

# SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

dance: choreography & comp shop 09-10

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## DANCE COMPOSITION: Fall Semester 2009 Syllabus

### OVERVIEW

#### Warm-up

It's everyone's responsibility to be warm for class to avoid injuries!

Two leaders each class, responsible for: *word for meditation + short activity*

#### Attire & Attendance

*These two pieces count together*

You must be present at the start of class, in dance clothes, hair back, large earrings OFF, cell phones OFF

#### Class Participation – 60%

It's mandatory! Participating with an open mind and positive attitude is fundamental to creativity.

If you are injured, please adapt the assignment to meet your needs

If you are sick, I expect you to be listening and engaged in class; giving feedback as appropriate.

#### Written Assignments – 40%

Paper – 1 pg Research Balboa Park & Dolores Park

Due September 11

Paper – 2 pgs Terminology

Due October 25

Paper – 2 pgs Trolley Dances Review

Due October 23

Paper – 2 pages Baroque Music

Due November 18

Paper – 2 pgs critique a dance you saw outside of class

Due December 11

*(please notice HOW MANY times these due dates are listed on this handout...)*

### PART I: *INDIVIDUAL INSTINCT*

#### 9/4/09

**I. STUDY #1: individual style and interests...** Tell me who you are in a small dance- Choreograph One minute or less. This dance is about you and is your introduction to me. Choose any music you think would fit this dance.

**SOLO ASSIGNMENT DUE SEPT 11.**

#### **Workshop: Friday, 9/18/09**

**RESEARCH Project: 5 historical facts: Balboa Park & Dolores Park Due 9/11**

**FIELD TRIP: Trolley Dances, Friday, October 16**

#### 9/11/09

#### **II. Authentic Movement: Structured improvisation**

A. At your core- you need exactly what you need- Not what you want.

B. Using both dancer and a witness- use a gong to start and finish- set your stage.

C. Both the dancer and witness must suspend judgment, projection, interpretation

D. The dancer should not "choreograph". It is not about thinking- it is about being, experiencing and feeling.

E. The goal is a meditative/ pre-consciousness state.

**(Class Work: Why Learn tools for Choreography? Choreography as communication. Discussion of terms used in Choreography/dance, Discussion of how to view dance. Research terms - definitions: PAPER ASSIGNMENT DUE 9/25)**

#### 9/18/09

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## Workshop with Kim Epifano

9/25/09

**III. STUDY #3: Environmental Piece-** This piece cannot be done in any other space- the performance is dependent on the particular stage or setting.

(Class Work: Showings of site-specific work (Roof Piece, Trolley Dances, YBGardens festival). Showing, then discussion of the large assignment: **DUET ASSIGNMENT DUE 10/02/09**

**\*\*Turn in Definitions**

10/2/09

Continuation of STUDY #3

10/9/09

**IV. STUDY #4: Prop Piece-** This piece cannot be done without this exact prop.

(Class Work: Find something in your bag/backpack to use as a prop for your dance... design a small study revolving movement around this item. Showing, then discussion of the large assignment: Why did you choose the prop? what does it represent? Is there more than one meaning? How does it change or shape your dance?)

**SOLO ASSIGNMENT DUE 9/23/09**

- A. When prop takes on design elements- it makes the dancers' body become the focus.
- B. Sound is a wonderful tool
- C. Intro & epilogue are not always so important- GET TO THE POINT
- D. If you have props on stage- you must use them or they will pull focus away from the dance
- A. Define the space
- B. Use elements of height
- C. Maybe Create an environment- lots of repetition (golf balls, balloons, eggs, milk cartons, etc)- it must effect how you move.

*AT THIS EARLY STAGE, ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE VERY SIMPLE AND PRECISE!!*

10/16/09

**Site-Specific Study: Field Trip to Trolley Dances J Church Line, SF**

10/23/09

Continuation of STUDY #4 : Pair up and incorporate each other's dances to make a duet.

**DUE: Written critique of Trolley Dances DUE**

## PART II: STRUCTURAL FORMS

10/30/09

**I. STUDY #1: A/B/A' form**

(Class Work: Create a small ABA piece. Class showing and discussion) Two contrasting movement phrases, A and B; A' similar to A with a slight twist, but recognizable; A' is a variation on A (possibly with a touch of B)  
USING: Dynamics (Nature of the movement)

- Time (Rhythm)
- Gesture
- Space
- Levels (Gravity and Air)

**SOLO ASSIGNMENT DUE 11/6/09**

11/6/09

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## II. STUDY #2: Theme and Variation

Theme should be very short- three or four motifs

- A. Begin with motif A, motif B, motif C
- B. As many variations of A as you can think of: one arm, two arms, bent arms, slow arms
- C. Repeat with B and C
- D. Cycle the variations A, B, C, A, B, C -The theme must be visible
  1. Classical variation always stays in order: A,B,C,A,B,C
  2. Contemporary Variation can be in any order: B,A,C,C,C,B,

Contemporary uses movement for transitions that doesn't have a name- In ballet, everything has a name. Be careful not to pull from your theme.

The purpose of the variation is to color the theme. If the theme is already very complex there is no room for the variation- keep it simple.

Careful not to repeat a variation too many times. Repetition is not acceptable in the theme and is only effective to a point. After that point it becomes minimalism.

## DUET ASSIGNMENT DUE 11/13/09

11/13/09

### III. STUDY #3: Phrase Variation

- A. Use a movement phrase as your theme.
- B. If you use a movement, it must be in your theme somewhere.

(Class Work: Take your previous phrase and expand it with Phrase variation.)

**DISCUSSION OF FINAL PROJECT SEMESTER I: SOLO to BAROQUE MUSIC – choose composer and confirm paper assignment)**

*NOW THAT YOU HAVE DEVELOPED THE MOVEMENTS AND THE SPACING, THINK ABOUT THE WHOLE PIECE: the BEGINNING, MIDDLE and the END.*

11/20/09

### IV. STUDY #4: Theme and Manipulation (Development)

- A. Rearrange the order of the motifs in the theme phrase
- B. Cannot use the movement in it's original form, but you may only use what is available from your theme. It should make something new.
- C. Use space very specifically. You may only move in the directions introduced in your theme. Front, Back, Side, Front Diag., Back Diag. Be Specific- complexity may be washed out by the unclear use of space.
- D. Use facing very specifically. Front and back facing is very different.
- E. Touching in anyway, or the floor, or any sort of jump must be represented in your theme if you use it in your manipulation. Touching your mouth is different than touching your stomach or your forehead. Putting a knee on the ground is different than rolling.
- F. The quality of the movement is very important to maintain in manipulation.
- G. Gesture is not a good idea to try and manipulate- You cannot manipulate a single movement. There must be at least two to combine.

### IIV. STUDY #5: FUGUE

- A. Minimum of three voices at all times: Theme (Root), Variation on the Theme and 3 episodes
- B. Episodes are all different and contrast the theme. But should enhance the theme.
- C. Theme should always be visible

Use all the thematic pieces to create something new. The theme should not be visible.

**DUET ASSIGNMENT DUE 12/2/05**

**Written Critique of a dance seen outside of class DUE 12/11/09**

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*THINK ABOUT THE DYNAMICS OF THE MOVEMENT. LET GO OF YOUR UNIQUENESS FOR THE SAKE OF THE ASSIGNMENT, TAKE A SMALL SENTENCE AND EXPAND IT.*

**12/4/09**

## **V. REVIEW of pervious assignment**

FINAL STUDY: INTRODUCTION for FINAL PROJECT: Solo to classical music from the Baroque Era

- A. Bach, Chopin, 3 instruments maximum- Count the music (usually a 4/4) and then make up your own rhythm, 12345/123- 123/123/12 etc. Ballet must stay with the music phrasing. Careful to choose music that does not overpower the movement.
- B. A/B/A' form- Ballet must follow the musical themes- being aware of the phrasing.
- C. Modern can break up the rhythm, but must maintain structure- Be careful, Duration Kills Dynamics!!

*THE PRESENTATION SHOWS IF YOU PUT TIME INTO THE ASSIGNMENT OR IF YOU JUST PUT SOME STEPS TOGETHER. NOONE IS GOING TO GIVE YOU THE PRIME TIME TO REHEARSE, YOU MUST FIND IT. I AM INTERESTED IN YOUR WORK ETHIC AT THIS POINT- NOT YOUR TALENT.*

**12/11/09**

**Continuation of FINAL STUDY**

**Written Critique of a dance seen outside of class DUE**

**12/18/09**

**Presentations of FINAL STUDY SOLOS**