EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION
DANCE
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Dance Department
FA / DANC 4215 3.0 SECTION A
CONTEMPORARY/MODERN DANCE FORMS
FALL 2019 / WINTER 2020

Last Modified Date: 09/25/2019

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION
Offers modern and contemporary dance technique for BFA dance majors. Ongoing training refines artistic expression, modern dance vocabulary, musicality and athleticism. Includes a theoretical component which may be written projects, oral presentations, and class discussions. Optional for all dance majors. Prerequisites: FA/DANC 3216 3.00 and permission of the department.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
<th>Contact Phone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sasso, Julia</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / F</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sasso@yorku.ca">sasso@yorku.ca</a></td>
<td>York Ext. 44651</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SPECIAL FEATURES

Course: FA DANC 4215/17 Contemporary/Modern Dance Forms

Term: Fall 2019
10.30-12 T W F ACE 249, R ACE 201

Course Director:
Julia Sasso
ACE 326
sasso@yorku.ca
416 532 5124

This course provides students with an opportunity to engage in an in-depth daily physical practice; a collaborative exploration and experience of contemporary/modern dance techniques based in lifelong learning and professional artistic practice. The course is inclusive and takes a holistic and healthy approach to daily physical practice and contemporary dance training. The course takes into account the group and the individual. The course presents physical, intellectual and emotional challenges endeavoring to prepare students to move toward meeting the demands of post graduation. A focus is placed on developing an evolved way of thinking and speaking about physical practice, creative process and the art form with an emphasis on a strategic approach to learning and development. The course offers an evolved approach to contemporary/modern dance technique training that engages with current and evolving directions in physical practice, dance technique training and choreography through a lens rooted in iconic forms including Limon, Graham, ballet, SRT, improvisation, GAgA and somatic fundamentals.
TOPICS AND CONCEPTS

Within a centre format the physics of contemporary dance techniques are explored through a range of danced sequences. Studies explore our relationship to each other, the viewer, the floor and space in all directions; in motion, in and out of balance and in stillness. Course material addresses awareness, alignment, focus, musicality, dynamic range, articulation, strength, flexibility, precision, assimilation, interpretation, artistry and a professional approach. Students are expected to approach this level of their physical practice with a high degree of curiosity, self-motivation, preparedness and professionalism. Students are expected to arrive in and maintain a healthy level of physical fitness and to grasp the difference between exercise and artistic practice. The course is web-like in nature and connects contemporary dance, somatic and creative process practices. Classes will build upon existing material and introduce new material daily. No two classes repeat in exactly the same way. As artistic development is experiential, attendance and punctuality is essential and encompasses on-going learning and development throughout instances of adversity and/or injury. The course introduces students to Skinner Releasing Technique™ (SRT) on Fridays in the Fall Term. SRT is a pioneering, inclusive approach to dancing evolved from a simple principle: when we let go of habitual holding patterns and ways of thinking we can move more freely, powerfully and articulately. We access energy, improve strength and flexibility and awaken creativity and spontaneity. A considerable influence on leading choreographers and dancers world wide, SRT can enhance any movement style while fostering artistic sensibility and creative unfolding. It is an experiential, intuitive approach taking into account the physical body and the energies that move through and around us. SRT classes include improvisation, hands-on partner studies, writing and, imagery as powerful tools for transformation.

There may be special presentations, events, performances, meetings and/or workshops during class time as part of your course schedule (TBA) To take full advantage of the expertise in our department you may have other guest faculty, graduate students or guest teachers in this course (TBA).

Recommended Reading

www.juliasasso.com
www.skinnerreleasing.com
www.skinnerreleasingnetwork.org

Dance Collection Danse (limited copies available on the 3rd floor)
The Dance Current (limited copies available at the Department office), selected articles available on line at www.thedancecurrent.com
Dance/Life, 2011, Kenny Pearl (order online at DanceLifeBook.com)
Unfold: A Portrait of Peggy Baker, 2008, Carol Anderson

LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EXAMPLES OF

The purpose of this course is to enhance students’ overall artistic practice through a multifaceted approach to contemporary dance technique training at an advanced level. The specific objective of the course is to instill a high degree of consciousness while nurturing the shedding of self-consciousness, to ignite curiosity, creativity and critical thinking. To heighten awareness as the first step to change, development and transformation. Instill confidence and the ability to discover strategies for overcoming obstacles. Develop autonomy and collaborative capacity. Cultivate empathy, patience and safe practices. Encourage risk-taking in thought and action.

By the end of this course students will be better able to take responsibility for their learning and development. Better prepared to meet and engage with alternative perspectives and approaches and respond
to unanticipated information and situations. Recognize and appreciate that learning and development are ongoing, lifelong processes. Students will be better skilled in improvisation – listening and responding. Better able to fully embody the topics, concepts and material presented in this and subsequent courses, workshops, intensives and auditions. Demonstrate an appreciation that technique is both integral to and at the service of interpretation and creativity. Demonstrate presence, curiosity, discipline, investment and consistency. Embrace the rigor of an advanced level of dance training in preparing to meet the challenges of professional career and life objectives and move toward meeting potential and personal goals.

GRADED ASSESSMENT

Students will be evaluated and graded based on their participation, practice and development over the course of the term as outlined in the course objectives:

**55% Practice:** attendance, preparedness, presence, curiosity, awareness, concentration, investment, participation, consistency, professional approach.

**15% Mid Term Evaluation:** Students will receive an unofficial midterm evaluation prior to the final drop date of November 8, 2019. Midterm evaluation provides a guide to students’ course progress and is worth 15% of Final Grade.

**30% Development:** Demonstrates the ability to let go of habits and to make new discoveries. Demonstrates grasp of concepts and application of information. Demonstrates embodiment of course topics and concepts including awareness, alignment, focus, musicality, dynamic range, articulation, strength, flexibility, precision, assimilation, interpretation, artistry and a professional approach. Demonstrates enhanced ability to recall, consistency, interpretation and artistic unfolding. Demonstrates movement toward meeting potential. Demonstrates overall physical and intelectual development.

*NB: SRT and technique classes will often allow time for writing as an extension of moving. SRT writing is shared with course director, is strictly confidential, is not graded and is returned to the student in the next SRT class. Students should come to SRT classes with paper and writing instrument. Layers of comfortable-to-move-in clothing are recommended. Jewelry, timepieces, scarves and mobile devices must be left OFF for ALL SRT classes (you will be reminded!). A dedicated technique class notebook is recommended. Electronic devices may be referred to in technique classes. Attendance at additional off/on-campus classes, workshops, jams, films, lectures, exhibits and performances is strongly encouraged. Any compulsory /optional fees for this course including materials fees, damage deposits, access fees, etc. are the responsibility of the student.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Important University Sessional Dates (classes start/end dates, reading/co-curricular week, add/drop deadlines, holidays, etc.):** http://registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/

**York University Grading System:**
The grading scheme for courses conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.) An average piece of work in university is about a C+ or B. Grades go up or down from there depending on the attention and effort applied as well as evidence of tangible change.

The Senate Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy stipulates that (a) the grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and that, (b) under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter, or Summer Term, and 30% for full year courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course without receiving a grade.

**Assignment Submission/Lateness Penalty:**
Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Assignments must be received on the due date specified and are to be handed in at the beginning of class. No electronic submissions will be accepted. Assignments received later than the specified due date will be penalized one-half letter grade per day. There are exceptions to this lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc. but require supporting documentation (e.g. a doctor’s letter).

**N.B.** Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or School grades distribution profiles. Once final grades have been posted, the full breakdown will be available and can be discussed in an appointment with the Course Director or Chair of the department.

"20% Rule": No examinations or tests collectively worth more than 20% of the final grade in a course will be given during the final 14 calendar days of classes in a term. The exceptions to the rule are classes which regularly meet Friday evenings or on Saturday and/or Sunday at any time, and courses offered in the compressed summer terms.

**Last date to drop a full year (Y) course without receiving a grade:** [February 3, 2020](#)
**Last date to drop a Fall term (F) course without receiving a grade:** [November 8, 2019](#)
**Last date to drop a Winter term (W) course without receiving a grade:** [March 13, 2020](#)

**Course Withdrawal Period:** (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of “W” on transcript)
**Last date for full year (Y) course:** [February 4 to April 5, 2020](#)
**Last date for Fall term (F) course:** [November 9 to December 3, 2019](#)
**Last date for Winter term (W) course:** [March 14 to April 5, 2020](#)

Please note that financial deadline dates differ from add/drop deadlines.

**Department of Dance Studio Dress Requirements:**
In order to give students the best possible guidance in Contemporary Ballet and Modern studio dance classes, teachers must be able to see the entire body. Postural alignment and joint and muscle use cannot be corrected in these classes if loose or bulky clothing hide the body. World Dance and other dance forms we teach may require specific footwear, props, and/or other clothing options. Please make sure to check your outlines for each of your studio dance classes for the specific dress requirements and the details each teacher will require. The general requirements are:
- Form fitting clothing that covers torso and legs should be worn. Bring close-fitting warmer clothing and socks for cold days. (No loose-fitting or ragged clothing unless specified).
- Hair must be worn off the neck and face for Ballet, and back and off the face for Modern.
- Tight buns are not recommended for Contemporary/Modern as they may impede floorwork.
- Students can wear leotard and tights (any solid colour), and ballet slippers for Ballet and bare feet for Modern.
• Please be considerate of your fellow dancers; avoid long fingernails and jewellery (including piercings, watches, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and large rings). Ensure hair-wear is secure.

Department of Dance Studio Use Regulations:
• There is absolutely no food or drink (other than water) permitted in the studios.
• Leave street shoes and boots in the cubbies outside the studio or preferably, in your locker. If you must bring street shoes and boots in to the studio, please place them inside a bag. Grit and dirt brought into the space pose a safety hazard for dancers (particularly for those working barefoot) in addition to damaging the floor surfaces. NO BARE FEET in the Dance Department hallways, stairs, elevators, or bathrooms. Bring indoor flip-flops or slippers to go from studio to studio.
• Do not prop the studio doors open by using the deadbolt, the mirror curtain, or anything that blocks the studio entrance.
• Please return studio furniture to its rightful place according to the floor plan posted by the door in each space.

Department of Dance Video Guidelines:
The Department of Dance has developed these guidelines in order to raise awareness of expected behaviour regarding recording/videotaping curricular work, and to foster a culture of respect for intellectual and creative property, as well as for individual privacy.

While the Department recognizes the democratizing effect of the internet, the Department requests that students do not post curricular work publicly to the internet, unless by express permission of the Chair of the Department, and waivers signed by all concerned. Work is to be shared only via private file-sharing access. This applies to documentation made by the Department and/or by individual students for their own archives.

Department of Dance Guidelines For Scented Products:
York University endeavours to provide an indoor environment that supports the University community at work and study. Some people experience severe health problems from exposure to chemicals contained in scented products including aftershave lotions, hair spray, deodorants and fragrances. In consideration of those who are affected by such chemicals, use unscented products only.

Department of Dance Guidelines For Physical Demands of the Program:
Courses in the Department of Dance may include elements that are physically demanding. Prior injuries can be aggravated by strenuous exercise so check with your physician and inform the Course Director before beginning the course. Be sure to share with the Course Director any changes in your injury or health that may affect your participation.

Courses in the Department of Dance may also include the possibility/likelihood of human contact (i.e., correction of alignment or technical execution as well as the possibility of collision with colleagues). Students uncomfortable with the use of touch are requested to relay feelings to the Course Director as soon as possible.

Department of Dance Guidelines For Safety and Wellbeing:
Should an accident occur in studio, there is a very clear protocol for reporting. This information is posted in every studio. Faculty members and staff are well versed in the protocol. For the various minor issues that come up in your day-to-day life as a dancer, it is recommended that you carry a well-stocked personal first aid kit in your dance bag. Programs Assistant Flannery Muise and faculty member Claire Wootten are the department’s certified first-aid reps.

Department of Dance Attendance and Participation Policy:
Students are expected to participate in every dance class, both studio and lecture courses. Under exceptional circumstances they may miss, without penalty, half the number of classes per term as the class meets in the week. (i.e., If your class meets two times a week, you may miss ONE class over the entire course without penalty.)

For studio classes that meet one (1) time per week:
- Absences or early departures in excess of 1 per term can result in a grade deduction of 4% per occurrence.
- Partial class participation beyond 1 class per term results in a 2% grade penalty.
- Non-participation beyond 1 class per term results in a 4% grade penalty.

For studio classes that meet two (2) or more times per week:
- Absences or early departures in excess of 1 per term can result in a grade deduction of 2% per occurrence.
- Partial class participation beyond 1 class per term results in a 1% grade penalty.
- Non-participation beyond 1 class per term results in a 2% grade penalty.

For all classes:
- In the event of an absence or limited participation, all missed material is to be learned prior to returning to class.
- In the event of an injury or illness preventing full participation for more than 1 class in a term, it is the student’s immediate responsibility, in consultation with the Course Director, to devise a plan for make-up work. The sooner this is done, the less stress you will experience from the uncertainty of the situation. If you are injured or ill, obtain and submit a hard copy doctor’s note. The doctor’s note will allow you to arrange for appropriate make-up work. **Grade penalties can still apply**, but the documentation assists in gauging the amount of penalty and make-up work needed.
- As detailed in the Injury Guidelines in the Department of Dance, students must complete a minimum of 60% of the studio work to receive course credit.
- Finally, in consideration of all participants, if you are ill, stay home and/or see your healthcare provider. You will recover faster and, should your illness be contagious, you will have shown others consideration by limiting their exposure. Do NOT come to class if you are ill!

Department of Dance Technical Evaluation Policy:
It is the Department’s responsibility to ensure that every dance major experiences optimal training and educational conditions. This is especially important in physical practice where safety is a pedagogical imperative. To that end, all students enrolled in dance technique courses (i.e. Contemporary Modern and/or Contemporary Ballet) participate in technical level evaluation at the beginning of the Fall term. Dance faculty conduct evaluations in a traditional group class setting. Students who have successfully completed the pre-requisite courses, have maintained an appropriate level of fitness, and have continued with technical training over the spring and summer months normally proceed to the next level. It must be noted that a satisfactory grade in the pre-requisite course does not guarantee placement in the next level of technique. Some students may be required to remain at the previous level to safely develop additional technical skill. Extended illness, injury, or insufficient technical skill are some of the factors that lead to such a decision.

The study of dance as a physical and artistic practice requires a commitment to **year-round** technical training, body conditioning, and cross training. Students are, therefore, expected to independently seek out and maintain an appropriate training regimen all 12 months of the year.

**York University Academic Senate Policies and Information:**
All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the Policies and Regulations information, which can be found on the 2019/20 Academic Calendars page:
http://calendars.students.yorku.ca/2019-2020/programs/dance
We recommend carefully reviewing all three sections; About, Degree Requirements, and Faculty Rules. Important information is explained here including the Policy on Academic Honesty, Academic Responsibility and Student Responsibility, and Academic Standing. Further details are available on the Secretariat Policies website, [http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/](http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/), which covers the following topics:

- Academic Integrity Tutorial: [https://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/](https://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/)
- University Secretariat: [http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/senate/](http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/senate/)

**STUDIO COURSES ONLY:**

**Professionalism and Classroom Etiquette:**
Professionalism is an attitude—much more than the act of receiving money for your work. It is about having confidence and pride in your work with a willingness to contribute to the group. These guidelines will also help you attain autonomy and professional capacity.
- Address all your personal care issues before class begins. This includes doing a bathroom run, filling your water bottle and a having a supply of tissues. You should not need to leave the studio during class unless you are experiencing a personal emergency.
- Please participate in helping to prepare the studio space for dancing in advance of the class start time to ensure a timely beginning.
- Please stand and cease all preparatory/warm-up activities when the Course Director or special guest indicates the start of class.
- Whether a correction is given to an individual or the entire class, all students are expected to apply the correction to their own work.
- When working in pairs or small groups, aim to stay focused on the given task and be prepared to direct your attention back to the group quickly in order maintain the classroom pace. Respect and support your peers by staying focused. This means that there are times when one must put aside personal feelings and frustrations to maintain an optimal work environment.

**Musicians and Music:**
Dancing involves two artistic practices—music and movement. Our Departmental musicians are an invaluable part of our York dance community. Show your respect by acknowledging their presence, gratitude through positive feedback, silence when they play and applause at the end of class. Please be sure not to block the musician’s view when waiting at the side. The musician must be able to see the dancers moving in
the space at all times. Should our regular musician be away, kindly exercise patience and respect to both the Course Director and the new musician. Should we be without a live musician, work to adapt to the use of silence and/or recorded music as a valuable opportunity to work on other related areas of your dance practice.

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University's course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

Moodle @ York University