

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

Class Time: M/W 11:10 AM - 12:30 PM
Location: DATH 110

Course Description:

This course introduces students to dance as both a performing and participatory art form through the study and embodied exploration of cultural dance practices, historical traditions, and contemporary dance styles. Students examine dance as a reflection of societal change, with particular attention to migration, colonization, cultural exchange, and globalization. Through movement experiences, dance viewing, discussion, research, and written analysis, students develop skills for observing, describing, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating about dance across diverse cultural and historical contexts.

No prior dance training is required. Studio activities are designed to introduce students to movement concepts and cultural practices at an introductory level. Students are expected to participate within their individual physical abilities and to communicate with the instructor regarding relevant limitations or approved accommodations.

Required Texts:

Myron Howard Nadel and Marc Raymond Strauss, editors, *The Dance Experience: Insights into History, Culture and Creativity*, Hightstown, NJ: Princeton Book Company, Publishers, 2014.

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

Recommended Texts:

Patricia Leigh Beaman, *World Dance Cultures: From Ritual to Spectacle*. New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.

Harriet Lihs and The Editors of Dance Horizons, *Appreciating Dance: A Guide to the World's Liveliest Art*, Fifth Edition. Trenton, NJ: Princeton Book Company, Publishers, 2018.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to:

1. Develop an understanding of dance as a cultural practice and examine how dance reflects the values, traditions, beliefs, identities, and aesthetic preferences of diverse cultures and communities.
2. Develop critical skills for viewing and experiencing dance as an embodied form of communication, including the ability to describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate movement.
3. Examine similarities and differences among dance practices and consider the historical, social, cultural, political, and economic factors that influence why, how, and where people dance.
4. Examine dance as a form of cultural exchange and consider the effects of migration, colonization, globalization, cultural appropriation, and stereotyping on the development, transmission, and representation of dance.
5. Develop intercultural awareness through the study and embodied exploration of dance, including

opportunities to consider connections between dance, personal identity, community, and lived experience.

6. Develop skills in researching and communicating about dance through written, oral, visual, and movement-based forms.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. **Describe** selected dance practices using appropriate movement vocabulary and concepts.
2. **Analyze and interpret** dance practices in relation to their cultural, historical, and social contexts.
3. **Compare and contrast** dance practices across cultures and identify both shared characteristics and culturally specific meanings.
4. **Analyze** how migration, colonization, globalization, cultural exchange, and other social forces have influenced the development and transmission of dance practices.
5. **Identify and discuss** issues related to cultural representation, appropriation, stereotyping, and power in the study and presentation of dance.
6. **Research and communicate information about a dance practice** using appropriate and credible sources and present findings through written, oral, visual, and/or embodied forms.
7. **Apply concepts from the course to movement experiences**, demonstrating an understanding of dance as both a participatory and performing art form.
8. **Reflect on connections between dance, identity, culture, and personal experience** through written reflection and/or discussion.
9. **Participate effectively in individual and collaborative learning activities**, demonstrating respect for diverse perspectives and contributing to shared learning goals.

Course Topics (may include but are not limited to):

- What is dance? Why do you dance?
 - basic concepts and definitions
 - its meaning and value
 - ways of viewing dance
 - crucial skills employed in experiencing and understanding dance
 - understanding that although dance is a universal activity it plays different roles in many cultures
 - dance and power
- Mexican Folkloric Dance
- Indigenous Dance Traditions of North America
- Western and Eastern Classical Dance forms
- Dance Traditions of China
- Japanese Butoh
- Traditional and Contemporary Dance Practices of Korea
- Bharatanatyam, Bhangra, and Bollywood
- Capoeira: Dance from Brazil
- Dance Traditions of Africa and the African Diaspora
- Hip Hop
- Latin Social Dance
- Modern & Post-Modern Dance (US)
- Contemporary Fusion Forms

UNT CORE Objectives

- **Critical Thinking** (CT): creative thinking; innovation; inquiry; and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
- **Communication** (COM): effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through

written, oral, and visual communication

- **Teamwork (TW):** ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
- **Social Responsibility (SR):** intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Class Participation, Professional Conduct, and Studio Expectations:

This course involves both academic and embodied learning. Students are expected to contribute to a respectful, and focused and supportive learning environment and to participate actively in movement, observation, discussion, and collaborative activities.

Professional Conduct and Participation

Students are expected to:

- **Arrive on time and prepared:** Students should arrive 5–10 minutes before class to allow time to enter the studio, prepare personal belongings, and warm up independently. Class begins at the scheduled time.
- **Participate actively:** Students are expected to engage fully in course activities, whether serving as a mover, observer, speaker, listener, or member of a small or large group.
- **Remain attentive:** Give your attention to the instructor and to classmates when they are speaking, demonstrating, performing, or providing feedback. Observation is an important component of learning in this course.
- **Engage constructively:** Approach movement activities, discussions, critiques, and collaborative work with curiosity, focus, and a willingness to learn. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves while working within their individual abilities.
- **Communicate professionally:** Professional and respectful communication is expected in class and in correspondence with the instructor, classmates, guest speakers, and other members of the university community.
- **Contribute to a respectful learning environment:** Listen to and consider perspectives different from your own. Feedback and critique should address the work or ideas being discussed rather than the individual.
- **Address concerns appropriately:** If interpersonal or course-related concerns arise, communicate with the instructor or appropriate university resource in a timely and respectful manner so that concerns can be addressed constructively.

Course Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- Checking UNT email and Canvas regularly for course announcements, assignments, schedule changes, and other course-related information.
- Completing assigned readings, preparation, and other coursework by the stated deadlines.
- Submitting work that demonstrates appropriate attention to content, clarity, and academic quality.
- Contacting the instructor before an assignment deadline if circumstances arise that may affect the student's ability to complete the work as assigned. Any exceptions to course policies are subject to the circumstances and applicable university policies.
- Understanding that active participation is an essential component of the course and contributes to the course grade.

Studio Safety and Attire

Because the course includes physical movement activities, students are expected to dress and conduct themselves in ways that support a safe studio environment.

- Wear comfortable clothing that allows for unrestricted movement. Jeans are not permitted during movement activities.
 - Appropriate attire may include athletic wear, a T-shirt with stretch pants, or similar clothing that permits safe and comfortable movement.

- Students may participate barefoot or in socks unless otherwise directed by the instructor.
- Gum chewing, baseball caps, and bulky jewelry are not permitted during movement activities because they may create safety concerns.
- Water is permitted in the studio. Food and other beverages should not be consumed during class unless permitted by the instructor.
- Students should notify the instructor of any physical limitation, injury, or other circumstance that may affect safe participation. Students with approved accommodations should work with the instructor and ODA to determine appropriate participation options.

Technology

Cell phones and other personal devices should be silenced or powered off and stored in a backpack or bag during class unless the instructor authorizes their use for a specific course activity.

Community and Collaborative Learning

Dance involves observation, participation, experimentation, and collaboration. Students are expected to contribute to an environment in which others can take creative and intellectual risks without fear of ridicule or dismissal.

Constructive feedback should be specific, respectful, and focused on the movement, ideas, or work being discussed. Students are expected to practice active listening, consider multiple perspectives, and contribute to the shared learning environment.

Attendance:

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 assignments completed during 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 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.

Course Requirements and Assessments:

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

Grading Breakdown:	
Daily Engagement	60%
Reading Responses/ Questions to Consider	20%
Assessments (Midterm, Final, Quizzes)	20%
TOTAL	100%

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.

Concert Attendance/Information:

Fall 2026 Concert Information:

- UNT Department of Dance and Theatre presents *Fall Dance Concert*
 - November 12-15, 2026
 - Location: University Theatre/ RTFP Building
 - Student Tickets: \$10, General Admission: \$15

Box Office location: [Radio, Television, Film and Performing Arts \(RTFP\) Building](#), first floor lobby of the University Theatre (Room 104). At our Box Office location, we can accept cash, checks, and credit cards.

The Box Office opens one hour prior to each performance for will-call, and to sell any remaining tickets for that performance. There is a NO LATE SEATING policy for productions. We do not hold unpaid reservations for our performances.

All sales are final. There are no refunds or exchanges.

AA/ADA/EOE - Patrons who require special accommodation 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 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 steps and movement patterns through both 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.

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 the production assignments within the Department, as well as outside employment 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 departmental assignments and outside obligations. It is also important to keep in mind that production work and outside obligations do not constitute an excused absence from DT classes or from the completion of any required class assignments.

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. All assignments will be submitted to [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com).

AI Policy:

In this course, I want you to engage deeply with the materials and develop your own critical thinking and writing skills. For this reason, the use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools like [insert tool(s) here, e.g., Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini] is not permitted. While these tools can be helpful in some contexts, they do not align with our goal of fostering the development of your independent thinking. Using GenAI to complete any part of an assignment, exam, or coursework will be considered a violation of academic integrity, as it prevents the development of your own skills, and will be addressed according to the [Student Academic Integrity policy](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>).

Academic Success/ Succeed at UNT:

UNT endeavors to offer you a high-quality education and to provide a supportive environment to help you learn and grow. And, as a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. Here's how to succeed at UNT: Show up. Find support. Get advised. Be prepared. Get involved. Stay focused. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can achieve success, go to succeed.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.

SPOT Evaluations:

This short survey will be made available at the end of the semester and provides you an opportunity to provide feedback on your experience in the course and how it is taught. I value student feedback and use it to continually reflect on and improve my teaching. Please complete the online SPOT evaluations thoughtfully and respectfully. The evaluation is available through your myUNT account and is an important part of contributing feedback to the course.

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 Requirements/Assistance:

UIT Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>

The University of North Texas provides student technical support in the use of Blackboard and supported resources. The student help desk may be reached at:

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu Phone: 940.565-2324 Sage Hall, Room 130

Canvas technical requirements: <https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements>

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](#)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](#)
- [UNT Food Pantry](#)

Academic Support Services

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

	Departmental Important Dates
8/21	Fall Dance Concert Auditions
10/11 - 16	Guest Artist Residency: Elijah Gibson
10/21 - 23	Wellness WEEK
10/29 – 11/1	<i>Dracula</i>
11/12 - 15	Fall Dance Concert
11/23 - 27	FALL BREAK
12/5 - 12/10	Finals Week

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