



Department of Dance and Theatre
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
SPRING 2026

Stress Reduction Through Movement

DANC 1100.001/301

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 1:00 pm - 2:20 pm

Location: DATH 111

Instructor: Emi Matsushita

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DATH Office Phone: 940-565-1121

Office hours: By appointment. Zoom or in-person (in DATH 103J)

Course Description:

An introductory course designed to acquaint and equip the student with diverse and global perspectives on wellness and health maintenance. Some units of study include 1) varying scientific and general wellness philosophies and disciplines; 2) the mind-body connection; 3) therapeutic massage and integrative bodywork; 4) various movement and therapeutic practices including artistic forms and fitness forms that highlight strength, flexibility, balance, creativity, and endurance; 5) sciences that highlight body and brain systems (i.e, anatomy, physiology, neuroscience, kinesiology, nutrition, etc). This course develops an understanding of the power each of us have to affect the immune system alongside mental, emotional, and spiritual states, and to know how to best support the body's efficient promotion and maintenance of general wellbeing and health. The course is 3 credit hours.

Course Materials:

No required reading. Supplemental readings will be assigned and provided by the instructor as the course proceeds.

Recommended reading:

- Martha Davis, Elizabeth Robbins Eshelman, and Matthew McKay, *The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook*, Sixth Edition. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2008.
- Hanna, Thomas. 1988. *Somatics: Reawakening the Mind's Control of Movement, Flexibility, and Health*. Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press.

Required Materials:

-Notepad/Journal (standard 8 x 11 size) and writing utensil for self-reflective JOURNALS throughout the semester (**NOT digital**).

Recommended Materials:

-laptop/tablet for occasional use in class sessions (such as research/class work)

Course Objectives:

This experiential course builds a foundational understanding of the body, its systems, and how they function in both optimal and stressed states. Students will explore baseline physical and mental states, examine stress on personal and global levels, and learn basic anatomy, physiology, and kinesiology. The class will introduce techniques and modalities to reduce stress, enhance performance, and support overall well-being. Learning will occur through practical application, discussion, research, and self-reflection, with opportunities to apply and share knowledge. Students will strengthen critical thinking, communication, and personal responsibility for their well-being.

Classroom Etiquette & Student Expectations:

- Create a Safe Space: Students should practice respect, empathy, and maturity. This experiential course may involve activities that feel uncomfortable or awkward; it is important to remember that everyone is learning together. Intentionally creating a safe space where this is understood is necessary for successful student experiences.
- Be Prepared: Students should bring required materials (assignments, readings, equipment). Cell phones must be silenced and placed “out of sight” at the start of class; in one’s bag (**NOT** on one’s body). Students should take ownership of their own learning.
- Arrive on Time: Arriving 5–10 minutes early is highly encouraged. This is in order to warm up or prepare so class can begin promptly. **see tardy policy below*
- No Food or Drink: Water bottles are encouraged; no food, gum, or other drinks.
- Stay Open-Minded: Students must maintain a positive attitude, be willing to push themselves, actively participate, and support others in their learning.

- Stay Informed: Students must check email and Canvas regularly to remain aware of updates, announcements, and important course information.
- Uphold Professionalism: Students must conduct themselves professionally in all interactions; Use clear, respectful language in person and via email.
- If any issues arise, the instructor may call on the student to remedy the situation immediately or in extreme cases, may be asked to leave class. Continued disregard for expectations will require a collaborative solution.

Attire:

Students should wear comfortable, movement-friendly clothing daily, with layers to accommodate for changes in temperature. In-class activities will range from lying still to vigorous movement.

- Avoid jeans/denim or short shorts.
- Pull hair back to keep it out of one's face during movement.
- Chosen attire should support full, uninhibited participation & align with class expectations.

Course Evaluation Procedures:

Daily Participation (30% of final grade)

Student learning depends on active, consistent participation. To earn an exemplary grade, students are expected to fully engage in class activities, uphold etiquette and expectations, complete assignments thoroughly, and follow the attendance policy.

Participation includes:

- Practicing taught topics, concepts, and techniques
- Observing peers and offering feedback when requested

- Actively listening to presentations and taking notes when needed
 - Contributing thoughtful questions and insights to discussions
 - Engaging fully in group work
 - Maintaining consistent attendance (*see Attendance Policy*)
 - Following “Sitting Out” guidelines when not participating physically
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Journals

Students will submit a **self-reflective journal entry each Tuesday** (beginning at 1 full page and progressing to 2 full pages as the term continues). Entries must be completed in a **8x11 bound journal*** (no loose-leaf). **as close to standard sized as possible*

- Pages must be **filled completely**—points will be deducted for not meeting minimum requirements.
 - Journals are intended to be a tool of wellness/mindfulness and record keeping throughout the term. They can be used to synthesize class topics, reflect honestly and critically, and connect personal, professional, or academic experiences to health, wellness, and stress reduction.
 - Journals are collected and graded monthly, and count toward the **Daily Participation grade (30% of total)**.
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Out-of-Class Assignments (20% of final grade)

These assignments extend classroom learning and may include research, reading, or other independent activities. They are designed to deepen understanding, support active participation in class, and broaden subject knowledge.

Submission Guidelines

All assignments must be submitted by the stated deadlines and in the required format (Canvas, email, or in person, as specified).

Midterm Experimental Group Project (25% of final grade)

There will be a 6-8 minute group presentation project required at the midterm. Topics are based on group interest but must involve an experimental design (e.g., testing a specific stress reduction method) and receive prior approval. Although completed as a group, grading is individual, with equal contribution expected from all members. A significant portion of the grade includes peer and self-assessments. The project must cite 3–4 credible sources in APA format. Class time will be provided to support development and practice.

TWO Final Projects/ Wellness Lab (25% of total grade)

(1) Wellness Lab (multi day)

In place of a final exam, students will complete a multi-day final project during class in the term's final weeks. The project involves designing, creating and facilitating a wellness experience through small group collaboration, applying concepts and skills from the course. Each group will facilitate the wellness experience for their peers. The process is emphasized through daily outputs such as peer/self-feedback surveys and end-of-day notes. A major component of the grading will be received from peer/self feedback. Further details will be provided in class and on Canvas.

(2) End of Year Reflection Project

As a concluding step of the course, students will review their journal entries compiled throughout the term. Students are encouraged to utilize AI tools to identify themes and personal support needs. The final output is a written journal entry including feedback, lessons learned, and suggestions for supporting healthy habits in the future.

**Students may opt out of AI use. Students who prefer not to use AI can choose an alternative method of analysis, to be discussed with the instructor.*

Extra Credit:

Extra credit opportunities will be posted on Canvas throughout the semester. These may include attending wellness events, exploring therapeutic practices, or interviewing wellness specialists, and can also serve as makeup for missed in-class assignments (*see Alternative Assignments*).

Grading Breakdown	Grade Weight (%)		Grading Scale	
Daily Participation: attendance, in-class activities & discussions, in- class reading/research, Journals	30%		100-90%	A
Assignments: out of class homework/activities, out of class required reading/research	20%		89-80%	B
Midterm Group Project & Presentation	25%		79-70%	C
Final Projects: <i>Wellness Lab</i> & Reflection Project	25%		69-60%	D
TOTAL:	100%		Below 60%	F

**Students are advised to retain all graded work throughout the semester to address any grading discrepancies. Grades and progress can be monitored on Canvas.*

Late Work, Makeup Work, and Alternative Assignment Policy:

NO late work is accepted. However, a ***24-hour grace period*** applies to most assignments; submissions after this period will **not** be graded—even if one minute late. Technical issues are not valid excuses for missing a deadline. If there are issues with submissions via Canvas, students may email work directly to the instructor within the grace period. Partial submissions earn partial credit, which is preferable to no submission.

Exceptions may be granted for extenuating circumstances if the student contacts the instructor within one week and provides valid documentation aligned with UNT Policy 06.039 on excused absences. Acceptable documentation includes notes from doctors, school officials, coaches, or family members. Alternatively, students may seek assistance from the Dean of Students, who will communicate directly with the instructor to verify and support the student's case.

★ **Make up Assignments-** Missed assignments, specifically in-class work, generally **cannot** be made up. Students must contact the instructor promptly (within a week of the missed class) to arrange a remedial plan. In most cases, an alternative assignment—typically an extra credit task—may be submitted to recover points. This assignment must be submitted directly to the instructor via email or Canvas message within **one week of the original due date**. Completion of an extra credit assignment for makeup purposes does not result in additional points beyond the original assignment's value.

Attendance Policy:

- Students are fully responsible for attending all mandatory in-person components and adhering to syllabus policies. A “no questions asked” absence policy is in place; documentation is not required for missing class.
- Due to the critical role of participation in this experiential course, **attendance is essential** and more strictly enforced than in typical university courses.
- Attendance will be recorded by roll call or sign-in sheets; falsifying attendance by signing in for others is prohibited.
- Each student is allowed **four absences**. A fifth absence results in a 10% reduction of the overall grade (e.g., 80% becomes 70%). A sixth absence results in **failure** of the course. Opportunities to make up absences *may* be provided throughout the term.
- Students absent from class are responsible for independently learning missed material. Make-up points for missed in-class assignments require communication with the instructor **within one week** of absence (*see syllabus policy for make up assignment procedures*).

Sickness/Injury Policy:

- A “no questions asked” absence policy applies regardless of the reason. Students who are sick are not required to notify the instructor but are responsible for learning missed material and making up assignment points via the make up assignment policy.
- Students with injuries or conditions limiting physical participation should still attend class and engage in all feasible activities that do not worsen their condition (*see Daily Participation section*). Participation is up to the discretion of the student. The instructor may assign alternative tasks to compensate for reduced physical

involvement. This also applies to students opting out of specific activities (*see Sitting Out Policy*).

- If an injury or illness significantly affects course engagement, students are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students for accommodations. The instructor will collaborate with the student to develop a plan for continued participation ensuring equitable outcomes for all.
- If physical participation is impossible for more than two weeks, the instructor may recommend withdrawal, course drop, or an incomplete grade.

Tardiness & Early Departures & Sitting Out Policy:

- Students must arrive on time; tardiness over 10 minutes will be counted against them.
- Early departures are generally not permitted.
- **Three** tardies or early departures equal **one absence** and may lower the final grade (*see Attendance Policy*).
- Students may request to sit out of specific activities for health or personal reasons, ideally with prior instructor approval. Same-day requests may be approved based on class dynamics. Full participation is expected unless accommodations are needed.
Note: It is expected that students will advocate for their own well-being and comfort and be able to communicate their needs, requesting accommodations as necessary.
- Approved observers must sit at the front, remain attentive, take notes, and submit them at class end. Distractions such as phone use, side conversations, or unrelated studying are prohibited.
- No student should be consistently sitting out without a substantial reason due to the negative impact on successful learning.

Cheating/Plagiarism:

Cheating and plagiarism are strictly prohibited. Students caught engaging in these behaviors will receive a failing grade for the assignment and may be removed from the course. Academic dishonesty policies also cover falsifying attendance or misrepresenting work, in accordance with university regulations.

Student Submission Standards:

Students must submit high-quality writing that demonstrates critical thinking and clear communication, using APA citation for all assignments that require it. Writing should reflect proper grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and course vocabulary. The institution's policy on academic dishonesty will be enforced (see section below): [UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity](#)

Academic Honesty Statement: Scholastic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and collusion, violates UNT's Honor Code. As a student, you are expected to follow this code, as outlined in the [UNT policy handbook](#). Cheating involves unauthorized use of materials or assistance, plagiarism is using another's work without acknowledgment, and collusion is unauthorized collaboration. Academic dishonesty can result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure of the course, or suspension from the college.

AI usage: In this course, it is the general requirement that students submit their original ideas and produce work written in their own voice to uphold maximum academic integrity. Although AI is not recommended to draft a submission completely, it may be used to edit and refine a student's efforts. It will be assumed that the student's voice and original content will approximately make up 80% of the work while 20% may be allotted to AI assistance. Overall, a student's original ideas, critical analysis, and creativity will be encouraged and rewarded. In all cases intellectual honesty and integrity will be assumed unless there is reasonable doubt otherwise. In those cases, the instructor will take any necessary action to align with academic standards listed above; i.e., filing a formal report, working with the student to mitigate dishonest behavior, etc.

Course Calendar SPRING 2026

Date	JANUARY
13 (Tu)	Course Introduction. Syllabus Review Movement as Inquiry: how does stress show up in body <i>*Sign Student Contract</i>
15 (TH)	Embodied Stress Awareness. EFT Method <i>*HW: Stress "Dis-embodiment"</i>
20 (Tu)	Mind-Body Connection (visualization & movement) <i>*journal entry due</i>
22 (TH)	Nervous system. Muscle testing. (orientation practice) <i>*Orientation HW</i>
27 (Tu)	Library Session #1 (Orientation) at Willis Library Room 130 <i>*journal entry due</i>
29 (TH)	Library Session #2 at Willis Library Room 130. In class research activity. <i>*midterm groups selected</i>

Date	FEBRUARY
3 (Tu)	Understanding the Body. Anatomy & Physiology *Journals collected #1 (3 entries)
5 (TH)	Body Exploration <i>*journals returned</i>
10 (Tu)	Breathwork & Meditation <i>*journal entry due</i>
12 (TH)	Massage & Body work I
17 (Tu)	No Class - Midterm Project work <i>*journal entry due</i>
19 (TH)	No Class - Midterm Project work
24 (Tu)	Massage & Body work II *Journals collected #2 (3 entries)
26 (TH)	Movement Fundamentals® Method <i>*journals returned</i>

Date	MARCH
3 (Tu)	Midterm Presentations Day 1 <i>*NO journals due</i>
5 (TH)	Midterm Presentations Day 2
10 & 12	NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK!!!!
17 (Tu)	“Soarin’ Through Stress” SHWC Presentation (location TBD) <i>*NO journals due</i>
19 (TH)	Somatics: Awareness & Movement
24 (Tu)	Somatic Movement & Mobility <i>*journal entry due</i>
26 (TH)	Movement Fundamentals® Method
31 (Tu)	Creative Movement <i>*journal entry due</i>

Date	APRIL
2 (TH)	Pay & Games as wellness
7 (Tu)	<i>Guest Instructor: Aaron Bowley Qi Gong & Tai Chi</i> <i>*journal entry due</i>
9 (TH)	<i>Guest Instructor: Brandy Michele Adams Yoga Nidra</i>
14 (Tu)	Wellness Lab Day #1 : data collection *Journals collected #3 (4 entries)
16 (TH)	Wellness Lab Day #2 : creation/curation
21 (Tu)	Wellness Lab Day #3 : experience facilitations #1
23 (TH)	Wellness Lab Day #4 : experience facilitations #2
28 (Tu)	<i>Reflection Project - Meet in Library: WILLIS Room 130</i> *BRING YOUR JOURNALS! *DO NOT GO TO DATH 111
30 (TH)	End of Term Wrap-up/Review & Closing Ritual- <i>Last class!</i>

Date	MAY
5 & 7	No Class- Final Project Work <i>*All Reflection Project Files Due by WEDNESDAY MAY 6th at 11:59 PM</i>

****Syllabus & Schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity (Policy 06.003)

The University of North Texas promotes the integrity of learning and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the University. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the University's actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities (ODA Statement) (Policy 16.001)

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu."

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward email. (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Student Course Evaluation (SPOT)

Student feedback is important to help improve the quality of instruction and student experience in their courses. The SPOT (Student Perceptions of Teaching) survey allows students to submit confidential feedback on their experiences. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Technical Requirements/Assistance:

If you ever have any issues with the technical systems needed to access course resources, correspondences, or for assignment submissions. Please contact the instructor and also the UNT Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm> or through email: helpdesk@unt.edu. Phone: 940.565-2324 In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Code of Conduct (Policy 07.012):

The University of North Texas is deeply committed to advancing educational excellence and preparing students to become thoughtful, engaged citizens of a diverse, global community. The University has established the Code of Student Conduct to promote the wellbeing, honor and dignity of all who live, learn and work in our educational community. The Code of Student Conduct is intended to foster a safe environment conducive to learning and development, as well as to hold students accountable through an educational process that balances the interests of individual students with the interests of the University. Students and student groups are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates respect for the rights and property of others and upholds the integrity and values of the University community.

Create a Safe Space:

- Practice respect, empathy, and maturity at all times.
- Contribute to a collaborative & safe environment where everyone can engage in attuning to their bodies throughout class activities (and outside of class) without fear of external judgment or criticism.

Come Prepared:

- Check Canvas daily to stay up to date with notifications & correspondences.
- Bring all required materials (completed assignments, readings, equipment, etc.) to class.
- Put cellphones/devices away during class (NOT in your pocket).
- Abide by the late work submission and makeup work policies (see syllabus).
- Take responsibility for your learning by making the most of every opportunity.
- Arrive 5-10 minutes early to warm up or prepare for class.

Classroom Etiquette:

- No food, drink, or chewing gum during class. Water bottles are acceptable and encouraged.
- Act in maturity. Take classwork seriously, understanding that what you give is what you get” to optimize your experience. This is life work, not just school work.
- Know that students are allotted 4 absences (maximum) and understand that grades will begin to be affected following any proceeding absences. (see *Attendance Policy*)
- Engage in class/group/partner discussions and support your learning by:
 - Wearing comfortable clothes suitable for optimal movement (utilize layers for comfort).
 - Putting away your cellphone to avoid distractions (**NOT** in your pocket!).
 - Being aware of assignment deadlines.
 - Contacting the instructor before any issues become a problem; the sooner the better!

Communication:

- Check your email or Canvas regularly for updates or notices regarding the course.
- Uphold professionalism in all communications and behavior, including in-person and written correspondences.

Behavior and Consequences:

- The instructor may address any issues immediately, and in extreme cases, students may be asked to leave class.
- If expectations are repeatedly not met, the student will work with the instructor to find a collaborative solution as soon as possible.

By signing this contract, I acknowledge that I have read AND understood the expectations & guidelines listed above and respective policies detailed in the syllabus. I agree to adhere to these standards to create a safe & rich environment to optimize learning for myself & others.

Student Name: _____ **Student Signature:** _____

Date: _____