Beginning Modern Dance (3 credits)  
Class Meets: TR 11:30am-12:45pm  
Location: Hale Kuhina 115

Professor: Blythe C. Stephens  
Email: blythecs@hawaii.edu  
Office: Hale Pālamanikila 152, T 10-11am

Windward Community College Mission Statement
Windward Community College offers innovative programs in the arts and sciences and opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding of Hawai‘i and its unique heritage. With a special commitment to support the access and educational needs of Native Hawaiians, we provide O’ahu’s Ko‘olau region and beyond with liberal arts, career and lifelong learning in a supportive and challenging environment — inspiring students to excellence.

Catalog Course Description
Introduction to modern dance technique. May be repeated up to 9 credits.

Student Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:
- Correctly define modern dance terminology
- Demonstrate kinesthetic proficiency in modern dance technique through performance
- Demonstrate conceptual understanding of contemporary modern dance technique

Attendance Policies
Students are expected to arrive on time, ready to dance, and stay for the entire class session. Latecomers may not join in the class without permission from the instructor; instead, they will actively participate by watching the class, taking notes, and being responsible for class subject matter and assignments.

DANCE PROGRAM ATTENDANCE POLICY: More than 3 absences will significantly lower the grade. After 4 absences, each absence will lower the grade by a full letter. Three “tardies” equal an absence. Medically excused absences will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Active Participation Expectations
Students must be eager to both think and sweat at the same time. An alert body and mind are expected. Students are expected to actively participate in each class unless medically unable. Active participation is shaped by a particular mindset: motivated, open-minded, supportive, exploratory, and patient. This class will challenge your Learning Edge:

“Your Learning Edge is the balance between taking risks and taking care of yourself, the boundary of your discovery zone and your comfort zone. In your comfort zone, you don’t learn anything. When you take risks and move beyond where you are comfortable, you enter a discovery zone where this opportunity to learn. Learning happens by creating new experiences and failures in your discovery zone, and then reflecting upon and evaluating them in your comfort zone. You will not learn anything by spending all your time in either zone, and the dance back and forth is what I call your Learning Edge.” (Morgan Rich)

Health Statement
Please notify the instructor if there are any particular physical concerns that affect your ability to dance. An Acknowledgment of Risk/Medical Consent Form must be completed and submitted to the instructor on the first day of class.

Disabilities Accommodation Statement
If you have a physical, sensory, health, cognitive, or mental health disability that could limit your ability to fully participate in this class, you are encouraged to contact the Disability Specialist Counselor to
discuss reasonable accommodations that will help you succeed in this class. Ann Lemke can be reached at 235-7448, lemke@hawaii.edu, or you may stop by Hale ‘Akoakoa 213 for more information. Please Note: This course takes a tactile teaching approach. Tactile teaching involves hands-on correction by the instructor, and is a valuable teaching aid in assisting the student in understanding aspects of proper alignment, placement and movement concepts during class. Physical contact may range from simple touch to correct alignment to relaxation massage. Students may also be asked to experiment with exercises that involve weight exchange. If this makes you uncomfortable, please notify the professor and appropriate modifications will be made.

Course Assignments

Refer to the “Assignment Descriptions” document on Laulima for full details:

A. Reflection Journal/Portfolio: All Students are expected to keep a brief ongoing journal for the class, to reflect and mark progress and insights. Instructor will provide prompts for short entries each class period and occasional more in-depth check-ins, such as at mid-term. Course handouts and assignments are also collected here to form an ongoing portfolio of work.

B. Dance Appreciation Annotated Bibliography: View and respond to 5 (five) dances on video/DVD.

C. Written Critique: Write about your observation of a live dance performance.

D. Creative Final Performance: Students create their own dances, solos or collaborations of up to 3 students.

E. Class Observation Log: If you must observe class due to injury or illness, please use a “Class Observation Form” to guide your written observations in your journal (collected at the regular times).

Grading

Each student will be evaluated at the level in which they have enrolled. Grades will be based upon attendance, enthusiastic class participation, technical and performance improvement, written and oral assignments, and a growing sense of professional behavior appropriate to studio work and the level of the student. No incomplete grades will be given in technique class.

Grading Criteria:

A. Progress in technique
   technical skills (20%) 40%
   performance skills (20%)

B. Attitude and concentration 50%

C. Written Assignments 10%

The attendance policy will be adhered to, and will affect the result of the above grading procedure. If a student is injured and unable to participate, they may attentively watch class and submit notes taken on class materials to the instructor (using the “Class Observation Form” provided). If a student is unable to take more than 6 classes due to injury, they will be advised to drop the course.

The professor will amend the syllabus as may be appropriate. Students will be made aware of any changes to assignments or grading policies.

Dress Code Policy

Students will dance in bare feet and wear dance clothing that fits close to the body. No baggy dance clothing, ankles must be visible. Large or potentially dangerous jewelry and watches are not permitted. Hair needs to be confined and out of the face. Students may consider purchasing kneepads to reduce the potential for irritation when performing movement combinations with floor work. Maintaining proper personal hygiene is a daily class expectation.
Course Timeline/Content
Week 1, 8/23, 8/25: Introductions, Syllabus, Learning Styles, Safety, Alignment, Preparing to Dance
Week 2, 8/30, 9/1: The Body - anatomical actions, movement patterns, parts, initiations, sequencing
Week 3, 9/6, 9/8: Action - axial and locomotor movements, accessing space, spatial pathways
Week 4, 9/13, 9/15: Space - size, level, place, direction, orientation, relationships, pathways
Week 5, 9/20, 9/22: Shapes/Shaping - curved, angled, compact, expansive, rising/sinking, spreading/enclosing, advancing/retreating, positive and negative space in shapes
Week 6, 9/27, 9/29: Efforts and Time - weight, time, flow, space
Week 7, 10/4, 10/6: Focus
Week 8, 10/11, 10/13: Music, Mid-Term
Week 9, 10/18, 10/20: Working with all of the elements of dance in personal composition
Week 10, 10/25, 10/27: Week 11, 11/1, 11/3; Week 12, (11/8 Election Day Holiday), 11/10; Week 13, 11/15, 11/17: Refining technique
  • “MemoryHouse: Dreams” Mainstage Dance Concert at UHM Kennedy Theatre 11/11-13
Week 14, 11/22 (11/24 Thanksgiving Holiday); Week 15, 11/29, 12/1: Work on final choreographic projects
Week 16, 12/6, 12/8: Final showings and Portfolios, any outstanding assignments due

Dance Movement Material to be Covered

Parallel position
5 (or 6) positions of the feet
Plié  demi plie and relevé in all positions
  grand plie: 1st and 2nd

Placement
Pelvis in relation to the legs and spine
Ribcage/head
Shoulders/arms
Knees/ankles

Foot articulation
Metatarsal, stretched foot
Tendu
Degage
Pas de cheval

Leg/hip articulation
Inward and outward rotation; abduction and adduction; extension and hyperextension; circumduction
Rond de jambe
Leg swings
Grande battements

Torso articulation
Sequencing head to tail and tail to head
Head and tail move together towards one another simultaneously
Isolations: ribs, hips, shoulders

Actions
Weight shift
Swing
Rebound
Suspension
Undercurve
Overcurve

Spatial Directions
Vertical Dimension—up/down
Sagittal Dimension—forward/backward
Horizontal Dimension—side/side

Planes
Vertical Plane—up/down AND side/side
Sagittal Plane—forward/backward AND up/down
Horizontal Plane—side/side AND forward/backward

Locomotor Steps
Walk/run
Jump—two feet to two feet
Hop—one foot to the same foot
Leap—one foot to the other
Skip—step, hop
Gallop (chasse)
Triplet

Directions/pathways in space
Forward
Side
Back
Diagonals
Circles

Movement qualities/flows
Light/Limp
Strong/Heavy
Bound
Free
Quick
Sustained
Smooth
Percussive
Float/glide; flick/dab; punch/slash

Music
Meters: 2/4; 3/4; 4/4; introduction to odd meters
Tempo: varied speed