

Instructor: Whitney Geldon, MFA

Office: 103C

Office Hours: TR 9:00-10:30AM or by appointment

E-mail: whitney.geldon@unt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This contemporary modern dance technique class acknowledges a dance field of many different training methodologies. Emphasis will be placed on experiencing and questioning the roles of performer, choreographer, and improviser within a professional contemporary dance context. Students will deepen their study of contemporary dance technique through conceptual frameworks of somatic awareness principles as expressive tools, movement sequences choreographed by the instructor, and participate in challenging improvisation and partnering experiences. At the same time, they will be asked to challenge their physical possibilities and their ideas about what dance technique can be.

We will explore contemporary modern technique as...

- The 6 paired principles of [Movement Fundamentals®](#): Alignment/Function, Range/Efficiency, Vocabulary/Intention
- The awareness of Modern Dance Principles as a soloist, partner, and ensemble
 - o weight
 - o momentum
 - o space
 - o time
 - o energy
 - o focus
- The development of a community in which ideas, desires, difficulties, and class experiences are shared openly
- The engagement of real time decision-making and movement creation

One of the most exciting things I find about dance is utilizing our technique to move beyond what we think is possible. ***I challenge us to blur the line between clarity and abandonment.***

What you'll need for class:

- Recommend knee pads and long sleeves/pants for floor work. Arrive to class in dance clothing that allows freedom of movement.
- Approach each class with openness, fresh ideas, creativity, and willingness to share with a community.
- Keep a class Journal, which should be accessible during each class. You may be asked to document significant moments, sequences, imagery, feedback, questions, etc.

COURSE PHILOSOPHY:

Contemporary dance technique requires technical skill, creative process expertise, and an awareness of the individual body. This course asks students to develop physical and technical-somatic knowledge while strengthening individual artistic integrity, agency, and personal responsibility.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Identify and perform** dance movement concepts, fundamental movement patterns, mechanics, stylistic components and contemporary dance movement vocabulary in the context of one's own

individual body on a pre-professional level, both in improvisation and in learned movement patterns.

2. **Demonstrate partnering and improvisational skills** by negotiating, communicating, and cueing spatial intentions through clarity of weight and dynamic body positioning.
3. **Apply Movement Fundamentals principles:** Alignment/Function; Range/Efficiency; and Vocabulary /Intention to develop individual movement potential and expand technical and creative choices.
4. **Contribute to a collegial and collaborative classroom** environment through active listening, engaged observing, constructive feedback, and respectful participation in individual and group exploration.
5. **Apply somatic and fitness principles** to dance practice and reflect on personal growth, achievements, desires, questions, and challenges in the development of an individual practice.

Student achievement of each learning outcome will be assessed through course assignments, class participation, demonstrations, performances.

Required Texts:

There is no required textbook, although articles will be provided.

Major Course Assignments and Examinations:

Assignments and classroom activities may include viewing video recordings and online audio resources.

1. **Daily Engagement and Participation:** Attendance and active engagement are essential components of a studio dance course. Students are expected to arrive prepared and participate fully in class activities, including movement exploration, technique exercises, improvisation, discussion, observation, and individual, group, and partner work.
Daily engagement includes:
 - Consistent preparation and participation in class activities
 - Willingness to explore movement concepts and creative processes
 - Active listening and observation
 - Application of instructor and peer feedback
 - Respectful and constructive engagement with classmates
 - Demonstrated growth in technical, somatic, artistic, and collaborative practices
2. **Application of Feedback:** Students are expected to consistently apply feedback related to somatic awareness, movement mechanics, and kinesiology informed approaches to dance technique. The goal is to develop safe, sustainable, and increasingly informed movement practices while supporting individual technical and artistic growth.
3. **Module Performance and Observation Assessments:** Students will complete two performance and observation assessments requiring demonstration of movement practices, with self and witness observation.
4. **Fall Dance Concert:** In-class work will include the development and presentation of the performance material throughout the semester. The structure and organization of each work will be determined by the instructor based on what best supports the artistic process and the needs of the concert.
Students are expected to participate in the following capacities:

Performer	Understudy / Non-Performing Participant
• Participate in rehearsals as assigned • Attend the required technical/lighting rehearsal • Perform in all four concert performances	• Attend the required technical/lighting rehearsal • Attend all four concert performances • Complete written/verbal analysis of selected works presented in the concert in place of performing

Out-of-Class Work:

This is a 3-credit-hour course, and the majority of your work takes place during scheduled class meetings. Out-of-class responsibilities will primarily include concert related rehearsals and performance.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION:

Participation is an assessment of student engagement in class, in movement, discussion, group and partner work as well as demonstrated achievement and growth.

The following is a percentage breakdown of final grades.

Daily Engagement	65%
Assignments	10%
Assessment	15%
Fall Dance Concert	10%

ATTENDANCE:

This class is concerned with the intellectual, physical, and artistic development of the body. Because learning in a studio course builds from class to class, week to week, and throughout the semester, regular attendance and active participation are essential.

Course learning may take multiple forms, including instructor-led practice, self-practice, readings, viewings, video demonstrations, improvisation, and self, peer, and instructor feedback. Students are therefore expected to attend and actively engage in all scheduled class meetings.

Students may have up to three (3) absences without an immediate impact on their course grade. Because Daily Engagement is assessed through a student's participation and engagement in class, attendance is necessary for the instructor to assess Daily Engagement. Attendance alone does not constitute engagement; rather, students must be present and actively participating in order for their engagement, preparation, application of feedback, collaboration, and demonstrated growth to be assessed.

Students are expected to communicate with the instructor regarding absences as soon as possible. Absences will be handled in accordance with the UNT [Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy](#). Students seeking consideration for an authorized absence are responsible for following the procedures outlined by UNT and providing appropriate documentation when required. Students who need assistance with absences related to illness or extenuating circumstances may 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.

In the event of an absence, students are responsible for notifying the instructor, prior to the absence if possible, as well as the material or content covered, in addition to completing the journal requirements including video and/or written responses.

Late Arrival and Early Departure

This is a physical practice, students should arrive 5-10 minutes early to prepare for movement. Students are expected to remain for the full class period unless they have made prior arrangements with the instructor.

Late arrival or early departure may affect a student's Daily Engagement assessment. For safety, students arriving more than 5 minutes late may be asked to observe rather than participate in the class.

Opportunities for Make-up or Adapted Work

If illness, injury, or another circumstance prevents a student from fully participating in class, the student should inform the instructor as soon as possible and discuss appropriate ways to remain engaged with course material.

When appropriate, students may participate in an adapted form of the day's activities. Adaptations will depend on the activity, the student's circumstances, and the course learning objectives. Examples may include:

- Substituting floor work for standing work
- Working from a seated position
- Reducing range of motion or impact
- Refraining from jumping
- Modifying choreography or movement assignments
- Observing class and completing an observation activity

Students are expected to communicate with the instructor about appropriate adaptations. The goal of adapted participation is to support continued engagement with course material while respecting the student's physical limitations.

Because this is a physically based technique course, minimal or adapted participation is intended as a temporary modification and should not exceed two (2) weeks during the semester. If an injury or serious illness prevents a student from returning to full participation after this period, the student should meet with the instructor to discuss their ability to continue meeting the course learning outcomes and requirements.

Students should not push through pain or injury in an effort to meet course expectations. At the same time, students should understand that prolonged inability to participate physically may prevent them from demonstrating the learning outcomes required for successful completion of a technique course.

LATE WORK:

Assignments are expected to be submitted by the stated deadlines. Students who anticipate difficulty completing an assignment on time should communicate with the instructor prior to the deadline.

Requests for extensions or alternative arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis, including circumstances covered by university policy, approved accommodations, or documented extenuating circumstances.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

- No food or drinks in the classroom, besides water in a closed container.
- Wear comfortable clothing that allows for freedom of movement. Avoid excessively loose or baggy clothing.

- Socks are permitted on the marley at the discretion of student and instructor, however socks may affect stability and traction.
- Phones should be silenced when entering the classroom. Phones may be used to document personal or peer performance when authorized by the instructor and/or the students being recorded.
- Students are expected to contribute to a respectful, collaborative, and supportive learning environment.

Class Recordings

In-class movement material may be recorded for students enrolled in this course to review throughout the semester for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management System, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

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.

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

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 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.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT - MOVEMENT:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodations must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student's specific needs in a course. Students 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 meet with faculty regarding their accommodations during 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 website.

The content of this class requires each student to:

1. Participate physically and mentally in a safe manner.
2. Exhibit mastery of specific steps and movement patterns through both visual and verbal cues.
3. Process visual and verbal cues spontaneously.
4. Demonstrating the ability to manage and support one's own body weight and, when required by course activities, safely negotiate or support the weight of a partner.

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 their production work and outside obligations do not constitute an excused absence from DT classes or from the completion of any required class assignments.

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.

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](#)

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](#)

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](#)

Fall 2026 Calendar	
8/17	First day of classes
8/19	Donuts and Dance
8/21	Fall Dance Concert & Guest Artist AUDITION
9/7	Holiday – No classes
10/11-16	Guest Artist Residency - Elijah Gibson
10/15-17	Texas Dance Improvisation Festival
10/29-11/1	UNT Dance & Theatre – <i>Dracula</i>
11/12-15	Fall Dance Concert
11/13	High School Dance Day
11/23-27	THANKSGIVING BREAK - NO CLASS
12/4	Reading Day – No classes
12/5-10	Finals Week

*To graduate, students majoring in dance and theatre are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 for all dance and theatre courses. .

*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.