

Instructor: Whitney Geldon, MFA

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Office Hours: TR 9:00am10:30am or by  
appointment

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Instructor: Jocelyn Schimpf, MFA

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### **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 boundaries and their ideas about what dance technique can be.

We will explore contemporary modern technique as...

- The 6 basic principles of Movement Fundamentals: Alignment, Function, Range, Efficiency, Vocabulary, and Intention
- The awareness of Modern Dance Principles as a soloist, partner, and ensemble
  - weight
  - momentum
  - space
  - time
  - energy
  - 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.***

This semester, our contemporary dance course will be led by two instructors. You will work with one instructor during the first half of the semester and transition to a second instructor for the latter half. This structure gives students the opportunity to experience multiple teaching styles, movement approaches, and artistic perspectives, helping to broaden their technical skills, adaptability, and creative range.

### **Prerequisites For Doing Well In This Class:**

- Students will need knee pads and long sleeves/pants for floor work. Students should arrive to class in dance clothing that allows freedom of movement.
- Students should approach each class with openness, fresh ideas, creativity, and willingness to share with a community.
- Students are requested to keep a class Journal, which should be accessible for each class. There will be times you will be asked to take note of significant moments, sequences, imagery, feedback, questions, etc. ***\*\*A Journal will also help you to reference class experiences for other assignments.***

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Contemporary technique represents a high level of technical skill and creative process expertise in which students should be able to recognize, understand, and apply physical and technical-somatic knowledge while strengthening individual artistic integrity and personal responsibility.

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

1. Identify and perform dance movement concepts, fundamental movement patterns, proper 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 effectively negotiating, communicating and cueing spatial intentions through clarity of weight and dynamic body positioning.
3. Develop an individual sense of movement potential through an exploration of Movement Fundamentals such as Alignment and Function; Range and Efficiency; and Vocabulary and Intention.
4. Contribute to a collegial classroom environment conducive to inner exploration and self-learning through the performance of active listening during class as well as supportively observing peers in performance and providing constructive feedback when possible.
5. Identify somatic fitness principles, apply them to dance technique and design a personal practice by reflecting on personal growth, achievements, desires, questions, and difficulties orally with the class and one-on-one with the instructor.

Each of the above student learning outcomes must be performed at an appropriate level as stated in each course assignment requirements, grading scale or rubric.

**Required Texts:**

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

**Major Course Assignments and Examinations:**

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

1. Attendance and full commitment to each class activity is of utmost importance in any studio dance class. Without this commitment, the student is unable to participate in the form of contemporary modern dance as a means of artistic expression and communication.
2. Student should demonstrate a consistent application of feedback, particularly those concerning somatic patterning and kinesiologically-appropriate performance of technique. This is important in order to avoid injury and to improve.
3. Two Module Performance and Observation Assessments requiring students to be conversant with dance genres and movement practices, with self and witness assessments.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION:**

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

The following is a percentage breakdown of final grades.

Daily Engagement	70%
Assignments	10%
Video Assessments (2)	20%

### **Accountability and Engagement:**

Daily engagement grades will reflect student demonstration of the following within a class:

1. Clarity: Student demonstrates a clear ability to understand and articulate the concepts presented in class, both cognitively and physically.
2. Presence: Student arrives ready, not only by being on time, but by preparing their body to move, by asking questions, and by dancing fully.
3. Community: Student contributes to creating a better environment for the class through observation of their peers, constructive criticism when asked, and bringing a supportive attitude to class.
4. Safety and Risk: Student pushes self to explore the edges of their own physicality, while listening to the needs of their body as to not cause health problems or injury.
5. Creativity: Student takes the concepts, phrases, and intentions explored in class and expresses ownership. Intent is not to perfect or imitate movement, but rather, embody it uniquely.

These categories are designed to help you understand how I define engagement throughout the semester. However, in a given class, I may access students through the lens of one or two of these criteria. After the first week of class, we will also determine which specific movement/artistry concepts we will hone in on throughout the semester. It will be through these specific concepts that you will be evaluated.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

This class is concerned with the intellectual and physical development of the body. Evaluations are based on development from class to class, week to week, and the course of the semester. There may be multiple formats for achieving the accountability standards for this course, including instructor-led practice, self-practice, articles read, viewings, video demonstrations of principles, with self, peer, and instructor feedback. Therefore, it is imperative to be present and working through class material during all class meetings.

There will be 2 free absences. Beyond 5 absences, you will be asked to drop the course, in accordance with the UNT Attendance Policy. 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.

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.

It is expected that you should not arrive late or ask to leave early. Please plan to arrive 5-10 minutes early to prepare yourself for practice. Late arrivals will be reflected in daily professional engagement. Students arriving more than 5 minutes late may not be allowed to take the class.

### **Opportunities for Make-up Work**

If a student is unable to fully participate in class due to injury or illness, the instructor should be informed ASAP via email and when they arrive at class. The student must articulate how they will modify the content to protect from further injury and inform recovery. If the student elects to observe, they must take notes, describing and articulating what the student learned from observing the class and why. (It's not enough to just describe what happened in class.) The student will add the notes to their weekly journal (in addition to weekly requirements).

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.

Minimal or adapted participation may be in the form of substituting floor work for standing work, working the upper body while sitting in a chair, adapting choreography assignments to accommodate physical limitations, refraining from jumping, or working with a reduced range of motion. In addition, an extended Pilates program may be the appropriate course of action during injury recovery. The goal is to maintain physical conditioning and fitness during recovery so that the return to full activity will not compromise health and wellness.

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.

### **LATE WORK:**

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

If the student has not amassed at least 30% of their 100% grade by midterm, the student will receive an unsatisfactory progress notice. If the student continues making unsatisfactory progress they will be asked to drop the course.

### **CLASSROOM POLICIES:**

No food or drinks in the classroom, besides water in a closed container. Please dress in comfortable, but not baggy clothing. Socks are permitted on the marley at the discretion of dancer and instructor, however socks could deter stability. Turn phone sound OFF when entering the classroom. Phones may be utilized for documenting personal and peer performance.

### ***Class Recordings & Student Likenesses***

In-class performances of movement material in this course may be recorded for students enrolled in this class section to refer to throughout the semester. Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university or instructor and are reserved for use only by students in this class and only 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](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](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

#### **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. If you need or think you might need academic accommodations please let me know today after class.*

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. Exhibit ability to carry their own body weight as well as the weight of others.

## **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.

### ***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](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm) (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>)

**Email:** [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu)

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

Academic Support & Student Services

### ***Mental Health***

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

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

## **Chosen Names**

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

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

## **Pronouns**

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

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

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

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

## **Additional Student Support Services**

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

## **Academic Support Services**

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

<b>Spring 2026 Calendar</b>	
1/12	First day of classes
1/19	MLK Holiday – No classes
2/5 – 2/8	Spring Dance Concert
2/6	Dance Day (High School Visit Day)
2/12 – 2/14	UNT Dance & Theatre – First Stage Series: Make Believe
2/26	UNT Fine Arts Series – Social Movement Contemporary Theatre
2/26 – 3/1	UNT Dance & Theatre – <i>The Tempest</i>
3/8 – 3/11	American College Dance Association Conference
3/9 – 3/15	Spring Break – No classes
3/26 – 3/28	First Stage Series: Gidion's Knot
4/16 – 4/19	<i>Merrily We Roll Along</i> (Musical)
4/23 – 4/25	First Stage Series – <i>Dr. Faustus</i>
5/1	Reading Day – No classes
5/4 – 5/8	Finals Week

\*To graduate, students majoring in dance and theatre are required to have a minimum grade of B in dance/theatre courses that comprise 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.