

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Fine Arts and Communication
Department of Theatre and Dance

Dance 301—Composition I
Michael Estanich, Professor
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Spring Semester

Dance 301 | Composition II
Monday, Wednesday—2:00-3:50 pm

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:00-5:30 pm and Fridays 9:00-10:00 am. Or by appointment.

Final Exam | Thursday, May 17th 8:00-10:00 am

Final Performance Date: TBD

Required Text:

Humphrey, Doris, *The Art of Making Dances*. 4th Ed. Princeton, Princeton Book Company: 1991

Nagrin, Daniel. *Choreography and the Specific Image*. Pittsburgh, U of P Press: 2000

Suggested Texts:

Blom, Lynne and L. Tarin Chaplin. *The Intimate Act of Choreography*. Pittsburgh, U of P Press: 1982

Course Description:

This course is designed for dance majors and minors who are beginning to develop their choreographic voice. The course explores the fundamental elements of choreography (space, time, energy) in the group form through improvisational exercises and formal choreographic studies.

Course Content:

The course content explores choreographic concepts through readings about choreography and the creative process, video viewings of artistic work, assigned choreographic studies, and discussions. The choreography assignments are designed to give you the opportunity to explore the possibilities of the group form within a prescribed context.

Course Goals:

- To introduce students to the fundamental elements of choreography: space, time and energy.
- To provide students with a toolbox of essential skills for dance composition.
- To expose students to a variety of approaches to creating group dances.
- To expose students to historic and contemporary choreographers and their work.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to identify and use the essential components of dance composition to create group dance studies.
- Students will be able to articulate observations and engage in feedback with peers.
- Students will be able to write and speak clearly, thoughtfully, and critically about their own and others' choreography.

Course Requirements and Information:

Attendance

I expect you to attend all classes, to be on time and ready to participate in all classroom exercises and discussions. It is the dance program policy to allow no more than **two (2) absences**. **Six (6) absences result in a failing grade**. Frequent tardiness will not be tolerated and will lower your grade. Two (2) tardies will be counted as one (1) absence. Each additional absence beyond the two (2) allowed will lower your grade a full letter grade (A to B, etc.). You are required to contact me prior to class either by email if you are going to be absent. You are responsible for keeping track of your number of absences.

Participation

I encourage you to arrive early and to begin the process of focusing on your work and the class ahead. You are expected to dress appropriately and actively participate (physically, mentally, and verbally) in the full class session. You should be well prepared to show your work (drafts and final) on the assigned date. As a student in the class, you are required to both choreograph your own studies as well as be a dancer in your classmate's work. Being inside of a creative process can

give you valuable insight into your own creative work; take class with a positive and healthy attitude toward learning and investigating choreography while respecting each other's abilities and limitations.

Observation and Feedback

Discussing and responding to your own and others' work are wonderful and important parts of your training as choreographers. We will look at a variety of approaches for observing, discussing, responding to, and giving feedback to studies. Working with information cumulatively, from class to class, is a great way to grow throughout the semester.

Documenting your work

You are strongly encouraged to bring your own video recording device to document your work in class. The department camera will be used to document final studies and is available to you during any class period with prior notification.

Participating Outside of Class

Outside of Class Meeting Time

There will be outside class hours expected to complete your choreographic studies. You will need to have time to dedicate to your own choreography as well as time to be involved in your classmate's work. Dance majors and minors may reserve two 90-minute sessions each week. The weekly studio schedules are posted on the NFAC 136A warm-up area bulletin board. A weekly three-hour block will be reserved for this class on the weekly calendar. Time TBD. Priority is given to faculty, production, and course assignments over personal use.

Outside of Class Performance Viewings:

You are required to attend the Theatre & Dance performance of Danstage 2018—April 13-15, 19-21.

Tickets can be purchased at the UWSP box office in the DUC.

A writing assignment or D2L discussion will be assigned for Danstage. Details will be discussed closer to the performance dates.

You are required to attend one additional artistic event. This could be a gallery event, Music concert, Literature or Poetry reading, Film, etc.

A writing assignment or D2L discussion will be assigned.

Consider how the principles of design relate across all artistic endeavors. How does engaging in another art form inform your understanding of composition and choreography? What are the similar compositional tools used?

Dressing Rooms

Please use NFAC 134 (male) and NFAC 135 (female) locker rooms to dress for class. You may leave your personal belongings in the locker room or warm-up area outside of the studios, but I would suggest leaving valuable belongings at home. The dance program cannot be responsible for thefts. Also, for our custodial staff to be able thoroughly clean the dressing rooms, all belongings must be put away and the floors cleared at the end of each day. Anything left on the floor will be moved to the lost and found.

New this year, dressing rooms have been secured with a lock system. An access code will be given out on the first day of class. For your safety, please be diligent about keeping this information confidential. Students should not share the passcodes with their roommates, friends, etc. Only students enrolled in dance program courses should have access to these codes.

Floor Surfaces, Water, Food

To protect our professional floor surfaces, please do not wear body/foot lotion or powder to class. These come off on the floor surfaces and make the floors slippery. They are also difficult to remove. Only water, in sealed bottles, is allowed in the dance studios. No food or beverages in open containers is ever allowed in the studios. Street shoes are not allowed in the dance program studios.

Cell Phones

Your cell phone is not permitted in the dance studio. Secure your phone in your backpack and store in the dance program warm-up area or dressing room.

Email

You are responsible for the information sent to your UWSP email. You are expected to check your UWSP email daily for class updates and announcements. Relevant information will also be posted on the D2L course news feed.

Evaluation and Grading:

Personal Progress, Effort, Participation, Attitude, (40%)

Consistent attendance in class provides the greatest opportunity for growth and development in choreographic ingenuity. While in class, student attentiveness, motivation, positive attitude, promptness, commitment, concentration and focus, respect of instructor and peers, willingness to dig deep and take risks, completion of all drafts and final assignments, active participation in discussion and feedback sessions, and completion of all reading, viewing, and writing assignments will be considered in final grading. An active engagement in the class and an eagerness to try new things is essential for a successful, exciting, and enjoyable experience.

Choreographic Studies (40%)

Studies will explore the fundamental elements of dance composition including time, space, energy, motivation, relationship, movement invention in concert and commercial dance forms. Assessment is based on completion of all choreographic studies with integrity, focus, and commitment.

Written Assignments and Choreographer Presentation (20%)

Reading, Writing, and Video Presentation Assignments

To develop fully as choreographers, it is also important for us to thoughtfully write about what we see. Course readings and video viewings provide a historical frame for our work as contemporary choreographers.

- **Choreographer Presentation**

You will work in pairs to give a short presentation on a choreographer assigned to you.

- Select a short video clip (2-3 minutes) that best represents the choreographer's work.
- Give a brief history of the choreographer
- Give any details about this choreographer's approach
- Give several social, political, cultural, economic facts about the time this choreographer was working. This information helps put into a world context the relevance of the choreographer's work.

Grading

A/A-

The student was present for and on time for all classes and actively participated with a positive attitude, attentiveness, and focused concentration. The student demonstrated commitment to growth by deeply investigating choreographic questions and presenting completed drafts and final studies. The student was curious and deepened personal engagement and developed personal artistry. The student whole heartedly participated in others' studies. There is demonstrated respect of instructor and peers. The student completed the assignments excellently, far exceeding the minimum requirements.

B+/B/B-

The student was present for and on time for all classes and actively participated with a positive attitude and focused concentration. The student demonstrated commitment to growth by investigating choreographic questions and presenting completed drafts and final studies. The student deepened personal engagement and somewhat developed personal artistry. The student participated well in others' studies. There is demonstrated respect of instructor and peers. The student completed the assignments well, exceeding the minimum requirements. The grade of "B" is very good: above average improvement.

C+/C/C-

The student was present for and on time for most class and participated with a positive attitude. Focus and Concentration were inconsistent. The student demonstrated some growth by investigating choreographic questions and presenting choreographic studies. The student was personally engaged and marginally developed personal artistry. The student participated in others' studies, but was inconsistent in presence and commitment. There is demonstrated respect of instructor and peers. The student completed the assignments. The grade of "C" is average.

D

The student was present for, on time for, and participated in some classes. Focus and Concentration were lacking. The student showed little interest in choreographic questions and presented unfinished choreographic studies. The student demonstrated little growth and development of personal artistry. The student inconsistently participated in others' studies and lacked presence and commitment. There is limited demonstration of respect of instructor and peers. The student did not complete all the assignments. The "D" grade reflects the minimal amount of effort/improvement to receive a passing grade.

F The student did not attend all the class periods nor did he/she adhere to the assignment guidelines. The student did not adequately participate in class. No improvement was seen.

Participation, Progress, Attitude	40%	A = 100-93	A- = 92-90	
Choreographic Studies	40%	B+ = 89-87	B = 86-83	B- = 82-80
Written Assignments & Presentation	20%	C+ = 79-77	C = 76-73	C- = 72-70
Total	100%	D+ = 69-67	D = 66-60	F = 60 or below

More than two (2) absences will lower your grade a full letter grade. We look forward to an exciting and enriching semester together!

UWSP Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

UWSP values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, a set of expectations have been developed for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the Rights and Responsibilities document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. For more information go to: <https://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/default.aspx> The Rights and Responsibilities document also includes the policies regarding academic misconduct, which can be found in Chapter 14.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, check here:

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability Services Office and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way I can. For more information, please visit the Disability Services Office, located on the 6th floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>