

eXit SPACE

SCHOOL OF DANCE

Basic Modern Course Syllabus Summer Series – 2022

Class Meetings: *Wednesdays 7:30-8:30pm from June 22 – August 17*
theNEST Studio B – 6600 1st Ave NE Seattle, WA 98115

Instructor Details: *Miranda Chantelois, ADP/YDP Faculty & Office Assistant*
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Course Description

Modern Dance is a style of western concert dance developed in the late 19th and early 20th century by European artists as an artistic rebellion against the perceived constraints of classical ballet and by European diasporic movers seeking to re-ground dance in indigenous and Black dance foundations. In Germany, dancers Rudolf Von Laban and Mary Wigman began abandoning the strict movement vocabulary, nymph-like portrayals of women, and confining expectations of ballet for more freeform movement characterized by organic body patterns, deliberate falls into the floor, and improvisatory scores – ideas later relayed to the United States by American dancer, educator, and modern dance pioneer, Isadora Duncan by 1914. By the 1930's Katherine Dunham, an African American anthropologist, ethnologue, dancer, and choreographer (among many other roles) revolutionized the form by rooting modern dance in Black culture and folk dance through her anthropological studies in Trinidad, Jamaica, and Haiti. Bolstered by the work of Lester Horton, Alvin Ailey, Pearl Primus, Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, Paul Taylor, Pina Bausch, and so many others, modern dance has since evolved to encompass a multiplicity of techniques not limited to any specific vocabulary with aesthetics derived from its broad history in European and Afro-Diasporan movement.

This Basic Modern course will honor the history of modern dance through an emphasis on equity and individuality while guiding beginning modern dancers through the structure of a dance class and the etiquette required in a studio. Warm-up exercises designed to center the body, re-pattern movement habits, and build strength and flexibility will prepare the student to move more fully, while movement combinations center and across the floor will allow for an in-depth study on locomotor steps while advancing coordination, musicality, and self-expression. Basic Modern dancers will also develop a deep connection to their center, confidence in level-appropriate inversion techniques and acrobatic skills (monkey jumps, tip ups, and floor rolls), refined articulation through the spine, and freedom of movement, focusing their attention on traveling through space with intention and dynamic variation. Throughout class, students will be presented with ideas and principles of movement as well as a wide range of movement qualities including the concepts of space, time, energy, and effort.

Course objectives (*Adapted from St. Olaf College dance dept. syllabus*)

At the end of the session, dancers should have increased understanding of the following concepts:

1. **Body Awareness:** Explore elements of your unique body, its function and ability.
2. **Physical Alignment:** The ability to maintain correct musculoskeletal positioning during movement and stillness.
3. **Coordination:** The ability to efficiently link movement patterning via body/brain connection.
4. **Movement Clarity:** The ability to consistently demonstrate accurate execution of intended movements with energy, shape, and line. A basic understanding of initiation points.
5. **Conditioning:** A balance of flexibility, strength, and endurance.
6. **Memory & Recall:** Increased ability to learn and perform movement combinations in a limited timeframe.
7. **Artistry:** The ability to integrate technical skills with intuition, personal presence, and musicality.

8. **Improvisation:** Create movement on the spot using physical instinct, impulse, and emotional drive.
9. **Modern Dance Vocabulary:** Establish a functional language for modern dance description as well as a basic understanding of: swings, spirals, spoking in all directions, parallel vs. turn out, pliés, tendús, flatbacks, drop swings, balances, undercurves, overcurve, prances, chassés, triplets, seat rolls, monkey jumps, and tip-ups.
10. **Historical & Cultural Context:** A general understanding of the roots and pioneers of Modern Dance.
11. **Safety:** The ability to execute movement functionally, anatomically aligned, and with spatial awareness so as to reduce the risk for injury.
12. **Have FUN:** This class is for you. Ask questions, offer feedback, and know that above all else, the goal is for you to enjoy yourself.

Class Etiquette

Dance classes across the board rely on a fundamental set of etiquette expectations in order to maximize student experience, safety, and class progression:

1. **Be prepared:** Please wear clothing that is easy to move in, similar to workout wear or yoga attire (no jeans, please). Tie your hair back and be sure to bring a water bottle! No shoes are worn for modern, but you can wear socks if you would like.
2. **Arrive on time:** Please arrive several minutes before the start of class and avoid entering late. This is for your own safety and to minimize distractions for students who do arrive on time.
3. **Take care of our floor:** There are no street shoes allowed on the dance floor. If you require footwear, it must be light-soled, non-scuffing, and indoor-only.
4. **No food:** Gum, candy, and food are not allowed in the studio. Dancers chewing gum will be asked to spit it out.
5. **Get permission:** Please get consent before filming, photographing, or making physical contact with another dancer. Modern dance often uses partnering vocabulary, but it is never required to partner in this class. If you would like a part of class on video in order to practice, please ask and we will arrange to record it after class with those willing/interested in participating. Please do not share any videos on social media unless you have received explicit consent from everyone filmed.

Injury, Disability, and Physical Integration

eXit SPACE believes that dance is for everybody and every body; your teacher is committed to creating a safe space for students of all physical abilities to explore the joy of movement through modern dance. If you require modifications or physical transpositions due to injury, disability, or comfort that are not immediately offered, please don't be afraid to ask! Most of the time, a series of options will be provided for any given exercise. For some of the people joining us in class, please bear in mind that the most accessible space is a **scent free** space. Please help us create an equitable environment by arriving smelling like only yourself.

Absences & Makeups

Dancers are permitted a maximum of two makeup classes per session to be used within the current session or the session to follow. Makeups are permitted in any basic class or any level-appropriate one-hour drop-in class at eXit SPACE or theNEST. All of our modern drop-in classes are 1.5 hours, so if you prefer to makeup in a drop-in modern class, you will be required to pay an upcharge. Makeups do not have to be scheduled in advance, but please check in with office staff prior to class so they know you're attending as a Basic makeup.

Recommended Reading

- *Moving History / Dancing Cultures* by Ann Dils & Ann Cooper Albright
- *Dancing Through History* by Joan Cass
- *No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century* by Nancy Reynolds & Malcolm McCormick

Welcome to eXit SPACE!