Modern III | DANC 309  
Wesleyan University | Dance Department | Fall 2013
Mondays and Wednesdays | 1-2:30pm | CFA Dance Studio
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Course Overview: Modern III is an advanced-level class which will build on student's previous study of modern dance technique. The studio will be our laboratory for a semester-long exploration of a wide range of modern dance concepts with a focus on initiation, phrasing and complex movement sequences. Along the way we will give continued attention to alignment, spatial clarity, use of breath, increasing range of motion and development of strength and stamina. Ultimately, the goal is for each student to engage in a holistic approach to contemporary/modern dance technique—moving beyond rote mimicry toward dynamic, fully expansive movement exploration. The hope is that this will contribute meaningfully to the ongoing pursuit of dance training, forming the basis of a sustainable and deeply engaged movement practice—one that may inform a lifetime of creative process.

Requirements and Grading: While active engagement in the studio practice will be the primary determinant of each student's grade, maintaining a journal throughout the semester and one Performance Reflection Paper will also be used to enrich the work in the studio.

Studio participation will comprise 70% of your grade. It is important to remember that dance training is experiential. As a result full class participation, consistent attendance and prompt arrival are absolutely essential. There is NO substitute for time spent participating in the studio. As a result, one's grade will be adversely affected by absences and tardiness. Any student arriving to class more than 10 minutes late, may be asked to observe and complete an observation sheet. Further, full class participation is defined by demonstrated physical and intellectual effort, curiosity, risk taking, and a commitment to cumulative improvement.

Journal reflections will comprise 20% of your grade. Each student is required to maintain a journal for the duration of the semester. Following each class, a brief reflection should be documented in a notebook obtained specifically for this class. Reflections may include documentation of exercises, corrections received, concepts addressed, personal discoveries, and/or prompts from me. Journals will be collected for review on two occasions: Wednesday, October 17th and Monday, November 25th.

Completion of a Performance Reflection Paper will comprise 10% of your grade for the course, and is due no later than 7 days following the production you’ve chosen to write about. Students will be required to write a 2-3 paged reflection (typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font) on one of the following performances or showings by guest artists this semester:

- Doug Varone and Dancers (Thursday & Friday, September 12 & 13 at 8pm in the CFA Theater)
- Kendra Portier: Friday Artist Studio Showing (Friday, September 20 at 1:30-2:30pm in the Schonberg Studio)
- Ana Paula Holfing: Friday Artist Studio Showing (Friday, November 1 at 1:30-2:30pm in the Schonberg Studio)
- Kyle Abraham's Abraham.In.Motion (November 15 &16 at 8pm in Patricelli '92 Theater)
**Opening Class Ritual:** Each class will typically begin with an established movement sequence which will be performed in a circle, as a group. This opening ritual will serve as our collective transition to embodied investigative process. As you become more and more familiar with the sequence throughout the semester, the challenge will be to engage with increasing depth and to embody the movement more expansively. That said, we will begin each class more quickly and squeeze the most out of our time together if each student resists the need to be herded the start of this ritual.

**Motivation to Return to the Daily Practice:**

*The dancer spends his [or her] life learning, because he [or she] finds the process to be, like life, continually in process. That is, the effort of controlling the body is not learned and then ignored as something safely learned, but must go on, as breathing does, renewing daily the old experiences and daily finding new ones. Each new movement experience, engendered by a previous one, or an initial impression of the action of the body upon time, must be discovered, felt and made meaningful to its fullest in order to enrich the dance memory.*

~Merce Cunningham, in “The Function of the Technique for Dance”

*The daily class is an act and a ritual that defines the dancer. The daily confrontation with the limitations and the possibilities of the body constantly challenges the dancer to renew her/his reasons for dancing. Not to go through the class each day is to loosen the structure, the authority and the honesty of the dance gesture when one is finally onstage. All the thinking and the studying makes it possible, finally, to think less and dance more.*

~Daniel Nagrin, as inspired by the quote from Merce Cunningham above