Pedro’s Course Description: This course introduces students to dance as an art form and as culture. We seek basic dance literacy by viewing dances on film and video, making movement studies, and practicing writing in different modes about bodies in motion. The utopian ideal of ‘the natural’ dancing body will guide our investigation, from Isadora Duncan to the Post-moderns. To what end are aesthetic codes about nature imprinted on bodies? How are classical norms and conventions about beauty and pleasure disturbed or re-enacted? No dance experience is necessary, but a strong desire and confidence to move through space collaboratively with others will guide individual progress and our work as a group.

Todd’s Course Description: This course introduces students to dance as an art form and site of social awareness and contest. Through consistent studio practice, viewings (live and recorded), and writing we will engage with how bodies make meaning and are made to mean. We will concentrate on issues of gender and queerness. Beginning with the work of Isadora Duncan and moving to contemporary artists like Olivier Dubois, the course takes up the idea of the ‘natural’ body to explore how the dancing body might challenge normative assumptions as well as inscribe discursive norms. This course does not expect you to work in any single idiom, style, or vocabulary. As we will discover dance, movement, and performance all have a wide range of possibilities in how they are articulated on stage. In certain assignments we will explore specific movement styles, but in general you will have license to do what you want to do. No prior dance experience is necessary, but students will be expected to commit to moving through space and collaborative physical work.

The methodology of our work will be based in Performance Studies. Dance Studies and performance studies are coming together more frequently to produce exciting new questions and work. This means that we will be borrowing from literary theory, philosophy, and other relevant fields. Performance Studies does not assume that it can coopt other disciplines blindly. As part of our work, we will take time to discuss the implications of bringing different voices into the conversation.

Course Structure
GENERAL. Each week we will have an assigned reading(s), viewing(s), and in-class work structured in response and conversation with that week’s topics. A word about the readings: we will be reading theory, history, and critical studies. I have chosen to assign only one reading a week. My expectation and hope is that you will take this time to read past the assignment and that you will dig deeper and engage with something that you may find opaque or even simplistic. Readings will be provided via handouts or pdfs.

WRITING. Writing is an important part of this discipline. It can be difficult to express artistic ideas and questions in clear prose. We will do quite a bit of in-class writing, short responses to
prompts and experiences. We will often share this writing with the each other. You will turn in bi-weekly one-page response papers and write critical responses to department performances. At the midterm and final you will write more formal papers.

**MAKING/OGRAPHY.** Our studio practice will include basic somatic work, phrase work, individual and collaborative makings, and improvisational practices. We will dance with everyone and everyone will dance. Emphasis is placed on commitment and process. You will create two more substantial pieces at the midterm and final in collaboration with other students.

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**Expectations and Requirements**

**ATTENDANCE.** 10% of total grade.

*Class.* You are allowed two absences. Two late arrivals equal a single absence. Three absences will result in a reduced grade. Four absences will result in failure of the course.

*Performances.* You are required to attend all department performances. Calendar is forthcoming. It is your responsibility to reserve tickets for these performances.

**PARTICIPATION.** 10% of total grade.

I expect you each to arrive on time and prepared to work. This means that you have read (or reread) all applicable assignments, are dressed to move, and have the necessary materials to work for the day.

More important than these basic expectations is ability to be present in each class meeting. This means much more than being physically present. How can you attend to the needs of the larger class while respecting your personal needs/limits for the day? I expect our studio to be our laboratory, a place where we can explore, discover, and fail. This is a safe place to risk and find out what we might learn when things don’t go according to plan. Participation also means observing work and learning to give critical and supportive feedback.

A lack of participation/preparation will negatively effect your final grade.

**WRITINGS.** 30% of total grade.

*In-class writings* are non-graded experiences, but can be incorporated into later assignments.

*Bi-weekly One Page.* Every other week, beginning on 9/18, you will turn in a typed, one-page response paper on a prompt. This on-going assignment is meant to help you explore a style of writing that incorporates your personal voice/expression with a more critical engagement of a topic/piece. You will turn these in via e-mail to me by Fridays at 5pm. See course calendar for due dates. 5 points per (20 points total).

*Performance Responses.* You will write two separate two page responses to different live dance performances during the semester. This assignment is intended to help you explore a critical voice in viewing live performance. 15 points per (30 points total).
**Midterm Paper.** This will be a 3-5 page paper that accompanies your midterm piece. The paper is due on Friday October 23 by 5pm, via e-mail. 50 points.

**Final Paper.** This will be a 5-7 page paper that accompanies your midterm piece. 50 points.

Both the midterm and final paper will be a critical engagement of ideas explored in your choregraphic work. While you will be working in groups on the dance, you will turn in individual papers. Papers must adhere to current MLA guidelines for citation and formatting. Papers must have a clear thesis.

- The midterm paper must have at least one citation to support your argument.
- The final paper must have at least two citations to support your argument.

The sources for all citations can come from assigned readings, but can be original research. Be sure that the sources are legitimate and authoritative. You are not allowed to cite Wikipedia or other wiki’s. Papers will be graded according to the rubric included in this syllabus.

See assignment pages for specific details and requirements.

**MAKING/OGRAPHY.** 50% of total grade.

*In-class Pieces.* Throughout the semester we will make many brief studies in response to readings/questions. These will be made and shared during class time. One of these will be a solo. 25 points total.

*Homework Pieces.* You will also make a series of studies outside of class that will be shared during class time. These pieces will be made in response to viewings, readings, and class discussion. Due dates will vary. 25 points total.

*Midterm Piece.* In groups of either 3 or 5, you will create a piece that explores concepts covered in class to this point. Topics and questions will be discussed with the instructor. This topic will also be the subject of your midterm paper. Pieces will be shown in class on October 22nd. 100 points.

*Final Piece.* In groups of either 3 or 5, you will again create a piece that responds and problematizes ideas covered throughout the semester. Final pieces will be shown in class on December 10th. 100 points.

See assignment pages for specific details and requirements.

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**Policies/Statements**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/ HONOR CODE.** Any form of plagiarism, cheating, non-sanctioned group work, or any other behavior or performance that falls under Wesleyan’s definition of misconduct will result in immediate failure of this course. See the Student Handbook for specific information.
**LEARNING DIFFERENCE POLICY.** Students who would like to request 504/ADA reasonable accommodations are expected to self-disclose by completing the Notification Form and making a follow-up appointment with Dean Patey. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss your disability in the context of your academic and nonacademic plans, review documentation and at your request, to assist you with arranging appropriate accommodations with your instructors and other university offices, as needed.

**STATEMENT ON TOUCH/CONTACT.** Touch is an integral component of instruction in dance education, central to the field of dance practice and performance. If you feel uncomfortable with being touched, please let the professor know ahead of time so that alternate plans for your participation can be found.

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**Materials**

**DRESS.** This is a physical course. While certain parts of class time may be given over to traditional discussion, you are expected to come dressed in clothes that are comfortable for you and allow you to move through a full range of motion. We will typically work barefooted or in socks.

**NOTEBOOK.** I ask you to have a notebook/journal with you each class period to take notes in and for in-class writings. We’ll tear pages out on occasion, so choose something you don’t mind ripping.

**READINGS.** You are expected to have access to the reading material during class time.

Sample Reading/Viewing List:

- Alvin Ailey. *Revelations*
- Pina Bausch. *Café Muller*
- Trisha Brown. *L’Orfeo*
- Judith Butler. *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*
- Merce Cunningham
- Ann Daly. “The Natural Body”
- Thomas Defrantz. “Composite Bodies of Dance: The Repertory of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater”
- Giles Deleuze. “Bodies Without Organs”
- Olivier Dubois. *Pour tout l’or du monde* and *Tragédie*
- Terry Eagleton. “Morality”
- Susan Leigh Foster. “Throwing Like a Girl:
- Gender in a Transnational World”
- Michel Foucault. “Docile Bodies” and “Discourse on Knowledge”
- Martha Graham. *Night Journey*
- Jack Halberstam. *Female Masculinity*
- Headlong Dance Theater. *More*
- Keith Hennessy. *Saliva*
- Bill T. Jones. *Still/Here*
- Steve Paxton and Nancy Stark Smith. *Fall After Newton*
- Diana Taylor. *The Archive and the Repertoire*
- Paul Taylor. *Beloved Renegade*

This list is representative and certainly not exhaustive. We will find ourselves as a class and reserve the right to adjust our readings/viewings to address the needs of the class.
Course Calendar

Readings and assignments are due on the date listed. We will do our best to adhere to this calendar. However, we may find that we need to switch focus from time to time. This means I may adjust a reading assignment. I will be sure to make any changes in time to allow for adequate preparation, and any change will be made in conversation with the class. All due dates for major assignments are set.

Week One – Course Introduction

**Thursday September 10th**
Creating common vocabulary.
Reading: (in-class) Terry Eagleton’s ‘Morality.’

Week Two – The Natural Body, or a Return to the Real

**Tuesday September 15th**
More common vocabulary.
Reading: Ann Daly’s ‘The Natural Body.’

**Thursday September 17th**
Viewings: Isadora Duncan Dancers (youtube)

*DUE*: **Friday September 18th** by 5pm via e-mail to Todd. One-Page Response #1

Week Three – Making Natural Bodies

**Tuesday September 22nd**
Reading: Foucault’s “Docile Bodies” from *Discipline and Punish*

**Thursday September 24th**
Viewings: Paul Taylor’s *Promethean Fire*
*DUE*: Homework Making #1

Week Four – Extra-Natural Bodies

**Tuesday September 29th**
Reading: David Gere’s “Blood and Sweat” from *How To Make Dances in an Epidemic*

**Thursday October 1st**
Viewings: Keith Hennessy’s *Saliva* (parts 1&2)

*DUE*: **Friday October 2nd** by 5pm via e-mail to Todd. One-Page Response #2

Week Five – Who Gets To Have a Body?

**Tuesday October 6th**
Reading: Gilles Deleuze’s “Body Without Organs” and “Bill T. Jones: Moving, Writing, Speaking”
Thursday October 8th
Viewings: Bill T. Jones Still/Here (youtube)
**DUE:** Homework Making #2

Week Six – The ‘Natural’ Woman

**Tuesday October 13th**
Reading: Susan Leigh Foster “Throwing Like a Girl” and Henrietta Bannerman’s “Martha Graham’s House of the Pelvic Truth”

**Thursday October 15th**
Viewings: Martha Graham’s Night Journey (youtube)

Week Seven – The ‘Natural’ Woman

**Tuesday October 20th**
Reading: Judith Halberstam “Introduction” to Female Masculinity and in-class viewing (TBD)

**Thursday October 22nd**
**DUE:** Midterm In-class Showings

**DUE:** Friday October 23rd by 5pm via email to Todd. Midterm Paper.

Week Eight – Bodies Remembered

Tuesday October 27th **NO CLASS.**

**Thursday October 29th**
Reading/Viewing: Diana Taylor’s “Acts of Transference” from The Archive and the Repertoire and José Limon’s A Moor’s Pavane

**DUE:** Friday October 30th by 5pm via e-mail to Todd. One-Page Response #3

Week Nine – Bodies Remembered

**Tuesday November 3rd**
Reading: Ann Cooper Albright’s “Auto-Body Stories” in Meaning in Motion

**Thursday November 5th**
Todd at ASTR
Viewing: Headlong Dance Theater’s Avalanche (vimeo)
**DUE:** Homework Making #3
Week Ten – ‘Other’ Bodies

**Tuesday November 10**
Reading: Susan Manning’s “Danced Spirituals” in *On the Presence of the Body* and Thomas DeFrantz’s “Composite Bodies of Dance”

**Thursday November 12**
Viewing: Alvin Ailey’s *Revelations*

*DUE: Friday November 13* by 5pm via e-mail to Todd. One-Page Response #4

Week Eleven – Egalitarian Bodies

**Tuesday November 17**
Reading: Sally Banes’ “A Concert of Dance” from *Democracy’s Body* and Ann Cooper Albright’s “Feeling In and Out”

**Thursday November 19**
Viewing: TBD
*DUE: Homework Making #4* (There is no preparation needed for this one)

Week Twelve – Missing Bodies

**Tuesday November 24**
Reading/Viewing: Emily Coates’ “Beyond the Visible” (pdf), Pina Bausch’s *Café Müller* (you tube, for class) and Cunningham (in class)

Thursday November 26 **NO CLASS.**

Week Thirteen – New Bodies in Classical Contexts

**Tuesday December 1**
Reading: “Mark Morris, Mickey Mouse, and Choreomusical Polemic” and “Trisha Brown’s L’Orfeo: Postmodernism Meets Baroque” (pdfs)

**Thursday December 3**
Viewing: Mark Morris’ *Dido and Aeneas* and Trisha Brown’s *L’Orfeo*
*DUE: Homework Making #5*

Week Fourteen – Banal Body

**Tuesday December 8**
Reading/Viewing: Ramsay Burt’s “Dissolving in Pleasure” in *Dancing Desire* (pdf) and Olivier Dubois’ *Pour tout l’or du monde* (in class)

**Thursday December 10**
*DUE: Final In-Class Showings*
Assignments

In-Class Pieces
Through the course of the semester you will make several movement and dance studies during class time. A total of five of these will be graded as in-class work. This is a low stakes assignment; you’ll be doing this work anyway. We will do these about every other week. One of the studies will be a solo. The information discovered in this work may be explored by any one for later work. (5 points each)

Homework Pieces
Building on the physical, written, and visual work of the class you will make a total of five short studies in various groupings. This assignment is intended to help you recognize the ways in which your body moves, the ways in which you like to make and receive information, and to begin to practice longer research. It is intended, but not required, that these pieces inform your midterm and final pieces. All work shown in class can be explored by any one for later work. These pieces should be rehearsed outside of class and ready to be shown on the assigned days. (5 points each)

Midterm Piece
PHYSICAL MAKING. Working in groups of 3-5, you will create a 3 minute (maximum) study using an artist, period, dance phenomenon or cultural notion of the ‘the body’ discussed in class throughout the semester. This means that you can look ahead to the second part of the semester, but I encourage you to incorporate something from the front half. You are free to explore the theme of ‘the body’ in the narrowest (recreating) or broadest (interpreting) sense to create a subversive space for critical inquiry for its intended audiences. The work must have a clearly defined thematic and choreographic point of view concerning its subject, and may use movement and text construction to stage its meanings. It may be performed anywhere on campus that does not disrupt the normal function of the university or Middletown with consultation and approval of the professor in a mid-semester conference. You can choose to use sound/music, but it is not a requirement. If you perform outside of our studio and need playback capabilities of any kind, then you need to solve that.

WRITING MAKING. You will also write an individual 3-5 page essay in which you describe your personal process. This means you will write from your point of view, but the essay is still argumentative. This means you are presenting a point of view/opinion about the subject of your piece and providing examples and discussion to support that point of view. You must have, at least, one citation from an appropriate source to support your argument. You will be evaluated in the areas listed on the attached rubric. Papers must follow current MLA guidelines. (50 points)

Final Piece
PHYSICAL MAKING. Working in trios, you will create a 3-5mins dance using an artist, period, dance phenomenon or cultural notion of the ‘the body’ discussed in class throughout the semester. You are free to explore the theme of ‘the body’ in the narrowest (recreating) or broadest (interpreting) sense to create a subversive space for critical inquiry for its intended audiences. The work must have a clearly defined thematic and choreographic point of view
concerning its subject, and may use movement and text construction to stage its meanings. It may be performed anywhere on campus that does not disrupt the normal function of the university or Middletown with consultation and approval of the professor in a mid-semester conference. You can choose to use sound/music, but it is not a requirement. If you perform outside of our studio and need playback capabilities of any kind, then you need to solve that. (100 points)

WRITING MAKING. You will also write an individual **5-7 page critical essay** in which you again write about and from your personal point of view about your final piece. Just as you did at the midterm paper, you will write an argument driven paper that expresses your point of view/opinion. This paper must have, at least, two citations from appropriate sources. I encourage you take time in this slightly longer paper to spend time to consider a different point of view. Acknowledge a different opinion. You will be evaluated in the areas listed on the attached rubric. Papers must follow current MAL guidelines. (50 points)

**Bi-Weekly Writings**
Four times throughout the semester you will turn in a single-typed page responding to a specific prompt assigned two weeks in advance. Two of these prompts will be geared towards writing critical responses to viewings assigned for class. You may choose to single-spaced or double spaced, but the writing cannot exceed a single page. The limited length is purposeful to help you practice editing in your writing as we do as artists. Feedback on these assignments will focus on clarity of argument/point of view (3 points) and organization – does the writing follow its own internal logic (2 points).

**Response Papers/Concert Ethnographies**
You will write two **2-page papers** throughout the semester in response to department concerts or department sponsored events. Purchase tickets immediately through the Center For The Arts’ box office 860.685.3355. You can choose what events to attend. You MUST tell me what event you’ll be attending in advance of the performance. Papers will be due the Friday following the event by 5pm via e-mail to me.

The papers need to focus only on one piece presented in the concert, or follow a single dancer who may be dancing in several pieces. The general prompt for both of these ‘reviews’ is: how is the body disciplined or liberated? My vocabulary sounds harsh, but it is purposeful. This assignment is intended to help us learn to write about performance beyond simple descriptions of what happened or what it looked like. One rule: only write from your point of view. Do not make statements that account for the experience of the audience as a whole. For example, saying “The audience gasped in surprise” is slippery. We don’t know why each person may or may not have gasped. Conversely, simply stating that the audience laughed is an observation of an event.

This is from Pedro. **CONCERT PERFORMANCE ETHNOGRAPHY**
You will write a two-page ethnography of the concerts, analyzing the works’ main themes and their relevance to today’s globalized culture. What is performed? For whom and by whom? What do the performers endeavor to express to their audience? What normative assumptions were affirmed or ruptured? How do we know these? What captivated your imagination and what devices where used to do so? In the end, what did the encounter between the audience and performer reveal about the event as a cultural construct.
Your report should bring the reader to the performance through movement description, keen observation, and insightful commentary. (You may quote from readings to create an analytic framework for yourself, though it is not expected.) This is not a piece of criticism, but an ethnographic synopsis of what occurred to familiarize your reader with the performance as a work of art and a cultural construct.

Papers must be typed 2-pages (single or double spaced).
## MIDTERM/FINAL Essay Rubric and Assessment Sheet – Dancing Bodies

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**COMMENTS:**

Clear discernable thesis statement. Awareness of reading audience demonstrated. Organization and ordering of argument adheres to internal logic of essay. Conclusion is not mere recapitulation of introduction.

Accurate and focused content. Sufficient examples given for support. Examples lead to new/original ideas. Consistency in argument.

Essentially no mistakes. Formatted properly according to MLA style guide.