and experience the basic ballet vocabulary
   1. Positions of the feet, and the types of movement they facilitate
   2. Positions of the arms, the theory that governs their movement, and how integrated porte de bras engenders power and leverage in movement
   3. Traditional elements of barre and its underlying logic (also including floor barre!)
   4. Traditional elements of centre and its underlying logic
   5. Five types of jump, angles of take-off/ landing, and a breakdown of the classes of jump
   6. Types of turn (closed and open) and how variations in the preparatory base influence the trajectory and potential shape of a turn

B. To develop competence in basic ballet movements
   1. In two legged stances (plie, releve, etc.)
   2. In one legged stances (tendu, degage, ronde de jambe, frappe, etc.)
   3. Leveraged shifts in level or direction (tombe, chasse, pique, etc.)

C. To demonstrate knowledge of ballet’s spatial framework
   1. Eight positions of the body and their kinetic potential
   2. Fixed points of the room/ directions on stage
   3. Three forms of weight transfer w/ directional modulations

D. To discover embedded strategies that link ballet to other dance forms
   1. What are kinetic conjunctions?
   2. How do we modulate our angles of take-off? Why?
   2. Closed vs. open transitions and their potential for leverage
3. How does rhythmic/dynamic variation affect movement?
4. How can “turn out” become an asset rather than an obligation? How to navigate choreography that mixes parallel and outward-rotated movements

Course Calendar
A course calendar will not be specified because D221’s Course Objectives will be addressed as looped/repeatable elements woven together and developed across the semester. (See exam schedule below.)

Course Requirements

Prerequisite: None

Exams: The mid-term exam (10/14) will be a written test of basic ballet theory and vocabulary. The final exam (12/9) will be an in-class essay detailing student learning and progress across the semester.

Journal: All students will write a detailed description of class content including personal moments of learning. The journals will be submitted for review.

Video Viewing Paper: Several specific ballet videos will be available for your viewing on YouTube. Select one. View it three times. Make notes after each separate viewing that capture your perceptual shifts. Write 2-3 pages. The opening paragraph should include an overview of the work plus the title, choreographer, composer, company/performers, etc. The subsequent paragraphs should describe your shifting perceptions with each successive viewing. Connections to ideas from our class work should be included where relevant. (due 11/24).

Attendance and Active Participation: Three absences are allowed. Your grade will be lowered one-half step (ie. B to B-) for each additional absence. No make-ups. Physical presence is only one dimension of attendance. Mental-physical focus, capacity to connect and weave concepts from moment to moment and week to week are the larger measure of attendance and participation. Anyone who, due to illness or injury, watches class must submit 1-2 pages of handwritten notes at the end of each class session.
**Tardies**: Class work begins at five minutes after the hour. You are considered tardy if you miss roll call or leave before the end of class. Two tardies equal one absence.

**Class Attire**: Traditional dance clothing or clothing that allows for freedom of movement. No dangling jewelry. Hair must be secured off face and neck. If a ponytail is long enough to swing it must be secured. Because it is sometimes difficult to control the studio temperature, additional clothing over basic dance attire may be necessary.

**Communication of questions and concerns**: Students are welcome to discuss questions related to this course with Ms. Irey before and/or after class as well as via e-mail kathryn@stage7.com. Due to the movement technique emphasis of this course, *office hours will occur in the studio space*.

**Evaluation**

- Attendance and active participation in class 20%
- Written video analysis 20%
- Journal Evaluation 20%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Exam 20%

*The dancer who* almost always *demonstrates mastery of the course objectives earns an “A”.*
*The dancer who* usually *demonstrates mastery of the course objectives earns a “B”.*
*The dancer who* sometimes *demonstrates mastery of the course objectives earns a “C”.*
*The dancer who* rarely *demonstrates mastery of the course objectives earns a “D”.*
*The dancer who* never *demonstrates mastery of the course objectives earns an “F”.*