



Instructor:	Whitney Geldon	Class Time:	TR 2:30-3:50pm
Email:	Whitney.geldon@unt.edu	Location:	DATH 110
Office Phone:	(940) 565-4057		
Office/Hours:	DATH 103C - MW 10:30am-12:30pm or by appointment		

Course Description:

Introduction to the principles and application of dance composition through improvisational exercises; addresses the elements of movement: space, time, and energy. Explores the concepts of abstraction, organic movement, developing a motive, working from a score and musicality.

Required Texts:

Stephen Nachmanovitch, *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1990.

Supplemental readings from other sources may be assigned during the course and provided by the instructor.

Recommended Texts:

Ben Spatz, *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research*. New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2015.

Melanie Bales and Rebecca Nettl-Fiol, editors, *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training*. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Wendy R. Oliver, *Writing About Dance*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2010.

Course Objectives:

Physical Clarity

- Learning to work from a score (set of rules like a game) to develop a movement idea based on a specific concept (motive, space, time, energy)
- Practicing to make that concept clearly visible in your body and develop it by making intelligent, artistic movement choices. This involves following through with ideas, moving organically, and showing concentration, persistence, confidence, and focus.

Creativity

- Creating original movement ideas: breaking stylistic boundaries and freeing yourself from movement clichés, inventing imaginatively;
- Working with the concept of abstraction, developing your own creative voice or identifiable movement style. This involves trusting your instincts and taking risks.

Performance Skills

- Performing in front of an audience of peers and faculty confidently and professionally while maintaining the improvisational process.

Collaborative Skills

- Collaborating with other dancers in an extemporaneous environment: leading as well as following, becoming sensitive to those around you and the direction of the ensemble, and

- being able to communicate “motionally” without the use of verbal cues
- Developing the skills of responding and relating your movement ideas to external stimuli- be it a sound, prop, an image, gesture, word, poem, environment, etc.

Musicality

- The ability to make visible in your body an understanding of music. Demonstrating a clear relationship between music and movement.

Writing Skills

- Seeing form and discerning successful artistic choices in yourself and others, then writing intelligently about the readings, what you witness in class, the concepts presented in class, and your artistic discoveries regarding a non-verbal art form (dance).

Professionalism: Positive Class Participation/Attitude:

- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner both in appearance and behavior while in class and with professional correspondence (e.g., phone, email, guest speakers). Professionalism aids in expediency of tasks and helps to establish a safe environment that is conducive to excellence and creativity.
- Demonstrate punctuality and come prepared to be present in the studio as an active participant in all daily movement activities. Arrive 5-10 minutes early to warmup on your own in the space as soon as you enter the room.
- Students are expected to come to class prepared, eager to learn and participate with a positive spirit and energetic attitude. You are expected to give yourself fully to classroom exercises, bringing your whole self to the experiences, and pushing yourself to grow.
- Students need to be respectful to the professor and other students by being quiet and attentive in class when the professor or another student is speaking or performing. This is a vital part of being professional.

Course Expectations and Instructional Policies:

- Check campus email and Canvas regularly to keep up with assignments and course announcements.
- Turn in all assignments on time; late work is not accepted. If you have difficulties, contact me prior to the due date so arrangements can be made.
- Daily positive participation is essential to your grade in this course (see grade breakdown). Your full involvement in the exercises is expected whether you are acting as a mover, observer, speaker, or listener.
- No food or drink during class. Water bottles are permitted.
- Cell phones must be put away in backpacks/bags on silent or powered off unless given permission to use in class for a specified assignment.
- Students are expected to submit quality work and writing.

Attire for Studio Work:

- Wear clothing that permits freedom of movement. No bulky or significantly revealing clothing is allowed that inhibits effective performance or assessment of physical practice. No jeans or pajamas permitted. Secure hair out of the face. Gum chewing, baseball caps and jewelry are not allowed in dance class for safety reasons.
- Examples of acceptable attire: athletic wear, tank top, T-shirt, leggings, stretch pants, shorts of appropriate length, leotard and tights

Etiquette:

- Practice empathy and kindness in the classroom (live or virtual). We will be giving constructive critiques and will help each other on progress in the movement analysis journey.
- Be prepared with your assignments for each class. You will be expected to work on your own and in groups. Recognize the pace in which you work and allot the necessary time

- to complete your assignments.
- If interpersonal issues arise between peers or with a professor, please address the issue so we may move to an expedient resolve. This will ensure accountability and responsibility to and for the community.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and participate fully in activities and discussions. There are no excused absences beyond UNT's [Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy](#). Students are responsible for requesting an excused absence in writing, providing satisfactory evidence to substantiate the request. A reasonable deadline will be agreed upon between faculty of record and student. A student needing assistance verifying absences due to illness or extenuating circumstances for all courses should contact the Dean of Students office. The Dean of Students office will verify the student's documentation and advocate on the student's behalf, as appropriate, to instructors.

Each excused absence must be addressed with the submission of a note from your doctor, coach/appropriate faculty, or college official. If you anticipate an absence, inform your instructor in advance. It is the responsibility of the student to make up any missed assignments, even if an absence is excused. **Documentation of excused absences must be turned in to instructor within one week of absence.**

Because this is a movement-based course, one must be in class to acquire the information. You are permitted **TWO (2)** absences for this course. On the third absence your overall grade will be lowered by 5%; for example, a 90% becomes an 85%. On the fourth absence, you will earn a failing grade for the course. (UNT allows the instructor to ask the registrar to drop a student with a "WF" upon accumulation of the stated number of absences.)

Sickness and Injury Policy: In the event of an injury or serious illness that prevents a student from engaging in any activity for more than two weeks, the student should drop the course rather than risk receiving a failing grade.

However, students may continue enrollment in a class by fulfilling minimal participation requirements agreed upon with the teacher until recovery from the injury or illness allows for return to full participation. (A period of minimal or adapted activity due to injury or illness should not exceed a total of four (4) weeks during any long semester.)

- Minimal or adapted participation may be in the form of substituting floor work for standing work, working the upper body while sitting in a chair, adapting choreography assignments to accommodate physical limitations, refraining from jumping, or working with a reduced range of motion. In addition, an extended Pilates or training program may be the appropriate course of action during injury recovery. The goal is to maintain physical conditioning and fitness during recovery so that the return to full activity will not compromise health and wellness.
- Observation and writing assignments will be given to compensate for partial participation when necessary; an observation day must be approved by the instructor. TWO (2) Observations equal one absence. (This applies to students who sit out only a portion of a movement class.) If a student is well enough to attend class but not well enough to participate physically, or if a student is injured and cannot participate fully in the physical aspects of the class, they must be in the studio and fully engaged throughout the class to be considered present and receive credit. *Under no circumstances should students study or work on assignments for other courses during an observation. If a student is not actively engaged, they will be asked to leave and will not receive credit for the class day.

Tardiness Policy: If a student is 5 or more minutes late to class, they will be considered tardy. If a student accumulates **3 tardies**, it will count as an additional absence, which could lower their grade as stated in the above attendance policies.

Attendance Statement:

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor prior to being absent, so you and the professor can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

Late Work:

Late work is not permitted in this class. Exceptions will only be considered for extremely extenuating circumstances. Students must speak with the instructor immediately if they foresee a problem in submitting their work on time.

If the student has not amassed at least 30% of their 100% grade by midterm, the student will receive an unsatisfactory progress notice. If the student continues making unsatisfactory progress, they will be asked to drop the course. If a student misses any portion of their final: does not attend and/or submit their written final, it will be an automatic failure of the course.

Course Requirements and Assessments:

Additional directions will be provided by the instructor prior to due dates.

Grading Breakdown:		Grading Scale:		
Daily Participation	60%		A	90-100%
Supplemental Assignments (readings, quizzes, assessments)	20%		B	80-89%
Assessments	20%		C	70-79%
			D	60-69%
TOTAL	100%		F	0-59%

An "A" student accomplishes consistently excellent work and demonstrates outstanding improvement. They are at the top of the class, always demonstrating strong technical execution of movement and expressive artistry. They are always on time, always focused and attentive throughout the class, and always take responsibility for making corrections even if given generally or specifically to another student. They accomplish assigned reading and writing at their highest possible level.

A "B" student accomplishes consistently good work and demonstrates significant improvement. They are not at the top of the class but are consistently trying to reach that level. They may struggle to learn new movement but can achieve a capable and expressive execution of the material after working on it. They accept and utilize both general and personal feedback and demonstrate a willingness to be open to new ways of thinking and moving.

A "C" student accomplishes consistently average work, demonstrating improvement throughout the semester. This student keeps up with the class and his/her technique is "coming along". They can pick up movement, but not with enough ease and depth to embody technical proficiency and expressivity at the same time. They must be given the same correction multiple times.

A “D” student accomplishes consistently below average work, demonstrating minimal improvement. They struggle to keep up with the class and fail to demonstrate the kind of personal commitment that will allow them to move forward in technical execution and artistry.

AI Policy:

In this course, you are encouraged to use Generative AI (GenAI) tools such as ChatGPT to support your learning and develop skills for a GenAI-oriented workforce. This use will help us stay technically proficient and ethically grounded. However, GenAI should complement, not replace, your critical thinking or our course materials. If something seems unclear, please seek clarification. I use GenAI to enhance materials and streamline tasks. I will always disclose how I use GenAI, and I expect the same from you. In line with the UNT Honor Code, all work you submit must be your own. Using GenAI tools without attribution or relying on them to complete assignments violates academic integrity and will be addressed according to university policy.

Concert Attendance/Information:

Fall 2025 Concert Information:

- New Choreographers Concert – Nov 20-22
 - Location: University Theatre/ RTFP Building
 - Tickets: \$8-15

Box Office Info:

Monday-Friday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. One hour prior to each performance. Seating availability is often limited, and many shows sell out quickly.

The Box Office is located in the [Radio, Television, Film and Performing Arts \(RTFP\) Building](#) in the first floor lobby of the University Theatre (Room 104).

AA/ADA/EOE - Patrons who require special accommodations should contact the box office three weeks prior to their desired performance.

Principles Of Engagement:

PoE refers to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines as provided by UNT:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
- Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people’s ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
- Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as “YELLING!”
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.

- Avoid using “text-talk” unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

Academic Accommodation:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Disabilities Statement – Movement:

In accordance with university policies, state and federal regulations, and specifically, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodation policy for this class is:

The content of this class requires each student to:

- a. Participate physically and mentally in a safe manner.
- b. Exhibit mastery of specific movement patterns through visual and verbal cues.
- c. Process visual and verbal cues spontaneously.
- d. Exhibit ability to carry own body weight as well as the weight of others.

If you have a disability, and feel you are able to meet the essential requirements of this class with or without reasonable accommodations, please contact the instructor during office hours to discuss your particular disability.

Code of Student Conduct:

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 well-being, 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.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004):

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Student Academic Integrity:

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.

Academic Dishonesty: (<http://www.vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.html>): The University takes plagiarism and cheating very seriously. Plagiarized work will earn a zero for the assignment. Students will face action according to University guidelines for academic dishonesty. I reserve the right to submit any paper I suspect of plagiarism to Turnitin.com.

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-5652648.

SPOT Evaluations:

This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class. Please fill out the online SPOT evaluations in a thoughtful and respectful manner at the end of the semester. These evaluations are found on your my.unt account.

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.

Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UIT Help Desk: [UIT Student Help Desk site](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm) (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>)

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](#)

ACADEMIC SUPPORT & STUDENT SERVICES:

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](#)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](#)
- [UNT Care Team](#)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](#)
- [Individual Counseling](#)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [UNT Email Address](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns.

You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](#) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- [What are pronouns and why are they important?](#)
- [How do I use pronouns?](#)
- [How do I share my pronouns?](#)
- [How do I ask for another person's pronouns?](#)
- [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](#)

Additional Student Support Services

- Registrar
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Student Legal Services](#)
- [Career Center](#)
- [Multicultural Center](#)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](#)
- [Pride Alliance](#)
- [UNT Food Pantry](#)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](#)
- [Academic Success Center](#)
- [UNT Libraries](#)
- [Writing Lab](#)

	Departmental Important Dates
8/22	New Choreographers Concert Audition
8/29	Spring Dance Concert Audition
10/9 – 10/11	Texas Dance Improvisation Festival
10/15 – 10/18	Guest Artist Residency: Mike Esperanza
11/5 – 11/6	Wellness Week
11/7	NCC Final Showing and ACDA Adjudication
11/20 – 11/22	New Choreographers Concert
11/24 – 11/28	Thanksgiving WEEK OFF
12/6 – 12/11	Finals Week

***Course Syllabus and Schedule are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**