EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION  
DANCE  
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design  
Department of Dance  
FA / DANC 4217 3.0 SECTION A  
CONTEMPORARY/MODERN DANCE FORMS  
FALL 2020 / WINTER 2021

Last Modified Date: 09/02/2020

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION
Offers a continuation of work begun in FA/DANC 4215 3.00. Ongoing training in modern to refine artistic expression, modern dance vocabulary, musicality and athleticism. Includes a theoretical component which may be written projects, oral presentations, and class discussions. Note: Open by permission of the department only.

INSTRUCTOR(S)
Name | Section / Format / Term | Contact Email | Contact Phone
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Sasso, Julia | Sec. A / STDO / F | sasso@yorku.ca | York Ext. 44651

SPECIAL FEATURES

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

**Term**: Fall 2020  
T W R F 10:30-12:00 (YK)

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

1. Special Features

Technical requirements for taking the course:
This course will be delivered fully online in Fall 2020. The Department of Dance is fully aware of the challenges dancing together but remotely presents. We will meet you where you are and address any issues or needs as they arise. Please read through the following content to help orient and prepare your self for this new experience of dancing remotely. At the same time know that anything described below is a guide and with clear communication with your CD can always be adjusted according to your needs.

4215/17 provides students with an opportunity to engage in an in-depth daily physical practice alone and together with class participants and in collaboration with/guided by course director; a collaborative exploration and experience of contemporary/modern dance techniques based in the CD’s lifelong learning and professional artistic practice. Classes will be recorded and uploaded to Moodle for those students unable to attend classes synchronously. The course aims to provide a ‘real-time’ experience of dancing and learning, is inclusive and takes a holistic and healthy approach to daily physical practice and contemporary dance training within these extraordinary
circumstances. Below you will find explicit instructions for the optimal engagement with the course.

2. **Topics and Concepts**

The course takes into account the individual and the group. 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 in a synchronous online format. Online daily physical practice sessions will aim to provide as real an experience of dancing and learning together as is possible. The online course will provide an opportunity for connection – to classmates, CD and the wider professional arts community. We will connect with and build our intimate community.

**Those unable to attend synchronous class meetings at least 2 times per week should be aware that you will have a very different experience of the course.**

Within a centre format the physics of contemporary dance techniques are explored through a range of danced sequences. Studies explore our relationship to one another, 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 will 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 the **Skinner Releasing Technique™ (SRT)** in the Fall Term. **SRT classes will not be recorded and must be attended synchronously. Together we will determine the best day of the week for our SRT class.** 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, partner graphics, writing and imagery as powerful tools for transformation. SRT is profoundly healing and therefore an important course component in this unprecedented situation.

Students will be required to maintain an ongoing **Wellness Strategy** as a component of this course [to be discussed in week one]. What are your strategies and actions for maintaining your mental, spiritual, physical health?

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](http://www.juliasasso.com)
- [www.skinnerreleasing.com](http://www.skinnerreleasing.com)
- [www.skinnerreleasingnetwork.org](http://www.skinnerreleasingnetwork.org)


*Dance Collection Danse* (limited copies available at the Department office)
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 is an 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.

4. 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. For the most part students will be assessed based on their synchronous online participation/practice. Where necessary, students may be required to submit video of their asynchronous practice for assessment.

45% Practice: Demonstrates attendance, preparedness, presence, curiosity, awareness, concentration, investment, participation, consistency, professional approach.

5% Wellness Strategy: Demonstrates evidence of strategies and actions for maintaining mental, spiritual, physical health.

15% Mid Term Evaluation: Students will receive an unofficial midterm evaluation prior to the final drop date of November 6, 2020. Midterm evaluation provides a guide to students’ course progress and is worth 15% of Final Grade.

35% 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 intellectual development.
5. Additional Information

4215/17 will be housed in Moodle.

We will discuss Remote and Online Learning in Dance in our initial meetings. To help you prepare:

**Space:** What is the best space available to you for your daily physical practice? Ideally, as large a space as possible, free from distractions and safety hazards, carpets, etc. A space/s in which you can lie prone and also stand upright, extend arms/legs in all directions. Clear away as much furniture as possible. Your optimal space may change as the term progresses. Be creative. Consider the time it may take to prepare your space and do this in advance of your classes.

**Floor surface:** Are you dancing on concrete, a carpeted or rough surface, grass, etc? A yoga mat/s is handy. You may need to wear sneakers, ballet slippers, jazz shoes or socks.

**Lighting:** Do a lighting check. Do you need to add more light? Be sure you are not backlit/silhouetted.

**Devices:** Choose your Zoom device wisely and elevate your screen to eye level. Be sure device is charged or plugged in. Be as close to your internet modem as possible. Wi-Fi can be super unreliable. If you can, turn off all other devices as these will split your wi-fi connection. An Ethernet cable plugged directly into your modem & into your device will bypass wi-fi & connect your device directly to internet. This may be essential if you are at any distance from modem.

**Music Accompaniment:** Classes will incorporate recorded music. Where possible this will include recordings of original music by York accompanists specifically designed for this course.

**Missed Synchronous Zoom class:** Things may happen beyond your control that may prevent you from taking a synchronous class. All Zoom sessions will be recorded and YOU WILL NOT be penalized for missing a synchronous class. You are however responsible to check in with your CD should this occur. If you are in a different time zone please let your CD know as soon as possible if you anticipate that this will affect your ability to participate in synchronous learning. Alternate arrangements will be made with you and your CD. Those unable to attend synchronous 4215/17 class meetings at least 2 times per week should be aware that you will have a very different experience of the course.

**Netiquette:** Set up early. Don’t wait to the last minute to sign-in and set up. Invariably this is when you will run into technical difficulties - technology hiccups, forgotten passwords, etc. It is especially hard to jump into an online dance class late. Maintain a tidy space/s, aim for privacy in your practice, wear appropriate dance attire. Eliminate reasons to leave your dance area. Just as you would in the studio, tend to all person needs prior to remote/online class - go to the bathroom, and have a snack before class. Stay motivated and engaged. Respect and support your peers by staying focused. Be patient and be kind with yourself, your loved ones and your colleagues. We are all new to experiencing dance in this way. This set up is not perfect or seamless, but we are all, including you, doing our best. Be patient with technology and most especially with things beyond anyone’s control. Be patient with your internet since it is in demand more than ever. Anticipate glitches and rejoice when things do work as they are supposed to work. Be patient with your teachers, this is new for us too and most importantly, be patient with yourself. You may have gone weeks, months without dance class and it will take time to get back to where you were and it will take some time to get used to dancing in this way. Adjust expectations of yourself, your program, your colleagues and your instructors. This does not mean a lowering of standards but rather perhaps the time frame in which you meet them. You are also likely facing more challenges and more distractions than you ever have before. Your body and mind are understandably exhausted from all the change and setbacks you have endured. Do your best and know that it’s ok if your best is not where you want it to be right now. Clear, open communication and constructive feedback on ways we can all improve is key.
Items to have on hand:
Yoga mat/s
Yoga blocks
Blue Theraband, 7’
Balls – various sizes
Foam roller, 6” diameter
Socks, shoes

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