



**History of Concert Dance in the U.S.:
1900-Present**
DANC 3800.001

Fall 2024
University of North Texas
Department of Dance and Theatre

Instructor: Whitney Geldon, MFA

Pronouns: she/her

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Office Hours: MW 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. or by appointment

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Email me at any time. I will respond within 48 hours (except over the weekends).

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to develop awareness, appreciation, and enjoyment of concert dance forms within their historical, geographical, and socio-cultural contexts. We will examine a thematic approach to dance in the 20th century in the United States, which stretches a more global view of the evolution of concert dance forms through the historical, political, social and cultural context of significant choreographers, pieces of choreography, the aesthetic movements and themes represented by specific dances through time. Through numerous readings and viewings, as well as physical experiences, students will engage with skills of observation, movement learning, contextual and comparative analysis, and descriptive and critical communication about dance.

This course fulfills Dance Major, Dance Minor, CLASS CORE Distribution, and Elective requirements

Learning Outcomes:

This course will tap into multiple modes of learning, incorporated through movement, written responses, readings, visual observation, verbal responses and written analysis.

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

- demonstrate awareness of the forms, trends, and key individuals in dance from 1900-Present
- identify critical frameworks useful for evaluating the impact of historical, social, and political influences on dance practices
- demonstrate an ability to compare and critique dance practices and their historical periods/styles
- apply strategies for critical reading and observing dances and dance writing styles
- demonstrate a comfortable and dynamic presence/presentation for an audience

Course Materials and Supplies:

McPherson, Elizabeth M. *Milestones in Dance in the USA*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2023.

Additional readings and articles will be provided via Canvas or UNT Library.

Technology Requirements:

- Participants need access to a computer (Mac or Windows) and the Internet for major amounts of time for this course.
- Browser that is compatible with Canvas. [Canvas Browser Checker](#)
- You will need access to your UNT outlook (email). Students should use only their UNT e-mail account or canvas message when communicating with the instructor, classmates, and completing online coursework.
- Your computer will need speakers to hear sound for videos and audio files.
- You will need access to word processing software such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs. Please note that any software that you use must be able to save files as Microsoft files (example *.doc or *.docx) or PDF.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader or an equivalent PDF reader.
- A webcam and microphone on your computer. A cell phone camera and microphone may suffice depending on the quality of the cell phone. It is your responsibility to ensure your cell phone and microphone is able to allow for real time video conferencing and video and audio recording.

If you do not have access to the necessary technology, please contact the instructor immediately to alert them. They will work with you to determine how to fulfill course requirements.

Technology Skills Required:

- Ability to use the library to locate appropriate information and resources when necessary.
- Ability to use online search tools for academic purposes, including the ability to use search criteria, keywords, and filters.
- Ability to properly cite sources in ([MLA](#))

UNT Art, Dance, & Theatre Reference Librarian, Rebecca Barham can provide excellent research support/assistance with UNT Library resources.

Major Course Assignments and Examinations:

Assignments will include viewing and listening to videotapes and online audio resources.

(Acknowledgements to Heather Castillo and MiRi Park at California State University - Channel Islands for many resources in support of assignments.)

1. Readings/viewings will be assigned each week. Our readings/viewings will help provide both linear and thematic lenses (such as social change, appropriation, technology, etc) through which we can examine aspects of dance history. Students will summarize what they learned, and define key words for each reading response.

You are asked to engage and interact with the materials in order to assert your own agency in our class discussions and in the field of dance. I charge you to be an active participant and learner in class.

2. A discussion activity will be assigned each week in support of the student's personal research and expands on the theme or lens for the week. There will be various optional resources provided and multiple modalities for sharing responses to activities assigned.

3. Additionally, students will develop two projects, designed to SPARK their mind. Through curation, collaboration, and creation explain your point of view, critical thoughts, and understanding of the course

material. Cited text from various sources, including (but not limited to) readings and discussions in class, will aid in the production of a paper and/or presentation. Additional sources may be obtained through local libraries or the web (not Wikipedia or britannica sources). Research will be formally cited in MLA format.

Project 1: Select one 20th/21st Century Artist in context to themes and ideas you witness present in their work. Identify the artist as a person, historical/geological/political context, artistic characteristics, and cultural relevance. Present your research as to WHY your artist impacts the field of dance.

Project 2: For the culminating project students select a thematic/critical framework where they will research multiple artist's works under this shared umbrella. The choreographic works must premiere in different moments and by different choreographers in the 20th/21st century. Students address questions surrounding the historical, socio-political, and aesthetic characteristics such as: Who made the work? When was it made? Who produced the work? What did the work speak to? How was it received? What global or national events shed light or impacted the reading of the choreography? By addressing such questions, students identify the power structures that influenced the choreographic works selected and how they are grounded in the critical framework they define.

Activities, Assignments, and Grading Policy:

Weekly Discussion Activities:	30%
(11)	3%
Weekly Responses:	40%
Readings/Viewings (11)	4%
Project 1:	15%
Project 2:	15%

Grading Scale:

90-100: A; 89-80: B; 79-70: C; 69-60: D; 59 and below: F

How to Keep Track of Your Grade Throughout the Semester

Canvas allows you two ways to keep a running or continual track of where your grade is with the graded record of each assignment. In your Grades tab there is a "Running Total" and a "Running Weighted Total." The Running Total adds up your points in relation to the total points possible to accumulate throughout the entire course. The Running Weighted Total keeps track of how your points are calculated in relation to the assigned percentage for each assignment. **In this class, the easiest way to keep track of your grade is through the percentage level you receive through the Running Weighted Total. It will tell you where you are in terms of your grade scale with each assignment.**

(Acknowledgements to Jennifer Hurley - Ohlone College and Lea Marshall - VCU)

To Pass

There are a few things I expect of everyone who passes my class. I expect you to submit work regularly, complete all weekly and Module assignments and most of your other work, and submit a passing project at the end of the semester that shows your learning. I expect you to possess enough fluency in English to comprehend college-level texts and to express yourself clearly in writing. I encourage you to revise assignments that do not meet requirements, and I'm happy to help you with these revisions or direct you to the [UNT Writing Center](#). However, if after revising with help, your work is still not meeting the standards, you will not pass the class.

To Earn a B

You will earn a B in the class if you complete all of the work in the class (including the reading) with sincere effort and on time. This means reading and annotating your texts each week; submitting all

response entries and module projects; and making revisions to your work at your own or my request. To earn a B, I expect you to “come to class regularly” (not missing more than 1 assignment in a semester) and to be fully present in class without turning your attention to electronic devices.

To Earn an A

You will earn an A in the class if you do all of what is required for a B and show excellence in your work. To earn an A, I ask that you put extra effort into your learning process and submit assignments that exceed the minimum requirements. Some features I look for in A work include:

- Evidence of thorough research (going beyond an initial Google search, or the first page of results in a library catalog search).
- Asking questions that invite us all to think more deeply about the material.
- The ability to understand and respond to perspectives other than your own.
- Assignments that demonstrate you have carefully read and re-read the material.
- Ideas that are uniquely your own, not just repeated from class discussions
- Clear sentences, careful proofreading, and correct citations.

I also ask that you stretch yourself in class discussions. If participating is hard for you, try to confront that fear with small steps such as asking questions. If participating is easy for you, try to hold back more and listen to others.

ENGAGEMENT:

It is advised to only take an “absence” from your work for extreme and urgent circumstances. Missing class material impacts your ability to progress and succeed in this course. Active engagement is imperative in a course where the discussions and interactions may not be duplicated. The themes and concepts developed in class discussions, movement activities, and videos create the basis for our analytical studies over the course of the semester.

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.

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 absence(s).

LATE WORK:

Late work is not permitted in this class after 24 hours from the deadline (10% immediately deducted from late submissions after the deadline). Exceptions to this policy will only be considered for extreme 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 mid-term, the student will receive an unsatisfactory progress notice. If the student continues making unsatisfactory progress he or she will be asked to drop the course.

All required assignments in this course may be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin.com

EVALUATION METHODS:

Written work and course assignments are graded on fulfillment of the assigned parameters.

When meeting synchronously, participation and contribution in class activity is expected. Preparation for class includes completion of and reflection on assigned readings, as well as prepared ideas for discussion. Class participation will reflect student demonstration of the following:

1. arrive ready
2. ability to articulate and engage the concepts presented in the class
3. contribution to creating a better environment

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

It is expected that you will be respectful, supportive, and tolerant of each of your colleagues in this class. A multitude of topics and images will be presented in class that may cause discomfort and may reflect one's life, familial, or cultural experiences. When engaging in critical discussions, it is important to be mindful of how our words and body language can impact others. This is also a general life skill that will serve you outside of the academic setting.

When meeting on Zoom, Be On Time and turn cell phones OFF. No food or drinks, besides water in a closed container. Please dress in professional clothing that allows for a range of mobility.

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:

- 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.

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.

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

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Walk-In Availability: 8am-9pm

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](#)

STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM:

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 Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities 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. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

UNT's Policy of Academic Dishonesty found in the Student Handbook applies to this course. If caught plagiarizing (meaning copying) published sources or another student you will be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities and you will also fail this course. This policy also applies if you are caught falsifying your attendance or misrepresenting your work in any way. For your own sake, please be sure that you are familiar with the rules and regulations regarding Academic Dishonesty. "The term 'plagiarism' includes, but is not limited to: 1. The knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement [or citation] and/or 2. The knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials."

-http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/misconduct.html

TENTATIVE CALENDAR

Week	Submission Date	Assigned Reading	Content
Week 1	Aug 22	(Provided via canvas)	Why Dance? Personal History & Historiography
Week 2	Aug 29	Introduction Chapter 1	Native American Dance & Engaged Resistance
Week 3	Sept 5	Chapter 2	An American Take on Ballet
Week 4	Sept 12	Chapter 3	Black Women Keep the Tempo: The Impact of Black Women on Jazz and Tap Dance in the USA
Week 5	Sept 19	Chapter 4	Gendered Politics and the Female Dancing Body
Week 6	Sept 26	Chapter 5	An Exploration of Inspiration, Imitation, and Cultural Appropriation in Dance in the USA
Week 7	Oct 3	Personal Research	Module I

Week 8	Oct 10	Personal Research	Module I Presentations and Discussion
Week 9	Oct 17	Chapter 6	Dancing for Social Change in the 20th and 21st Centuries
Week 10	Oct 24	Chapter 7	Challenging the Distinction between Art and Entertainment: Dance in Musical Theatre
Week 11	Oct 31	Chapter 8	Postmodern Dance: Laboratory of Rupture
Week 12	Nov 7	Chapter 9	On Black Dance and Postmodern representation from Black Power to Afro-Futurist Performance
Week 13	Oct 14	Chapter 10	From the Serpentine to the Renegade: Milestones in Dance and Media Technology
Week 14	Nov 21	Research	Project 2 discussion and workshop
Week 15	Nov 28		Thanksgiving
Week 16	Dec 5	Research	Project 2 discussion and workshop
FINALS	Dec 9		Project Presentations

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS TO ACADEMIC/PRODUCTION WORK:

DT students are expected to budget and organize their time and efforts in order to meet both their academic and production commitments satisfactorily and on time. The faculty and staff recognize that the academic and production assignments within the Department, as well as outside employment, athletics, and other obligations, sometimes impose conflicting pressures on DT students. One of the principal responsibilities of each student is to carefully identify and monitor the commitments that comprise his/her production work and outside obligations do not constitute an excused absence from DT classes or from the completion of any required class assignments.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT-MOVEMENT:

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 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 see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at [940.565.4323](tel:940.565.4323).

Course Communication:

General Guidelines

- Remember that college communication is still professional communication. Use correct spelling and grammar and always double-check your response before hitting send or reply. Do not use slang and limit the use of emoticons.
- Use standard, readable fonts, sizes, and colors and avoid writing in all caps.
- Use your instructor's title of "Dr." or "Professor," or if you don't know use "Mr." or "Ms." Do not use "Mrs." to address female instructors unless told otherwise by said instructor.
- Be mindful of tone in online communication as it lacks the nonverbal cues of face-to-face communication that provide clarity and context to conversations.
- Respect the personal identities of others based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture.
- Respect the privacy of yourself, your instructor, and your peers. Keep in mind what you reveal and do not reveal, particularly if this information involves personal health and/or classroom performance, such as grades.
- Give people the benefit of the doubt. Though there may be a computer between you, there are people on the other side of the screen.
- Do not make assumptions about others' technological skills. Technological skills vary across a variety of factors, including experience, age, culture, etc.

Communicating via Email

- Check the syllabus before asking a question about the course and let the instructor know you checked the syllabus before asking. Instructors put a lot of time into making syllabi as comprehensive as possible for students.
- Use a descriptive subject line to get the instructor's attention. Instructors receive a lot of emails and a descriptive subject line helps them identify student inquiries more efficiently.
- Be concise and to the point.

Discussion Board Communication

- Treat your posts like the professional communication that they are. Use correct spelling and grammar and always double-check a response before hitting send or reply. Do not use slang and limit the use of emoticons.
- Read all the messages in a thread before replying so you do not repeat something one of your peers may have already said.
- Avoid replies such as "I agree" and instead explain why you agree or do not agree.
- Show your work by sharing resources and utilizing citations.
- When disagreeing, do not make personal attacks or use language that discriminates based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture.

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](#)

*To graduate, students majoring in dance and theatre must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 in dance courses, make a B in dance technique courses and at least a C in all other dance courses comprising his/her major.

*Students who miss the first day of class without consent of the instructor are subject to be administratively dropped from the course so that other students may be added. Students who must miss the first day of class because of illness or some other acceptable excuse must notify the instructor on record the day of the absence.

***The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary.