

The University of Michigan- Ann Arbor  
Introduction to Ballet  
DANCE 100.008  
Winter Term 2017  
Department of Dance- Studio B- T/Th 9:10-10AM

“Let us read, and let us dance. These two amusements will never do any harm to the world.”

-Voltaire

Instructor: Kelly Hirina  
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Office hours: by appointment

**Course Description:**

Introduction to Ballet is designed to help you build foundational knowledge and skills in the execution of ballet technique and learn the basic etiquette and code of operation in the ballet classroom as you learn to memorize the patterns of ballet combinations. The students will also learn to articulate the language of ballet as well as build a critical and observational eye for dance.

**Course Objectives:**

The goal of this class is to engage physically in the practice of classical ballet technique while improving each of the following:

Posture

Creative expression

Poise and body awareness

Musicality

Spatial awareness

Focus and discipline

Another aim of this course is to build your ballet vocabulary and learn the origins of this art form.

**Course Requirements:**

**Attendance and Participation:**

This is an experiential course, and therefore it is required that you attend and fully participate in every class meeting. Full participation requires more than the mere presence of your body in space. It is not expected of you to technically master all ballet steps taught in class, but your attention and focus on picking up the movement phrases, enthusiasm to execute them, as well as, a desire to improve at your level are necessary requirements. A portion of your grade will include assessment of your concentration skills, self- motivation, and attentiveness. Arrive early to allow yourself time to change, use the restroom, and enter the space before the beginning of class.

**Assignments:**

Throughout the semester you will be required to fully complete and deliver several assignments geared toward increasing your understanding of, appreciation for, and skills in ballet.

### **1) Motivation Letter:**

The trend today for dancers when applying to an audition is to include a motivation letter with their Curriculum Vitae. In this letter I would like you to introduce yourself to me and explain your motivation to take this course. There is no right/wrong information here, it is your personal story. Explain your history with movement, what makes you curious about ballet, and possible goals for yourself in this class.

A few questions to consider are:

Where are you from?

What is your major?

What are your previous experiences with movement, art, or music?

Have you previously seen dance live or on video?

What is your ultimate motivation for choosing this class?

Any other information you would like me to know!

**Due: September 21, 2017**

Form of Submission: hard copy delivered to instructor or via email

Format and Word Count: 1 page, 12 font, single spaced

Video option: For this assignment you are also allowed to film yourself speaking about the items listed above. You can load this up to youtube.com as a private video and send the link to me. If you can send the video directly through email, go ahead, only make sure the quality is good. Maximum length of video: 8 minutes.

### **2) Dance Criticism/Reaction Paper:**

You are required to attend at least one dance concert during the Fall Term {see attached list of scheduled dance concerts}. The performance must be one of the Dance Department or University Musical Society Dance Concert. If you find yourself interested in a performance that is not listed, please speak to me directly about the concert you have found and are interested in, to make sure it is an appropriate choice for this assignment.

**Due: Two weeks after attending the performance, however!!!!**

Note that most of the performances this semester happen in December. If you choose to see one of these performances- the paper is due before the semester ends. I will accept papers up until December 15th.

Form of Submission: hard copy delivered to instructor or via email

Staple ticket stub or program to your paper

Format and Word Count: 2-3 pages, 12 font, single spaced

Guidelines & Requirements:

1- State the facts about what you saw. How many works did you see? What was the name of the company and the works? Include any information about the company you may have researched.

2- Provide opinions and thoughts about the concert. Did you like or dislike anything in particular? Be sure to mention the various elements of the concert, including music/sound, lighting, costumes, movement, etc. If you are attending a contemporary

performance, mention whether or not there was any relation to classical ballet dance or not. How would you describe this?

3- Include some context, explaining how your viewing of this concert fits into your overall dance viewing experience. Is this the first dance performance you have ever seen? Is this concert similar or different from what you have seen in the past?(if applicable)

Optional performances for this report

SMTD@UMMA

Sunday, September 17 - 8:00pm

Museum of Art, Front Lawn

Free - no tickets required

Ann Arbor Dance Works Performance

Tuesday, September 26 - 7:30pm

Dance Building, Betty Pease Studio Theatre

Tickets \$10 general/\$7 student/seniors available at the Michigan Union Ticket Office

Dance & Related Arts Concert

12/1/2017 & 12/2/2017 @ 8:00 PM

Dance Building, Betty Pease Studio Theatre

Tickets are \$10 general admission, \$7 students/seniors

Dance Composition Class Showing

Thursday, December 7 - 2:10pm

Dance Building, Betty Pease Studio Theatre

Free - no tickets required

BFA Dance Concert #1

12/7/2017-12/9/2017 @ 8:00 PM

Dance Building, Betty Pease Studio Theatre

\$10 general admission, \$7 students/seniors

Congolese Class Showing

Sunday, December 10 - 2:00pm

Dance Building, Betty Pease Studio Theatre

Free - no tickets required

Performance Improvisation Class Showing

Sunday, December 10 - 4:00pm

Dance Building, Betty Pease Studio Theatre

Free - no tickets required

## UMS Concerts

<http://ums.org/genre/dance>

Written in Water, Ragamala Dance Company

Friday October 20, 8pm, Power Center, Ticketed  
Detroit

Dance: [https://www.detroittheater.org/index\\_dance.php](https://www.detroittheater.org/index_dance.php)

Broadway Touring Shows: [https://www.detroittheater.org/index\\_musical.php](https://www.detroittheater.org/index_musical.php)

Please note that as a Freshman or Sophomore at the University of Michigan you can receive one free ticket to performances at the University.

Bert's Ticket for undergraduate U-M first-year and second-year students

Bert Askwith (1911-2015) was a true victor for the arts and an incredible advocate for the U-M student experience. Bert pledged to buy every first- and second-year U-M undergraduate student a free ticket to a UMS performance and provide a second ticket for a friend for just \$10.

Eligible performances for the Fall semester are available starting August 31, 2017 while Winter semester performances are available starting January 3, 2018. All performances on the 2017-18 season are eligible for the Bert's Ticket offer, except the Berlin Philharmonic, Igor and Moreno, and Yo-Yo Ma, Edgar Meyer, and Chris Thile. Stop by the Michigan League Ticket Office to claim your free Bert's Ticket.

### **3) Mid-Semester Reflection Paper**

This mid-semester paper is an opportunity for you and I to check in with how things are going. Similar to your motivation letter, this paper should be simple, easy, and conversational. This is a chance for you to reflect upon the process of learning ballet combinations, technical vocabulary, and history. Does your participation offer you a new view on dance, inspire you to see more performances, or possibly continue to dance once the semester ends? What have been the most interesting and challenging moments up until now?

**Due: October 24, 2017**

Form of Submission: hard copy delivered to instructor or via email

Format and Word Count: 1-2 pages, 12 font, single spaced

### **4) Reading/Viewing Assignment**

Write about what you have learned, as well as your own personal thoughts, about one of the articles or videos listed below. Remember it is required to read and/or view all of the selections in order to gain knowledge required for your written exam. For this writing assignment, however, relate the information to one selection only.

**Due: November 14, 2017**

Form of Submission: hard copy delivered to instructor or via email

Format and Word Count: 1-2 pages, 12 font, single spaced

### **5) Performance and Written Examinations**

Throughout the semester there will be several performance examinations designed to evaluate your comprehension and execution of the ballet form, technique, and vocabulary. There will be one written exam near the end of the semester based upon

what was discussed in class as well as the readings and viewings. \*Remember you will be graded based upon your effort and your own personal improvement both physically and energetically. Exams will always be announced ahead of time.

**Required Reading:**

Forbes: How ballet can make you a better leader by: Shellie Karabell

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/shelliekarabell/2015/08/29/how-ballet-can-make-you-a-better-leader/#f7062f6496ee>

Russia: Balanchine -- The Choreographer Who Shaped The Future Of American Ballet by: Nikola Krastev

<https://www.rferl.org/a/1052099.html>

**Required Viewings:**

Royal Opera House: Ballet evolved, the first four centuries

<https://youtu.be/auDNcfK0Wcs>

Royal Opera House: How ballet has changed over the centuries

<https://youtu.be/-EjfGgvsldM>

Ballet 101: Episode 4- The History of Ballet

<https://youtu.be/GMH5UKXB4EA>

The Origins of Ballet- Jennifer Tortorello and Adrienne Westwood

<https://youtu.be/OEekFTj5PvU>

**Grading:**

**Grading Criteria:**

60% Studio Performance, Attendance, and Journaling

5% Introduction Paper

5% Mid-Semester Reflection Paper

10% Performance Examinations

10% Reading and Dance Concert Reaction Paper

10% Final Semester Movement Project

**Grading levels:**

A range – Outstanding & Excellent Student exhibits a hunger and passion for learning; willingness to take movement risks; integration and application of corrections; exceptional growth toward course objectives; active participation in group assignments with leadership, cooperation, commitment, creativity, and enthusiasm; and punctual submission of assignments and course work.

B range – Very Good & Good Student's work shows uniform solidity, dedication, concentration, and consistency; student demonstrates improvement toward some skills throughout the semester and actively participates in group assignments with satisfactory leadership, cooperation, commitment, creativity, and enthusiasm; student submits all assignments on time.

C range – Average & Adequate Student actively participates in class activities and exercises but lacks energy and commitment toward improvement; work habits are

inconsistent; student participates in group assignments with minimal leadership, cooperation, commitment, creativity, and enthusiasm; assignments are hastily completed with minimal effort.

### **Other Important Information:**

#### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism, whether from the Internet or from printed sources, will result in failing the course and may be the cause of immediate dismissal from the University. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, consult the following University website: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/understanding-plagiarism-and-academic-integrity>

#### **Dress Code:**

To each and every class meeting, please wear form-fitting, athletic clothing that not only allows you to move comfortably but also allows for your instructor to see your body adequately enough for giving feedback and corrections about your movement. It is required that you purchase ballet shoes for this course. (If you purchase your ballet shoes at a store location be sure to ask about how to cut and sew the elastic bands properly. I'll be able to help you as well.) Hair should absolutely be pulled back, up, and away from the face. Avoid wearing bulky and dangling jewelry that might impede movement or potentially lead to dangerous and harmful entanglement. Gum chewing will not be permitted in this class.

You can purchase ballet slippers at The Dancer's Boutique:  
355 S Zeeb Rd Ste C, Ann Arbor [www.dancers-boutique.com](http://www.dancers-boutique.com)  
or online at [www.discountdance.com](http://www.discountdance.com) or [www.dancewearsolutions.com](http://www.dancewearsolutions.com)

#### **Absence Policy/ Tardiness:**

University of Michigan policy allows you two absences without penalty. However, given the experiential nature of dance, it is important that you attend every class session with consistent punctuality, preparedness, and presence. If you anticipate struggling to make it to class on time, or to class at all on any specific dates, (because of other commitments, or perhaps bus schedules) please speak with me directly and as soon as possible; we can negotiate a plan. After the first two absences, your grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a letter for each additional absence. One tardy will count as 1/2 of an absence, with two late arrivals totaling to one absence.\*\* If you cannot dance, because of illness or injury, please contact or inform me as soon as possible. In this instance you may instead actively observe class by taking notes, to be collected at the end of the class period, and contributing to class discussions and activities as much as possible. At the discretion of the instructor, circumstance may allow for absences to be made up. If you arrive to class late it is your responsibility to ensure that I mark your attendance for the period as 'here.' Otherwise you may be counted as an absent for the day.

**\*\*Tardiness:** It is important that you arrive on time to each and every class so that you may adequately prepare your body and mind for whatever the instructor has planned for the class period. It is also a matter of respect that you maintain punctual arrival to class so as not to disrupt your instructor and classmates who have already begun class. If you arrive more than 5 minutes after the beginning of class, you will be asked to observe. Proceed by taking notes and your instructor will be sure to include you in activities wherever and whenever possible. These observation notes are to be typed and emailed to your instructor. Again, it is your responsibility to ensure that I mark your attendance as 'here.'

### **Dance Floor:**

The dance floor is integral to our dance activities and practices. It is important that we treat it with care and respect. Please refrain from bringing shoes into the studio. Never walk on to studio floors with street shoes. We need to maintain a clean and debris-free floor for our classes and for others to use the space safely and comfortably. Open and lidless water bottles will not be allowed into the studio, as water on the floor is dangerous and detrimental.

### **Changing Rooms and Security:**

Changing rooms and bathrooms are located on the first floor of the dance building. The lockers in the changing rooms are reserved for Dance Majors at the University. You should carry valuables with you at all times.

### **Movement Restrictions:**

Be sure to let your instructor know if you have any disabilities, impairments, injuries, chronic pains, conditions, or etc. that might at any time require special attention or the modification of movement. For example, if you're recovering from an ankle injury, I absolutely want to know about this injury. If you have difficulty maintaining blood sugar levels and need to eat during class occasionally, please speak to me about this as soon as possible. If you would like for this conversation to be private, however minor or major the topic might be, feel free to explain through email, or email me to set up a time to meet and talk.

### **Corrections and Physical Contact:**

Dance requires physical communication that often involves contact between/among bodies. Your instructor has a responsibility to not only observe your body to ensure that it is working as correctly, efficiently and safely as possible, but also to give you corrections and guidance toward efficiency and safety. This may require that your instructor use touch to guide your body (i.e. a hand on the head to make corrections of the neck or a hand on the ankle to guide articulation of the foot). There will also be instances in which you will come into contact with other dancers in your class, either accidentally or as a part of class activity. If you are uncomfortable receiving hands on corrections, please inform me at the beginning of class so that I can restrict information to verbal corrections.

**Mobile Phones:**

Mobile phones are disruptive and distracting in a learning environment. Mobile phones must be turned off or silent during the duration of the class. If seen engaging with a mobile phone during class time I will mark you tardy for first time use and absent at any subsequent use.

**Door Code and Studio Policy:**

The door code to travel within the Dance Building and to enter Studio B is: 482  
Please do not share this code with anyone else, unless they are enrolled in a dance class. This is important for your safety and security of items within the studios. The studio space cannot be reserved outside of class, so your time in class is the time to get moving and learn!

**PLEASE NOTE THAN ANYTHING MENTIONED IN THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**