

Beginning Modern Dance (3 credits)

Lecturer: Alex Durrant

CRN: 61377

Class Meets: TR 3pm – 4.15pm

Location: Castle

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Office: 138 Hala Palanakila

Office Hours: M & W 10.30am – 11.30am & 2.30pm – 3.30 pm  
T 9am – 10am

### **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.

This course is about developing modern dance technique giving students the opportunity to gain a solid foundation of skills in this style of dance. Students will take part in regular technique classes in order to develop the skills required to dance in a modern style. Students will gain the underpinning knowledge of the skills needed to progress in the performance of modern dance. They must be aware of their technical ability in order to evaluate their progress and improve. This course introduces the essentials of modern technique; it will develop strength, flexibility, stamina, and coordination.

### **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](mailto: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**

- A. **Reflection:** Students will be required to book and attend at least 3 one to one sessions with their teacher throughout the semester to discuss their progress. This will not simply consist of tutor feedback but will be a two-way discussion. Students are required to identify their strengths and weaknesses in reference to defined balletic practical activity so that they can develop their technical skills. The teacher and student will work together to achieve the goals set in these sessions.
- B. **Complete a variety of in-class activities** Students will be assessed on their participation in practical class activities. The classes may build on movement vocabulary in a number of ways, eg adding on to, quicker, more demanding as well as having new movement phrases and exercises. The development of contemporary dance is integral to this unit and students need to be given opportunities to prepare, learn, develop and rehearse set movement sequences. Students are encouraged to demonstrate independence in their learning and may also lead other students in exercises, sequences and set studies.
- C. **Dance Appreciation Annotated Bibliography:** View and respond to three dances on video/DVD.
- 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		40%
	technical skills	(20%)	
	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.

### **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION**

All classes will follow a similar structure, with exercises, phrases, sequences, combinations and studies taught over a number of weeks to enable students to develop physical skills, increase movement memory and challenge their abilities. If students have not had any dance or movement training before starting this unit, they will need to develop basic skills in the first few weeks, for example, establishing correct posture, alignment, distribution of weight, correct positioning of the feet and arms.

During the course exercises will increase in complexity giving students the opportunity to develop their skills further. This unit will provide students with a solid foundation in technique and the opportunity to experience the ways in which dancers are committed to regular technique class, training and evaluation in order to maintain their artistic 'tools' or bodies. It is important to allow students to build up their knowledge of contemporary dance over the course of the unit allowing time for corrections, evaluations and target setting to come into effect. Students also need to understand the disciplined way in which a technique class works and demonstrate an improved and developed technique over the course of the unit.

Tutors might like to introduce a variety of styles to enable learners to have a broader understanding of contemporary dance and its many influences. As is often the case the tutor may deliver a class that 'borrows' from a whole host of contemporary dance styles that could be appropriate as long as all the unit outcomes are addressed.

### **Course Timeline/Content**

*Week 1: Introductions, Syllabus, Learning Styles, Safety, Alignment, Preparing to Dance*

*Week 2: **The Body**- anatomical actions, movement patterns, parts, initiations, sequencing*

*Week 3: **Action**- axial and locomotor movements, accessing space, spatial pathways*

*Week 4: **Space**- size, level, place, direction, orientation, relationships, pathways*

*Week 5: **Shapes/Shaping**- curved, angled, compact, expansive, rising/sinking, spreading/enclosing, advancing/retreating, positive and negative space in shapes*

*Week 6: **Efforts and Time**- weight, time, flow, space*

*Week 7: **Focus***

*Week 8: **Music**, Mid-Term*

*Week 9: Working with all of the *elements of dance* in personal composition*

*Week 10, Week 11, Week 12, Week 13: Refining technique*

*Week 14, Week 15, 11/29, 12/1: Work on final choreographic projects*

Week 16: 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: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

#### 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