

**University of North Texas
Department of Dance and Theatre
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences**

**Fall 2025
Contemporary Dance
DANC 4407
M/W 9:00-10:20 AM**

Faculty Contact Information:

Reyna Mondragon: Reyna.Mondragon@unt.edu
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Office Hours W 11am-1pm or by appointment.

Pronouns: she/her/hers
Class Location: DATH 110

Whitney Geldon: Whitney.Geldon@unt.edu
Office: 103C
Office Hours: M/W 10:30am-12:30pm or by appointment.

Pronouns: she/her/hers
Class Location: DATH 111

Course Description & Overview:

With an advanced artistic integrity in their dancing, students will contribute meaningfully to a critically engaged and socially responsible learning community. Students are expected to demonstrate leadership through their practice and participation, supporting both individual and collective artistic inquiry.

We will:

- a.) learn and perform teacher-generated material to challenge and develop beyond our current abilities
- b.) choreograph and share peer generated material to integrate new physical ideas
- c.) improvise with ideas to innovate and expand ways that ideas might manifest in movement.

Though most material you encounter will be generated from *my* personal aesthetic, *your* problem solving, analyzing, and transforming material in personally relevant ways will lead to the development of your own agency as a creative performer.

This is a course in translation, not imitation. I will not ask you to look like me, move like me, or dance like. But I will ask you to fully embody the movement concepts presented in class, to take the model (most of the time me, but sometimes your peers) and translate the information and adapt it to your body, to remain yourself but also to challenge yourself. Translation not imitation. This is a course in deliberate practice. Deliberate practice occurs when learners are given appropriately difficult tasks, informative feedback, and the opportunity for repetition and correction. This class is an opportunity to apply methods of deliberate practice to three aspects of your dancing: body, mind, artistry. Body: Ability to execute movement. Mind: Ability to learn movement. Artistry: Ability to perform movement. You are responsible for the deliberate development of these three parts of your dancing.

Students will be assigned to one of two groups based on prior enrollment, with each group led by a designated faculty member.

Proficiency Standards and Student Learning Outcomes

1. Engaging the Body: mechanics, dynamic alignment, technical skill

The Center Axis

Center Axis movement skills are present and integrated within a variety of movement contexts, performances practices or styles.

- Use core support and connectivity (lower abs and hamstring connection) when moving at high speeds in various directions, changing levels and between distal and proximal initiations.
- Apply head-tail and upper/lower articulation and opposition when performing advanced movement combinations through space at brisk tempos and/or slow motion.
- Access spinal movements such as flexion, extension, lateral flexion, rotation when moving through space at brisk tempos and/or slow motion when performing advanced movement.
- Maintain mechanical rhythm (patterning) between hip, knee and ankle flexion/extension in all related movements like pliés, relevés, weight shifts and jumps and spirals when performing advanced movement combinations.
- Maintain a clear center axis while initiating advanced movement from various parts of the body and connecting initiations sequentially or successively while moving and changing directions on or off balance.
- Balance on one leg while moving the other leg and turning and/or extended falling when performing advanced movement.

Moving within Personal Kinesphere

- Move pelvic girdle (center of gravity) through space with gravity via pelvic under curves and over curves during advanced combinations that move the center of gravity into and out of the floor, up in the air and spiraling space.
- Access the mobility, stability and coordination of the upper body/shoulder girdle (center of levity) through coordinated movement of the sternum, scapula, shoulder, elbow and wrist in various movement combinations that involve spoking, carving, arcing, slashing and spiraling through the space and traveling in and out of the floor when performing advanced movement.
- Perform complex combinations of articulated and integrated circumduction of shoulder and hip joints when performing advanced combinations.

Moving Through Space

Students should be able to access integrated connectivity within the performance of diverse, virtuosic movement combinations.

- Move clearly the center of gravity through space via five basic weight shifts including jumping, (one to one, one to two, two to two, one to another and two to one) with direction/facing changes while turning. Feet are energetically and spatially lengthened (pointed) and with clearly discernable qualitative intentions.
- Perform complex and clearly initiated sequential, successive and simultaneous movements combinations.
- Transfer weight from the lower body to the upper body or other body parts as in the performance of a variety of advanced inversions in any spatial plane or level while maintaining active core connections and shoulder stability and lengthened (pointed) feet while performing advanced movement sequences.
- Spatially hold extended shapes, particularly involving the use of hip and leg extensions, for durations relevant to advanced movement ideas.
- Perform off-balance weight shifts that are integrated with extended shapes, reaches, pulls, or changes of direction and find balance from an off-balance state when performing advanced movement.
- Perform with momentum in weight shifts and level changes and utilize momentum to aid spiraling, jumping, moving across the floor with swiftness and power, and achieving "line" and extension when performing advanced movement.
- Perform advanced movement combinations with smooth, clear transitions at high tempos and in slow motion.

2. Engaging in the Environment: performance, improvisation and musicality: Performance and Improvisation

Students should be able to discern emergent performance practice in their initial stages and be able to contribute fully to their realization thereby contributing meaningfully to the co-creation of new content. Performing partnering sequences and a variety of partnering modes, responsiveness in performance and employing improvisational methods while performing set movement material are also necessary. The student must demonstrate creativity in performance by being able to experiment with performance ideas and to seek out original ideas.

- Engage other dancers in advanced movement improvisations with spatial, tactile and weighted partnering (as in lifts) to interact creatively within the performance space.
- Use attention, intention, and visual focus to engage an audience as advanced level movement warrants, particularly being able to demonstrate internal, external, body part, directional, partner and audience foci in ways that engage an audience with the artistic context.
- Perform advanced improvised or learned movement initiated by more complex combinations of somato-sensory stimuli like perceptions of the movement environment, tactile sensations, movement patterns and anatomical imagery integrated with traditionally virtuosic elements like jumping, turning and musicality.
- Perform an advanced improvised movement score and set movement material while engaging an audience in an emergent composition with only verbal instructions.
- Accurately “pick-up” long (about 16-32 counts) advanced movement combinations by kinesthetically identifying, analyzing, sequencing, performing and retaining movements with immediacy, at high tempos.
- Support full weight of a partner for momentary durations on both pelvic and shoulder girdles with the assistance of momentum and timing.
- Engage responsively with both spontaneous and planned movement stimuli in partnering and be able to shift between the performance of set and improvised movement material.

Musicality

- Demonstrate facility with both advanced bodily phrasing rhythms and metered rhythms and be responsive to the content of the sound score or environment.
- Kinesthetically negotiate musicality as a set of relationships between advanced phrase work ideas/ images, the performance dynamics of the group and musical rhythms.
- Execute complex rhythmic patterns such as mixed/random meters (for example 2,5,3,3,6,1) when performing advanced movement combinations.
- Differentiate between various musical tempi like real time, half time, double and triple time when performing advanced movement combinations.

Course Materials and supplies:

Selected videos/films may be shown in class or may be required for viewing from online video databases.

Appropriate attire for freedom of movement is required. Sweatshirts and T-shirts may be worn at the beginning of class and through the warm-up (alignment of the body must be visible). Hair should be securely fastened and off the neck. No excessive jewelry (large ear rings, dangling necklaces, large watches, etc.) is allowed in class for the safety of all class participants. The instructor has the right to set the standard for appropriate dress in each class.

Major Course Assignments and Examinations:

Assignments and classroom activities could include viewing and listening to videotapes and online audio resources.

1. Attendance and full commitment to each class activity is of outmost importance.
2. This class requires all students to attend one professional concert during the semester. Must submit ticket information and one paragraph describing your experience.
3. Student should demonstrate a consistent application of feedback, particularly those concerning somatic patterning and kinesiology-appropriate performance of technique. This is important to avoid injury and to improve.

4. Midterm Performance and Observation Assessment requiring students to be conversant with modern dance genres and movement practices.
5. Final Performance and Observation Assessment requiring students to be conversant with self and witness assessments.

Activities, Assignments, and Grading Policy:

Rubrics for each of the following activities will be supplied by the instructor.

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| 1. Daily In-Class Participation | 70% |
| 2. Performance Assessments +Final Assessment | 20% |
| 3. Performance Analysis | 10% |

Assessment throughout the Course:

Evaluation is ongoing throughout the semester via verbal and written comments from the instructor, outside observers and peers. Criteria for success in the performance of technique is based on technical expertise, the student's commitment to the activity as evidenced by energy investment, attention to performance quality, presence and classical ballet practice, contributions to discussions and application of suggestions from the instructor, peers and student to enhance quality of performance and technical expertise.

Grading and Evaluation: a student may receive 10 points per day based on the following grading criteria:

"A" 10 pts (Daily) This is an exceptional grade for distinctly superior work. Every aspect is of exceptional quality. This grade is reserved for a very few who are at the top of the class, an exception rather than the rule. The student demonstrates a clear ability to understand and articulate the concepts presented, has thoroughly mastered the subject, displays marked initiative and exhibits intellectual curiosity. The student shows a full range of cognitive and physical skills including knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

"B" 9pts (Daily) This is an above average grade for achievement of the highest order. This grade is reserved for students who are at the top of the class but fall below an "A." The student has fulfilled the requirements and has achieved excellence in all aspects of the work including complete attentiveness, accuracy of knowledge, independence, creativity, and critical thought. The student demonstrates most levels of cognitive and physical skills including knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

"C" 8pts (Daily) The student shows evidence of knowledge about the subjects and is able to analyze concepts. The student may have an open, active, and discriminating mind but demonstrates lower and middle level ability and retention of skills specific to that class particularly knowledge, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This student takes no initiative or leadership in their learning. This is an average grade.

"D" 7pts (Daily) The student demonstrates lower level ability and retention of skills specific to the class material, takes no initiative or leadership in learning and is consistently unprepared or unaware of concepts. This student demonstrates lower than average ability and retention of skills specific to that class particularly knowledge, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

"F" 0-6pts (Daily) The student has failed to demonstrate knowledge, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of any of the class subject matter or concepts. This student has failed to acquire or retain skills specific to class material, takes no initiative or leadership in learning and is closed to the subject matter.

Attendance Grading Policy for studio classes:

Since performance in studio classes in particular relies almost entirely on work accomplished during each class any absence from class will impact the grade.

- Students are allowed two (2) absences. There are no excused absences except for personal or family emergencies or a UNT official activity, which the professor needs to approve. 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.)
- Students who do not attend the first day of class may be dropped to accommodate those who are on the wait list.
- If you are sick please reach out to the instructor right away so you and the instructor can create a plan of action to support your education and absences.
 - A student is responsible for requesting an excused absence in writing, providing satisfactory evidence to the faculty member to substantiate excused absence and delivering the request personally to the faculty member assigned to the course for which the student will be absent.
 - 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.

Lateness and Early Departures: Students should not arrive late to class or ask to leave early. Typically, **(2) tardies and/or early departures will equal one absence.** In order to ensure all students are properly warmed up and prevent injuries, students arriving more than 5 minutes late for class may not be allowed to take class.

Observations/Sitting Out: Students should request to observe a class only in exceptional cases -- the expectation is that all students will participate even though the level of activity and kind of activity may be adjusted to accommodate specific health issues. If an observation is approved by the teacher, the student will take notes following specific directions given by the teacher. These notes will be turned in at the conclusion of class. The quality of these notes will determine the student's grade for that particular day. Under no circumstances should students' study for other courses during an observation.

Typically, observations are considered one-half absences, as the student is not fully engaged in the activity or the class.

Should a student need to sit down during class, they are expected to remain attentive and engaged with the class. Sitting at the front of the studio, watching, and learning through attentive observation. Lying on the floor, sleeping, talking, or texting on a cell phone, or engaging in conversation with other students during class is not considered appropriate. No student should be consistently sitting out as it warrants a low-class participation grade.

MAKEUP WORK:

Only in specific circumstances may the student be allowed to make up an absence. For this consideration communicate with the faculty member at an appropriate time. Do not wait till the last minute.

Class Etiquette:

- There are certain rules of classroom etiquette that include but are not limited to: no leaving class during an exercise unless there is an emergency, no chewing gum, and no food/beverages other than water in the studio during class.
- Cell phones will not be tolerated unless explicitly used for a research tool when asked to during class. PLEASE SILENCE THEM
- Be kind to your fellow classmates. We will be giving constructive critiques and will help each other progress in the movement analysis journey.

- 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.

Fall 2025 Important Dates and Concert Information:

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| • Dance and Donuts | 8/18 |
| • New Choreographers Concert Auditions | 8/22 |
| • Spring Dance Concert Auditions | 8/29 |
| • Texas Dance Improvisation Festival (SHSU) | 10/9 - 11 |
| • Guest Artist Residency: Mike Esperanza | 10/15 - 18 |
| • KNOw BOX Film Festival | 11/5 |
| • Wellness Week | 11/5 - 6 |
| • New Choreographers Concert | 11/20 - 22 |
| • Thanksgiving WEEK OFF | 11/24 - 28 |

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 \(RTEP\) 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.

University Policies:

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (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 \(https://disability.unt.edu/\)](https://disability.unt.edu/).

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.

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](#) to learn more.

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. 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. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://spot.unt.edu/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

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.

University of North Texas Compliance

Updated immigration regulations may be found at: <https://international.unt.edu/international-students/immigration-regulations/>

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.

- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Download the UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form.

Transmission and Recording of Student Images

1. No permission is needed from a student for his or her image or voice to be transmitted live via videoconference or streaming media, but all students should be informed when courses are to be conducted using either method of delivery.
2. In the event an instructor records student presentations, he or she must obtain permission from the student using a signed release in order to use the recording for future classes in accordance with the Use of Student-Created Work guidelines above.
3. Instructors who video-record their class lectures with the intention of re-using some or all of recordings for future class offerings must notify students on the course syllabus if students' images may appear on video. Instructors are also advised to provide accommodation for students who do not wish to appear in class recordings.

Example: This course employs lecture capture technology to record class sessions.

Students may occasionally appear on video. The lecture recordings will be available to you for study purposes and may also be reused in future course offerings.

No notification is needed if only audio and slide capture is used or if the video only records the instructor's image. However, the instructor is encouraged to let students know the recordings will be available to them for study purposes.

Academic Support & Student Services

Student Support 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.

- [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](#)

Academic Dishonesty: 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.

Academic Ethics: Acts of academic dishonesty are subject to discipline at UNT. Cheating plagiarism and furnishing false or misleading information are acts of academic dishonesty. The definitions of these terms are clearly described in the Undergraduate Catalog (www.unt.edu/catalog) and by the Center for Students Rights and Responsibilities.

Authorized Class Absence: All travel by students off campus for the purpose of participation in UNT sponsored activities must be authorized by the dean of the school or college of the sponsoring department. Within three days after the absence, students must obtain authorized absence cards from the dean of students for instructors.

Absence for Religious Holidays: A student absent due to the observance of a religious holiday may take examinations/ complete assignments scheduled for the day(s) missed within a reasonable time after the absence. Class participants should notify the instructor via email of planned absences for religious holidays.

Office of Disability Accommodation Statement: (ODA)- 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 Accommodation (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 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 see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

