DANC 489C: CONTACT IMPROVISATION (3 credits)
MW 3:30-4:50pm
CSPAC
Fall 2013
http://tdps.umd.edu/

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Discovery and cultivation of the principles and skills of Contact Improvisation (CI) dance technique practice.

COURSE OVERVIEW:
Contact Improvisation (CI) is an improvisational duet dance form based on sensation, weight, touch, communication and essential connection between two people, first instigated by Steve Paxton in the early 1970s in the U.S., influenced by modern dance, martial arts, social dance and cultural values of its time of inception. This cooperative dance practice explores states of presence, perception, sensory awareness, and responsiveness to one’s self and environment, as well as physical strategies related to gravity, momentum, falling, rolling and lifting. CI’s influence can be seen in modern/post modern dance and physical theater training, choreography and performance. CI is a rich opportunity for collaborative play and experimentation dancing with another person, and is accessible to people of all physical abilities and experiences. In this course we will engage in regular studio practice as well as read, watch, discuss and respond to Contact Improvisation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
To cultivate somatically based mind/body awareness and integration of sensing, thinking, feeling and intuitioning
To gain an embodied knowledge of the principles and skills of Contact Improvisation, how they relate to other techniques, and how they support smart, efficient open-bodied and open-hearted movement choices.
To increase facility in generating movement spontaneously via CI with awareness, skill and expressive clarity
To deepen range and access to physical awareness, experimentation and personal expressive movement choices in improvisation
To develop a sense of CI as a historical form and in relation to the contemporary dance field today
To make connections between engagement with dancing inside the studio and reflection on human behavior outside of the studio in daily life

REQUIRED:
ISBN: 978-0299124441
-Notebook and pen/pencil for class notes (no computers or planners at opening class circle please)
-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:
Class Participation 40%
Progress 20%
Class Responses 10% Midterm response & Final response
DC CI Jam & Response 15% Choose one Sunday to attend
Reading Responses 15% 3 Sharing the Dance readings

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.

ASSIGNMENTS:

A. CLASS RESPONSES: Midterm & Final
*Class Responses: 2 full pages min., 3 pages max.
This assignment is to encourage you to process and synthesize the course material beyond the class period and be aware of your own intentions, goals and progress throughout the semester.

Be specific and personal. This is your opportunity to hone your meta-learning skills, and become more aware of your perceptions, questions, learning and growth, and be responsible for your own education and training.

*Discuss the following in your reflection:
- Observations/connections to aspects of class physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually
- Observations/connections to areas/subjects/experiences outside of class
- A personal image, dream, memory, story that relates to class themes
- Observations concerning your individual progress in the CI context, reflect on where you started and where you’re going, including reference to intentions, goals, struggles, questions, answers, jokes, existential quandries, explanations of chaos theory and quantum physics etc.

*-Optional to add visual art aspect: collage, drawing, photo etc. (can be added to document, in addition to text)

B. DC CONTACT JAM & RESPONSE:
*Jam Response: 2 full pages min, 3 pages max.

Sundays 2-5pm
*Choose ONE Sunday to attend during the semester
http://myriadicity.net/contact-improvisation/dc-contact-improv/dc-contact-improv
*Next time use: dcontactimprov.net

Facilitator: Ken Manheimer
St. James & St. Monica Church parish hall, 222 8th St. NE, Washington, DC 20002
$5-10 donation

*First Sunday of each month is an ensemble improv approach called the Underscore, developed by Nancy Stark Smith. Ken gives an intro from 2-2:30pm-Please take extra care to be on time for these sessions.
*See website to print, sign and bring liability agreement to Jam, and read through website for guidelines/etiquette

*Discuss the following in your response:
- Describe your experience attending the Jam, including thoughts, emotions, sensations, questions, ahas, concerns
- Discuss the Jam in relation to our class sessions, Sharing the Dance and any other context for learning about CI
- Add any other observations, comments that seem important to note

C. READING RESPONSES: Sharing the Dance in 3 sections
*Reading Responses: 2 pages min, 3 max. Essay Format
Readings will be assigned in 3 sections from Sharing the Dance.
When responses are due they will be discussed in class, please bring your book for reference, and be prepared to contribute. Including specific page numbers referenced, but do not extensively quote.

*Discuss the following for each response:
1. What stands out to you/what are you inspired by in terms of the text and images?
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?
GENERAL ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES:

NOTE: Typed, 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 [with written notice in first two weeks of semester, see Religious Observation Policy]
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 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 cover 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

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.

“Contact improvisation is a duet dance form that creates a frame for observing the functioning of the body’s reflexes and our innate abilities to respond to the unusual physical circumstances of the touch of a partner and the floor on any surface of the body.” -Daniel Lepkoff
COURSE SCHEDULE

DANC 489C Contact Improvisation
Fall 2013 Sharon Mansur
<<DRAFT June 2013>>

Week 1: INTRODUCTIONS
-Surveys due
-Conflicts and religious observations due

Week 2: BASICS: SAFETY & BOUNDARIES

Week 3: SENSORY AWARENESS & PERCEPTION

Week 4: DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS
-Sharing the Dance Section 1 due

Week 5: BODY SYSTEM SUPPORT: Skeletal, Nervous, Muscular

Week 6: CI EXPLORATIONS: WEIGHT
See Fall After Newton video excerpts

Week 7: CI EXPLORATIONS: MOMENTUM
-Midterm Class Response due
-See Sharon & Daniel video excerpts

Week 8: CI EXPLORATIONS: SPIRALS
-Sharing the Dance Section 2 due

Week 9: CI EXPLORATIONS: ROUND ROBIN

Week 10: DEEPPENING THE DANCE

Week 11: DEEPPENING THE DANCE
-Sharing the Dance Section 3 due

Week 12: DEEPPENING THE DANCE

Week 13: SYNTHESIS

Week 14: SYNTHESIS

Week 15: CLOSING CIRCLE
-Final Class Response due [No final exam period]

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

The simple pleasure of moving and living through one’s body is what I think matters most here.
And the pleasure of dancing with someone in a spontaneous, unplanned way… -Steve Paxton on CI