

Sally A. Radell
Department of Theater and Dance
DA 329 Contemporary Issues in Dance
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Piedmont Project Introduction

Each spring I teach DA 329 Contemporary Issues in Dance for primarily our dance majors and minors. This course examines the practical, aesthetic, and critical issues of dance as a fine art and involves discussions, project-based assignments, guest speakers and field trips as appropriate. I usually include a segment in the course which explores some of the ways contemporary dance reflects and questions the concerns and challenges of the American culture. We usually do this by examining the work of specific contemporary choreographers.

For the Piedmont Project I had originally decided to include the work of two artists for this course who do work in the natural environment, Anna Halprin and Eiko & Koma. As my work on assembling this new unit has evolved I have narrowed it down to just the work of Halprin to allow for greater focus. Her work in creating dance and movement structures in the natural world are motivated by three central beliefs: the human body is a microcosm of the earth, the processes of nature are guidelines which directly inform her aesthetics, and finally that nature is a healer.

I have scheduled six classes in this unit. The first will be a general overview of the differences, similarities and overlapping areas of dance as a reflection of contemporary culture, the natural world, and place. This will be done through film viewing and discussion. The next class will be a focus on the work of Halprin and how her central beliefs are exemplified in her work. The next two classes will be field trips to different campus outdoor areas. The students will do site surveys and be led through a process of using the site survey information as an improvisational springboard to create their own movement structures. I hope that the students will begin to develop their own emerging aesthetics and belief systems regarding movement in the natural world and how that can relate to place. As a final course project the students will be given the opportunity to either write a final research paper or choreograph a movement structure (with a short paper) that will be performed for the class. While the students in the course are primarily dance majors and minors with choreography training, there are some students who have minimal dance experience. I decided to make this final movement project an option to be sensitive to the students who do not feel fully equipped to create an actual movement/dance structure and prefer to write a final research paper. In addition, we will have a guest speaker scheduled who is a solo artist who does primarily movement/text dances that are rooted in a particular community of place, tradition, or spirit.

I am very curious on how this will all turn out. Although I have trimmed down this project from my original idea, I suspect that further editing and focusing will be necessary after I complete the process of teaching it the first time next spring.

My original concept of “sustainability” has broadened considerably since my workshop with the Piedmont Project and has influenced me in the creation of this course unit. Sustainability is about place and developing a deep respect and appreciation of place. It seems like tying my project in with a deeper connection with the Emory Campus through movement is a natural pairing. Sustainability is a continual process of questioning and exploring “what if...” which is directly what happens in the improvisational and choreographic process. Sustainability is transformational. Perceptions of environmental spaces can be changed forever after seeing the space in an altered way through a new choreographic lens. Sustainability is about seeing new relationships. This

happens when we view relationships of the human from within the natural environment. This process of becoming aware of new relationships will further unfold as this course unit continues to evolve.

Emory University/Spring 2011

Dance 329 Contemporary Issues in Dance

Professor Sally Radell

Office Hours: T & TH 8:30 – 11 am

115 Rich, East Annex sradell@emory.edu

Course Objectives

This course examines the practical, aesthetic, and critical issues of dance as a fine art. Focus areas will include the arts in higher education, arts advocacy, grant writing and presentation skills, dance as a reflection of place, the natural world and contemporary culture, and guest lecturers from a myriad of professionals in dance related fields. The course material is delivered via readings, discussions, project-based assignments, guest speakers and field trips as appropriate.

Course Procedures

The basic format of the class is lecture/discussion related to assigned readings, guest speakers, practical/creative assignments and projects. This is supplemented and illustrated by films, videos and field trips where appropriate. Guest speakers in many areas of dance including performance, choreography, teaching, dance administration, dance writing, and dance therapy, as available, will be integrated into the curriculum.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Department of Health, Physical Education, and Dance is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students in need of accommodations must present authorized medical documentation to the Office of Disability services (ODS), 110 Admin Bldg. Once registered with ODS, it is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with the instructor at the beginning of the semester to receive accommodations.

Course Requirements and Grading

Grant assignment 20%

Essay exam 15%

8-9 page research paper/Final Project 20%

Active participation, attendance and assignments 45%

Total 100%

Excessive absences and tardiness will affect your grade. The writing requirement cannot be satisfied in this course. Students are responsible for any work or handouts missed due to absences. Please make copies of all papers for your own records. It is a violation of the honor code to submit a research paper for this course that is also used for another course without prior approval from the instructor.

Text and Readings:

Dance from the Campus to the Real World by Suzanne Callan, Editor (purchase in bookstore)

Moving Toward Life: Five Decades of Transformational Dance essays by Anna Halprin (handed out in class) including:

Earth Dances: The Body Responds to Nature's Rhythms

Planetary Dance

The "Earth Run" from Circle the Earth

Circle the Earth: A Philosophy

In addition other germane articles will be handed out in class throughout the semester.

DANCE 329 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN DANCE

ASSIGNMENT SHEET /SPRING 2011

Note: The speakers have not yet been officially scheduled. However, they have all spoken in my class in the past and have expressed a willingness to return.

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>TOPIC</u> | <u>HOMEWORK DUE</u> |
|-------------|---|---|
| TH 1/13 | Introduction | |
| TU 1/18 | Film: The Individual and Tradition (VHS 3493 #7) | |
| TH 1/20 | What is contemporary dance? Read LA & NY times articles | and research what is contemporary dance – bring in definition |
| | "Out beyond the idea of right thinking and wrong thinking is a field... I will meet you there... -Jalaluddin Rumi | |
| TU 1/25 | What is role of arts in collegiate and larger community arena? articles | Read arts advocacy articles |
| TH 1/27 | Arts Advocacy Prepare and present an | arts inclusion argument |
| TU 2/1 | How do we learn? Nagrin & Kimmerle excerpts Grant Intro 5 ?'s for a ch/perf./teacher | |
| TH 2/3 | Guest Speaker: George Staib Dance/Campus book Choreographer/performer/teacher pp. 38-41, 66-67, 125-134 | |
| TU 2/8 | Learning process presentations 2-3 page self reflection | learning process papers due |
| TH 2/10 | How does one present oneself Bring resume, 1-2 page Staib in the arts or other professional endeavors? book and 5 ?'s for a dance admin. MEET IN RICH STUDIO | paper, pp. 109-119 D/C |
| TU 2/15 | Guest Speaker: Dana Lupton Read D/C book Dance Administrator pp. 60-62, 77-80 | |

TH 2/17 Grant Workshop Day Rough drafts of grants due

TU 2/22 **Film/discussion:** Dance as Grants Due & 1-2 page
Reflection of Contemporary Lupton reaction paper
Culture, the Natural World,
and Place

TH 2/24 Grant Panel read assigned grants

TU 3/1 Grant Panel read assigned grants

TH 3/3 Final Round of Grant Panel Bring a calculator and grants

S P R I N G B R E A K

TU 3/15 **Guest Speaker: Dr. Charne** dance therapy reading
Furcron - Dance Therapist

TH 3/17 dance therapy class Meet in Rich studio

TU 3/22 **Film/lecture/discussion:** Furcron paper due
Environmental dance Reading: Halprin essays

TH 3/24 **Campus Field Trip:** Wear gym shoes and
Environmental dance movement attire

TU 3/29 **Campus Field Trip:** Wear movement attire
Environmental dance 3 site surveys due

TH 3/31 **Guest Speaker: Celeste Miller,**
Ch./teacher/solo artist - "My dances
as reflective of place"

TU 4/5 Transitions Workshop Transitions assignment

(part I) due, Read pp. 45-47
D/C book

TH 4/7 Transitions Workshop Transitions assignment

(part II) due

TU 4/12 Open Topic (TBD based on class interest)

TH 4/14 Project Presentations Papers due

TU 4/19 Research Paper Presentations

TH 4/21 Review for final/Closing discussion

Contemporary Issues in Dance Spring 2011

**PICK ONE OF THE BELOW ASSIGNMENTS TO COMPLETE AS YOUR FINAL
PROJECT/PAPER**

OPTION #1 - Final Paper Assignment

Pick a topic of interest in dance, conduct research and write a 8-9 page research paper.

1. Paper is to be typed and double-spaced.

2. Paper should be researched using at least 3 library sources.
3. You may structure the paper as either a "point to illustrate" paper or it may simply be research on a topic of interest. The topic should be directly relevant to this course. The intent of this paper is to have the opportunity to research in greater depth some topic addressed in class.
4. You must follow appropriate English writing paper style using footnotes and a traditional bibliographic format.
5. I also encourage you to browse the GV section in the library to see what dance books and relevant ideas catch your eye.
6. Everyone must submit to me in hard copy by 3/31 in class a typed one-paragraph synopsis of your paper topic and the research it will cover. All papers are due on 4/14. Please be prepared to spend 10 minutes discussing your paper in class on 4/19. Audio visual equipment will be provided to support your paper topic. If you want to change your topic after it has been approved you will need to clear this with me first.

OPTION #2 – Choreographic Project

Choose a location on the Emory campus that has meaning for you. This can be a location used for one of your site surveys or can be a new location on campus.

1. Complete a site survey for this location. If you already have one you may use your existing survey for this site. Use this survey as resource information about your space.
2. Identify questions that you want to address regarding the space. What is important about this space to you? Do you have an emerging belief structure regarding environmental dance? Identify a clear intent that you want to explore. Design a choreographic structure for this space for either a solo or group dance that addresses your intentions.
3. The only musical accompaniment you may use is one that is natural to the space. Your time frame is a minimum of 3 minutes.
4. Schedule and conduct at least 3-4 rehearsals for your dancers in this space to give life and physical embodiment to your ideas.
5. Be prepared to share your completed choreographed dance with the class on 4/14 during class time. The rain date is 4/19.
6. Write a minimum of a 3 page reflection paper focusing on the original intent of your dance, its genesis and evolution, your choreographic structures developed for this dance and any new information you uncovered about this space and your dance as the process unfolded. Address how this dance evoked a sense of place for you, if appropriate. Discuss your emerging belief structure regarding environmental dance, if appropriate. This paper along with your site survey is due on 4/14.