EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION
DANCE
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Dance
FA / DANC 5501 3.0 SECTION A
INITIATING, FORMING, PERFORMING CRG’PHY I
FALL 2020 / WINTER 2021

Last Modified Date: 09/04/2020

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION
This course explores a variety of creative approaches to developing, structuring and editing movement. Through individual and collaborative research, the student develops a personal choreographic voice and explores the cultural and aesthetic questions arising from their choreographic research. Prerequisites: GS/DANC 5300 3.00 and GS/DANC 5325 3.00. Required for MFA students.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
<th>Contact Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olafson, Freya</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / F</td>
<td><a href="mailto:olafson@yorku.ca">olafson@yorku.ca</a></td>
<td>York Ext. 88688</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SPECIAL FEATURES

This course is provided via ARMS

Course Director: Freya Björg Olafson | olafson@yorku.ca
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00 to 2:30 (please make an appointment)

Technical requirements for taking the course: Students participate in the course through video conferencing and appear on video for discussions and critiques. In addition to stable, higher-speed Internet connection, participants will need a computer with a webcam and microphone, and/or a smart device with these features. A video camera will be required for this course; the camera can be a cellphone, tablet, laptop with built in webcam, or an external web camera that plugs in via USB. A handicam or DSLR camera would also work well. Be prepared to acquire or borrow resources from peers or family to create unique projects this term; consider lighting options, technical equipment, costume, music, fabric, or set ideas. Additionally, an external harddrive is recommended to backup student work and ensure no loss of vital files.

Location: Please note that this is a course that depends on remote teaching and learning. There will be no in-class interactions or activities on campus.
**Organization of the course:** This course combines both synchronous and asynchronous learning. We meet online for a portion of the scheduled weekly Wednesday timeframe 10:00 - 13:00 and occasionally meet on Tuesday, via Zoom (link embedded on Moodle). The Tuesday class is typically open studio time for course participants to work and/or document active research. If the course director determines additional time for critiques or a guest speaker is necessary, then a mandatory Tuesday class is scheduled with advance notice provided. To duplicate the in-person experience and to foster a safe and interactive learning environment, participants are requested to have their cameras turned on during the delivery of course material (ie: lectures, presentations, discussions). The chat feature is encouraged as a mode to engage in dialogue, with the use of microphones when individuals wish to speak to the larger group. Please note that the Zoom meetings are recorded and posted to the course Moodle. Please discuss with the instructor on the first day, if this format raises any concerns.

**Special Features**
This course explores diverse creative approaches to the development, structuring and editing of movement. Individual and collaborative research requires students to expand and refine their creative process through reflection on the aesthetic, social, cultural, and political questions arising from choreographic praxis.

**TOPICS AND CONCEPTS**

**Topics and Concepts**
This studio course provides the opportunity for students to devise, research and reconsider how choreography is formed, edited, refined and performed. Time and space are primary choreographic materials, activated frequently through the use of movement and the body to produce meaning(s) and engage viewers. Throughout the term students reconsider how staging choreography can be informed by the relationships structured through overlap of objects / props, clothing / costumes, technology / technique, music / sound and performers / audience. Students are challenged to develop their conceptual praxis. Class discussion, assigned readings, video viewings, and written commentary are essential to the course format and basic to creative reflection and strategic research. Class viewing of historic and contemporary performance works supports and provides direction for studio exploration and integration of theory and praxis.

**LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EXAMPLES OF**

**Learning Outcomes**
The purpose of the course is to prepare the first year MFA dance students for thesis research, support the second year MFA dance students in the development of their praxis / thesis research as well as assist graduate students from varied disciplines, to include the corporeal body as material and choreography as methodology in their research and/or creative projects.

**GRADED ASSESSMENT**

**Graded Assessment**
Student participation and progress is evaluated by the following criteria: depth of reflection and artistic propositions, quality of work executed, ability to articulate individual process; understanding of historical and theoretical material presented, ability to integrate history and theory to both an overall understanding of the medium and aspects of individual practice; willingness to let go of self-limiting perceptions in artistic process; and clear evidence of sustained focus, effort, and thought applied to coursework. A rubric for assessment of choreographic and written assignments is available on the course website. Feedback is regularly provided in class through structured critiques.

**Required Reading**

Access to additional texts and a full schedule for required readings is available on the course Moodle page. Students need to use their York University Passport account. If there are any issues accessing Moodle or downloading articles please contact Computing at York or ithelp@yorku.ca for assistance. Moodle is the primary platform for receiving grades and communication about course content. Students are responsible to ensure they are receiving course communication through both email and Moodle.

Note: The syllabus is subject to change and may be amended over the course of the semester. Students are notified of changes in class - these are reflected on the course website. Specific assignments and due dates as well as schedules for presentations are updated weekly and subject to change dependent on class progress.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional Information
40% Choreographic Assignments
15% Reading Response Prompts
15% Presentation - Expanded Field of Choreography
10% Participation
10% Artist Statement
10% Final Paper - Reflexive Essay

Choreographic Assignments: Four choreographic assignments are the major focus for the term. Assignments are created predominantly during the Tuesdays Open Studio and presented in class to be witnessed and critiqued. Each assignment is thoroughly discussed in class, and examples offered prior to initiation of studio work. Themes and methods for the term include: working with materials / objects introducing ideas from sculpture and visual art practice, proposing and enacting choreographic scores, working with found movement sources, documentation as concept, and remixing / editing. Critique dates and assignment details are posted on the course website. (4 x 10%)

40%

Reading Prompts: Each student is responsible to present three prompts in response to weekly assigned readings. Prompts are an opportunity to generate theoretical discourse and thereby deepen our understanding and connection to the readings, as well as expand and refine what it means to research. Students are expected to connect or contest the texts ideas in relation to choreographic practice:

Quote: Analyze the text and its larger context (historical, art-historical, biographical, social, political, cultural). Then select a substantive or impactful quote from the assigned text.
Comment: Once a generative quote from the text is selected unpack its meaning and examine it critically. Develop a written commentary in response to the quote. Why is it of interest? Why might one disagree? How does it resonate with your work or ideas? How does it connect with other work you are familiar with?
Question: Devise a question in relation to the quote and your commentary to both prompt and sustain class dialogue and engagement with the text.

Quote, Comment, Question - Prompts are submitted on Moodle prior to class for all to read online. Subsequently, they are read aloud in class to incite conversation and dialogue. One prompt per student on any of the following dates: September 16th, September 23rd, October 21st, Nov 4th or November 26th - three prompts required in total.
Artist Statement
An essential document to establishing a solid praxis; an artist statement weaves theoretical understanding with creative practice. Writing an artist statement is challenging but essential to situate and substantiate the arc of one’s praxis. Details and examples are provided in class and on the course website. Initial draft due September 26th, with a subsequent update and revision at end of semester – length 1 to 2 pages. Final artist statements are read aloud during the last class on December 2nd.

10%

Expanded Field of Choreography
Presentation: Focusing on expanded ideas of choreography, each student is responsible to select, introduce and explore a choreography or dance event that challenges preconceived ideas of choreographic praxis. Research, introduce, discuss and critique the specific work, in order to provoke questions / discussions with the class. Students may use excerpts of the selected choreography, Power-Point presentations, videos / DVDs, and have access to the Internet. Students may choose to contextualize the event / choreography within the era in which it was generated and / or include a historic overview of the politics, values, and cultural point-of-view(s) the selection addresses or challenges. Research questions may include: What impact does the work have on our understanding of dance as an art form? What might this work reveal about dance values today? Was there movement vocabulary, physical sensibility or embodied knowing promoted or relied upon by the choreographer? What choreographic concerns are central within the work i.e.: use of time, space, organization of materials, relationship between performers and / or audience? Is the choreography situated within scholarly international dance discourses, if so, how? How does the selected performance fit into the history of the artists’ development? The presentation should be max twenty minutes with time for discussion afterwards. Course director must approve the selected choreography; some suggested works are listed on the course website.

Presenters prepare a written component to accompany the presentation. Provide a brief introduction to the context of the selected choreography and include support materials for the ideas within the presentation. Provide a bibliography of resources used to research the presentation. Maximum two pages including bibliography; pages should be numbered and the student name on each page. Upload the document to Moodle by 6 pm on Monday November 9th. Presentations are scheduled for Tuesday, November 10th. 15%

Reflective Essay - Choreographic Development
Each student will write a self-reflexive essay identifying outcomes of the choreographic explorations throughout the term. Reflecting on past choreographic work, articulate shifts in process that occur through the choreographic assignments. Integrate course readings and / or viewings into the essay to frame and articulate the development of choreographic praxis. Identify areas in both praxis and / or creation skills to grow, deepen or reinvent. Both students’ revised artist statement and reflective essay, should show evidence of insight and agency, specific to the evolution of their individual choreographic practice and connect with the course material. Although written in first person this is an academic essay. Three to Five pages max., Double Spaced, Font 12, Times New Roman, MLA style. Due by 11:59pm on Dec. 2nd. Please upload the file to Moodle. note: keep process notes throughout the term / each assignment to assist this reflexive process. 10%

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 online prior to the beginning of class.
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).

**Attendance and Lateness**
Regular and punctual attendance is required professional behavior in the creative field and therefore in this course. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each Zoom session. Students are responsible for letting the course director know ahead of time if they are going to be late for class, or not attending an online session. For students who are doing the course asynchronously due to time zones, missed zoom sessions will be accommodated through written online course participation. While grade deductions will not be applied for absences, missed classes will inevitably impact participation grades. Exceptions for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be considered by the course instructor but will require supporting documentation (e.g. a doctor’s letter). Students are responsible for all academic, financial penalties, and consequences resulting from their non-attendance.

---

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

*Moodle @ York University*