DANC 109: IMPROVISATION I (2 credits)
T Th 11:00am-12: 15pm
CSPAC 1610 (Dance Theatre)
Spring 2013
http://tdps.umd.edu/

Sharon Mansur
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301.405.3198
CSPAC 1929

office hours by appointment

Note:  No classes Spring Break March 18th week

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
An introduction to the discovery and cultivation of spontaneous movement in solo, duet and group settings.

COURSE OVERVIEW:
This course is an introduction to the spontaneous movement form known as improvisation. Through guided movement exercises and experiences, readings, discussions, observations, and journaling, students will broaden self-awareness and physical and expressive skills in the movement aspects of time, space, energy, shape and dynamics. This course will delve into the basics of improvisation as self-exploration, technique, choreographic tool and performance form through various approaches and styles.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
To gain awareness of the basic movement elements of time, space, energy, shape and dynamics
To deepen range and access to physical awareness and personal expressive movement choices in improvisation
To increase facility in generating movement spontaneously with awareness, skill and expressive clarity in solo, duet and group settings
To gain experience and ease in numerous approaches and theories concerning improvisation
To appreciate improvisation as both a participant and observer, as an art form and aspect of life

REQUIRED:
-Notebook and pen/pencil for class notes (no computers and no planners at opening class circle please)
-Separate journal to record entries and hand in to instructor, either typed or neatly handwritten (Initial entries typed)
-May periodically be articles and/or other handouts for reading/discussion

PREPARATION:
Please be changed and ready to start by the class time, and turn off all cell phones. Come dressed in movable but not overly large or loose dance/workout clothes: t-shirt, cotton pants etc, hair pulled off face, take off watches and dangling jewelry. Water is the only food/liquid allowed in the studio and take off shoes before entering. Kneepads optional.

COURSE EVALUATION:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Performance/Event Responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Including Maryland Day Sat Apr 27
With 1:1 meetings Mar 11 week & Apr 29 week
Collected Mar 7 & May 7 (all entries, with journal summary)
Attend 2 events with responses due Feb 21 & May 7
Free Play responses, due Feb 14 & Apr 4

ASSESSMENT:
Grading: Evaluating an improvisation class is, at best, subjective to some extent. What is important is your commitment to the process, personal improvement, your willingness to go beyond personal boundaries, and your contribution to a high standard of concentration and thorough embodiment. There will be grey areas in this work, which makes it even more crucial that you come to class with a strong work ethic, see participation guidelines for more information.

Midterm and Final Meetings: Mar 11th & Apr 29th weeks *with typed self-assessment
I will meet with each of you individually March 11th week, and again April 29th week to discuss your progress in class. I would like to begin each of these meetings with a self-assessment statement by each of you relating to your experiences of and responses to the class practice, followed by me sharing my observations. In a typed paragraph that you’ll bring to the
meeting and reference, you may reflect on the impact of the topics explored in class on your strengths and challenges; what ideas and suggestions were given to you or others that were significant in strengthening your skills and understanding of dance; and how you applied them in class and outside of class. In addition to these scheduled meetings, please feel free to make an appointment to come see me at my office to discuss your work in class. We will occasionally videotape in class to aid your self-assessment.

ASSIGNMENTS:

A. JOURNAL:  
*Collected: Th Mar 7 & Tu May 7
For each class session students will write a (1/2 page minimum) journal entry on:
1. Brief recap on class material covered
2. Personal reflections on your individual class experience, making connections outside of class as well.
This assignment is to encourage you to process and synthesize the material introduced beyond the class period. The journal will be collected twice during the semester and can be neatly handwritten or typed, and entries should be kept separate from class notes, in a separate notebook (8 1/2 by 11 sized), folder or document.

NOTES:
*Hand in the entire journal to date at each deadline.
*Please date entries and note dates when absent and missed class.
*Aspects to consider and include throughout the semester:
  - Connections to aspects of class physically, intellectually, emotionally
  - Connections to areas/subjects/experiences outside of class, personal images, dreams, memories, stories that relate to class content
  - Observations of self in motion, other people, animals, environmental movement
  - Goals, struggles, questions, answers
  - Visual art: collages, drawings, photos etc. (added to text, not replacing)
*At end of semester, will also include an end of course Summary paragraph, noting what stood out to you overall
*Class observation notes are handed in separately and then when returned a separate journal entry should be written.

Journal Format:
Use first person “I,” neatly handwritten or typed for class entries.
Spelling/grammar will not be assessed strictly but please write clearly and coherently.

Journal Assessment criteria:
-Completeness of entries
-Personal “I” perspective
-Depth of reflection and processing
*Journals will be read privately by the instructor, not shared with others.

PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE:
As developing artists and members of an artistic community, please attend as many TDPS sponsored events and other wonderful CSPAC performances as possible, as well as those happening in the Metro DC area at Dance Place, The Kennedy Center, Dance Exchange and other excellent venues! Seeing art and supporting fellow artists by participating in the dance field is an important aspect of learning and growing as an artist, which is a lifetime endeavor.

B. PERFORMANCE RESPONSES:
In order to broaden your experience of visual and performing arts, there will be 2 required events to attend and a response assignment for each that relates to our class. Specific guidelines on each response assignment to follow.

*CSPAC Student Tickets: Limited free tickets starting the Monday of the performance week at 11:00am at CSPAC box office and $10.00 discount rate available with student ID, see http://claricesmithcenter.umd.edu/ for more information

1. Convergence: Jazz, Films, and the Visual Arts exhibit, Driscoll Center  
   *Mixed Media Response Due: Th, Feb 21
   http://driskellcenter.umd.edu/JazzExhibition/index.php
   with Branford Marsalis at CSPAC, Fri Feb 15 8pm
   http://claricesmithcenter.umd.edu/events/2013/evening-branford-marsalis
C. READING RESPONSES:
Readings will be assigned in two parts from Free Play.
When responses are due they will be discussed in class, please bring your book for reference, and be prepared to contribute. Typed response, 2-3 full pages (4 max.) including specific page numbers referenced, but do not extensively quote.
Discuss the following for each section:
1. What stands out to you/what are you inspired by?
2. What do you agree/disagree with and why?
3. What is a question or topic that you are curious to know more about?
4. What do you connect to within our class or other contexts?

Sections 1 & 2: The Sources p. 1-55 & The Work p. 59-111
Sections 3 & 4: Obstacles & Openings p. 115-160 & The Fruits p. 163-197

Due: Th, Feb 14

GENERAL ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES:
NOTE: Hard copy accepted only, due at the beginning of class on assigned deadline.
Late assignments will generally not be accepted. If you are absent on an assignment deadline, please contact the instructor within 24 hours to explain circumstances and request an exception to this policy. Email copy in that rare situation can be provided as proof of completion only, and hard copy is expected at the next class for actual credit. This exception will be granted on occasion, so do not rely on this as a general strategy. Please plan ahead in terms of preparing materials as with Murphy’s Law often there will be a printing crisis right before an assignment is due.

Basic Assignment Format:
Typed, 12 point font, double spaced, 1 inch margins all around
Include in upper right corner, single-spaced on first page only: student name, class, date, instructor name, and assignment
*Please use recycled paper or double side print and staple multiple pages together. Invest in a stapler if needed.

General Assignment Criteria/Expectations: *Additional criteria reviewed as needed for specific assignments
-Complete fulfillment of topic/theme
-Clarity and cohesion of content
-Sense of individual/personal voice
-Specific references/examples/details with accurate citation
-Accurate spelling, grammar and format

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES:
All students are expected to come to each class on time, be prepared and focused for class, and actively participate in class discussions and lab experiences. Students are also expected to contribute to a professional, respectful learning environment, including a willingness to ask questions, take risks and support one another. High quality of class participation includes: open-minded, self-motivated and enthusiastic energy level each class, attentiveness, active contributions to discussions and group work, high level completion of in class exercises and full engagement in all aspects of class including studio etiquette and attendance. Your presence in class is integral to your participation and progress.

*Note: Email etiquette includes, listing the class name or number in the subject line, addressing the instructor by name and also signing your name. Please plan ahead and allow 24 hours for a response to any assignment questions.

STUDIO ETIQUETTE
- Demonstrate an understanding of the class structure by arriving in the studio, on time, prepared for class
- Take off shoes before entering studio and put them on after you leave to protect our floors
- No food, gum or beverages are allowed in the studio with the exception of water bottles
- Turn off cell phone before class
- If you are unable to dance or have any injuries, please inform the instructor before class begins
ATTENDANCE POLICY of the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies

Regular attendance and in-class participation are integral components of all dance and theatre classes and seminars. Although instructors are responsible for informing each class of the nature of in-class participation and the effect of absences on the evaluation of a student’s work, the School’s general attendance policy on excused absences is consistent with the University’s policy, which allows students to be excused for the following causes:

1. Illness of the student* or illness of a dependent as defined by the Board of Regents policy on family medical leave
2. Religious observance
3. Participation in University activities at the request of University authorities
4. Compelling circumstances beyond the student’s control

*In May 2011, the University Senate and President passed a new policy for granting excused absences, which can be found at http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/v100g.html. A student may provide a self-signed note when missing a single lecture, recitation, or laboratory, one time per course per semester, with the understanding that providing false information is prohibited under Code of Student Conduct. Self-signed notes are not accepted during “Major Scheduled Grading Events.” Specific questions concerning the TDPS policy on non-consecutive medical absences should be addressed with the Head of the Cluster.

Students claiming an excused absence must apply in writing and furnish documentary evidence for their assertion that the absence resulted from one of these causes.

(Undergraduate Catalog, pages 36 & 37 or go to: http://www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/atedasse.html)

Whenever possible, instructors will make a reasonable effort to re-schedule in-class presentations for students with an authorized excused absence. Students should check the specific requirements of their courses carefully, however, as such re-scheduling is not always possible.

Absences:

With all absences (which will hopefully be rare!) please make a reasonable effort to communicate with the instructor in advance in class or via email, or afterwards as soon as possible. It is also the student’s responsibility to contact another student from class to find out what was covered, and get notes, announcements and/or assignments. If that information is not sufficient, then see the instructor. If a student is absent on a major assessment event, contact the instructor as soon as possible, ideally within 24 hours, to request arrangements.

**Excused:** For the single/one (1) time self-documented absence students must bring in a hard copy note, neatly handwritten or typed, within one week upon returning to class identifying the date of and reason for the absence, and including “I pledge on my honor that the prior statement is true” at the end and sign the note.

If a student is absent more than once for a medically necessary illness, the instructor requires documentation signed by a health care professional. If you do not have doctor or hospital documentation, see http://www.health.umd.edu/faq under “What should I do if I miss class because of an illness?” for a class excuse note that should be printed, signed via the honor code, and turned in to the instructor within one week. Make copies as needed for multiple instructors.

*Religious observances can be a self-signed note as well, in advance of the absence.
*University activities and “compelling circumstances beyond the student’s control” need official documentation to be excused.

**Undocumented/unexcused:** One (1) is allowed in this class to cover various personal needs, beyond that will be guaranteed to impact your participation grade. There are no class make-ups or extra credit, and leaving early for designated holidays/breaks is not excused.

*Note: Excused absences do not automatically impact your assessment, but they do have an impact indirectly and cumulatively, because they affect your presence, which impacts your participation and progress.
*Keep track: It's also important for each of you to keep track of your absences, both excused and unexcused, so you have your own record in addition to the instructor’s log.

Timeliness: Students are expected to be ready to start class on time and remain for the entire class. Excessive tardiness or leaving class early (more than once or twice) will affect your participation grade. Please be responsible to have your
attendance recorded at the end of class that day if you arrive after class has started or you will miss attendance credit. If you are more than 5-10 minutes late you may be asked to observe, at instructor’s discretion for your safety and for the class focus and safety overall.

Active Observation: If you feel well enough to come and observe class, inform the instructor before class begins and you can sit and take handwritten observation notes on the movement portions for up to two (2) classes and turn in notes at the end of class for full participation credit.

Injury: See instructor if you sustained a long-term injury, as an incomplete or withdrawal may be needed.

Tactile Work: This class may involve tactile hands on work between instructor and/or student and student to student as part of the learning process. See instructor if there is an issue concerning this learning approach.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE POLICY
University of Maryland Policies and Procedures Concerning Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observances provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed because of individual participation in religious observances. Students are responsible for obtaining material missed during their absences. Furthermore, students have the responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. The student should provide written notification to the professor, by hand (not through email or mailbox delivery) within the first two weeks of the semester. The notification must identify holiday(s) and date(s).
http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii510a.html

ACCOMMODATING INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE DISABILITIES
The University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities that have been documented by Disability Support Services (0106 Shoemaker Building, 301-314-7682). A disability should be verified and discussed with Disability Support Services and the student should provide an “Accommodation Letter” to the professor or TA. If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this class, please contact the professor or TA no later than the end of the schedule adjustment period. For more information: http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/

HONOR CODE
The University has a nationally recognized Honor Code, proposed and administered by the Student Honor Council and approved by the University Senate. The University of Maryland Honor Pledge reads:

"I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination."

Unless you are specifically advised to the contrary, the Pledge statement should be handwritten and signed on the front of all exams, papers, projects, or other academic assignments submitted for evaluation in this course.* Students who fail to write and sign the Pledge will be asked to confer with the instructor. Please recognize that all students are subject to the requirements of the University's Code of Academic Integrity whether or not they write and sign the Honor Pledge. For more information: http://www.orientation.umd.edu/VirtualFolder/academicintegrity.pdf

*This honor code statement should be included at the end of assignments for our class, instead of the “front cover.”

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY
University of Maryland is committed to maintaining a working and learning environment in which students, faculty, and staff can develop intellectually, professionally, personally, and socially, free of intimidation, fear, coercion, and reprisal. The Campus prohibits sexual harassment, which is a violation of law and University policy. Individuals who engage in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. The University has procedures in place to report sexual harassment and correct it when it occurs. Students who have questions may call the Campus Compliance Officer (301-405-2839), or the Legal Office (301-405-4945). To read the entire Policy see Appendix B in the Undergraduate Catalog. http://www.president.umd.edu/legal/policies/sh.html and http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/52/s/943.

STATEMENT ON CIVILITY
The College of Arts and Humanities is expected to be a diverse, open and tolerant arena within which all ideas, whether
popular or not, may be freely discussed without rancor. Demeaning, intimidating or threatening behavior is unacceptable and contrary to our basic values. As citizens of the University, we should take the lead in producing, and take pride in sustaining, an environment that is characterized by tolerance, respect and civility. This should be the hallmark of a college that welcomes and values diverse perspectives, intellectual pluralism and the free and open exchange of ideas. Every member of this community—students, staff, faculty, leadership and supervisors within the college—is responsible for promoting such an environment and supporting these expectations.

INCLEMENT WEATHER
Official closures and delays are announced on the campus website at umd.edu and snow phone line (301-405-SNOW), as well as on local radio and TV stations. If inclement weather conditions force a faculty member to cancel a class even though the University if open, check your email frequently for updated information.

UNIVERSITY GRADING DEFINITIONS
A+, A, A- denotes excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship.
B+, B, B- denotes good mastery of the subject and good scholarship.
C+, C, C- denotes acceptable mastery of the subject and usual achievement expected.
D+, D, D- denotes borderline understanding of the subject, marginal performance, and does not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree.
F denotes failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance.

WRITING CENTER  See www.english.umd.edu/writingcenter for information and appointments.

COURSE EVALUATIONS
Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University as well as to the tenure and promotion process. Please go directly to the website: www.courseevalum.umd.edu to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online, at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

REFERENCES:

SOME IMPROVISATION WEBSITES:
Action Theater: www.actiontheater.com/
Authentic Movement Institute: www.authenticmovement-usa.com/
Contact Improvisation Net: http://www.contactimprov.net/
Contact Quarterly: www.contactquarterly.com/
DC Improvisation Festival: http://home.gwu.edu/~withers/improvisationfestival.html
Earthdance: www.earthdance.net/
Improv Arts: improvarts.alkem.org/

*Note: This syllabus may be subject to change. Students will be notified in advance of important changes that could affect grading, assignments, etc.

*Improvisation is acceptance, in a single breath, of both transience and eternity.* -Steven Nachmanovitch
# COURSE SCHEDULE

**Danc 109 Improvisation I**  
Spring 2013 Sharon Mansur  
*Note: This schedule may be subject to change*

## Week 1:

1. **TH 1/24**  
   INTRO  
   *Start Journal, Surveys due*

## Week 2:

2. **T 1/29**  
   *guest instructor Stephanie Miracle*
3. **TH 1/31**  
   BASIC MOVEMENT ELEMENTS  
   *Collect first 2 journal entries (typed)*  
   *Performance conflicts due*

## Week 3:

4. **T 2/5**  
   BASIC MOVEMENT ELEMENTS
5. **TH 2/7**  
   BASIC MOVEMENT ELEMENTS

## Week 4:

6. **T 2/12**  
   AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT
7. **TH 2/14**  
   *Choreo studio*  
   AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT  
   *Free Play 1st response due*

## Week 5:

8. **T 2/19**  
   *Choreo studio*  
   AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT
9. **TH 2/21**  
   *Choreo studio*  
   AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT  
   *Jazz/Visual Art response due*

## Week 6:

10. **T 2/26**  
    *Nora Chipaumire master class*
11. **TH 2/28**  
    *Nora Chipaumire master class*

## Week 7:

12. **T 3/5**  
    *Choreo studio*  
    CONTACT IMPROVISATION
13. **TH 3/7**  
    *Choreo studio*  
    CONTACT IMPROVISATION  
    *Midterm Journals due*

## Week 8:

14. **T 3/12**  
    *Choreo studio*  
    *Midterm Meetings this week*  
    CONTACT IMPROVISATION
15. **TH 3/14**  
    *Choreo studio*  
    CONTACT IMPROVISATION

### Spring Break  
March 19 & 21 no classes

[Passover Mar 25-27]  
[Good Friday Mar 29, Easter Mar 31]

## Week 9:

16. **T 3/26**  
    CONTACT IMPROVISATION
17. **TH 3/28**  
    CONTACT IMPROVISATION

## Week 10:

18. **T 4/2**  
    ARTPROV
19. **TH 4/4**  
    ARTPROV  
    *Free Play 2nd response due*
### Week 11:

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<td>20</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>*Choreo studio</td>
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<td>ARTPROV</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>TH</td>
<td>*Choreo studio</td>
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### Week 12:

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<td>22</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>*Choreo studio</td>
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<td>*guest instructor Stephanie Miracle</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>*Choreo studio</td>
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### Week 13:

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<td>24</td>
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<td>ARTPROV</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>TH</td>
<td>MARYLAND DAY PREP</td>
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*Maryland Day improv event Sat 4/27

### Week 14:

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<td>26</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>*Meredith Monk master class</td>
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<td>*Dancing Voice/Singing Body</td>
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<td>*Final meetings this week</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>TH</td>
<td>SITE SPECIFIC IMPROV</td>
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*Meredith Monk Sat 5/4 8pm

### Week 15:

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<td>T</td>
<td>SITE-SPECIFIC IMPROV</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>TH</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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*Journals due  
*Last day of class!

///NO FINAL EXAM PERIOD////

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