COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

In this first course of dance composition at the graduate level, the entire semester will be dedicated to the exploration of the creative process and to nurturing and refining one’s individual choreographic voice and vision in a shared studio setting. Most importantly, this semester is meant to be one of exploration, of awakening new pathways of imagination, of practicing the freedom to create without the pressure to succeed.

Participants, many of whom may have had many years of experience in performing, teaching, and/or creating dances, will be invited to let go of previous definitions of their artistic selves and established patterns of movement styles and ways of choreographing. As we set aside habitual patterns of seeing/feeling/moving, a spaciousness becomes available to give room for experimentation and transformation.

Each week or two will be devoted to delving into choreography from different pathways, exploring different ways of beginning, different ways of continuing, different ways of structuring and editing material. Solo, duet, and group forms will be explored, as well as working with site-specific choreography, spoken word/text, video, and methods of working with composers and researching recorded music and sound scores. Improvisation will be integrated as a technique for tuning into one’s body and one’s choreographic ideas.

Each week you will watch short YouTube excerpts from diverse artists. Except for the videos we watch together in class, you will be required to post “instant responses” to these viewings – no more than 1-3 paragraphs – of writing that is non-academic, honest, spontaneous. Sometimes I will choose these, sometimes you will select a choreographer to introduce to the class (via YouTube.)

In addition, you will have longer viewing assignments to soak in some of the great artists working today, including Maya Lin, Andy Goldsworthy, Christian Marclay, Anna Schuleit, Pina Bausch, and Meredith Monk. Each assignment is to be accompanied by a short written response, shared online for class participants’ reading of each other’s writings.

Each of you will introduce an artist (your choice) with examples of their work in a 15-20 minute presentation to the class. This could be a film director, composer, choreographer, photographer, cartoonist, installation artist.

In addition to the weekly short choreographic assignments given within class, each participant will create a new dance/performance work of their own choosing (3-10 minutes in length) to be performed in class on Monday, December 3. This is to be something new that you begin now and work on throughout the semester, something in which you possibly depart from what you have already done before. Every three weeks you will show it to the class as a work in progress – either live or on video. This is a time where you will practice giving and receiving constructive feedback, articulating thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a supportive environment.

You are encouraged to attend as many of the Friday monthly showings (5-7pm) as possible throughout the year, but are required to come to at least one showing per semester. Ideally you will present something you are working on, but equally important is for you to give feedback to the undergrads (and grads) who will be showing their own works in progress. I am very interested in you experiencing yourselves as mentors to the undergrads, and that these relationships will develop into a rich aspect of your three years here at UMD.

You are encouraged to see as many performances as possible during your three years here at CSPAC, and are required to see four concerts this semester, including the shared MFA dance thesis concert and the Fall MDE Saturday matinee.
REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY:

You are expected to be putting in 1-2 hours of creative practice/day. This can mean improvising in the studio, choreographing on oneself or other people, developing phrases or warm ups you will use for teaching your own dance classes, listening to music with undivided attention (in the studio or elsewhere, dancing or in stillness.)

You are expected to be putting in an average of 2-3 hours/week in viewing live or recorded performance.

You will have completed the summer assignment of reading Marjane Satrapi’s “Persepolis” with response paper, as well as the summer choreography assignment.

You will attend four concerts this semester.

You will attend a minimum of one Friday departmental open showing.

You will create a new work to be performed in class on Monday, December 3rd.

You will introduce the work of one artist in a 15-20 minute presentation to the class.

You will participate in the classroom creative process explorations which may have continuation assignments to be created outside of class and presented the following week.

You will each choose YouTube videos of choreographers/performance works/dance styles you will assign for viewing to the class, with a short written commentary on why you chose them.

You will make a playlist of five musical choices to share with the class, with 1-2 paragraph introductions of each composer and your connection to it.

You will all write commentaries on each YouTube and viewing assignment: no more than 1-3 paragraphs unless you feel compelled to write more: what moved/interested/inspired you? (or not) What did you see? What do you think is the artist’s intent? What was your response? Be non-academic, honest, articulate. Read your cohort’s postings.

You will keep a weekly journal of ”aha” moments - whether they happen while in a class, walking down the street, chopping vegetables, reading a book, watching a concert, listening to music, lying down in silence and stillness.

You will write a reflection paper at midterm (Oct 15) and again at the end of the semester (Dec 3) - about this class, but also about your overall experience while at school. It should be at least two pages in length, in any style or format.

GRADING:
50% class participation (including creative work in class, feedback to others)
50% assignments (including choreography, papers, readings, viewings)

NOTES:
You must come on time for the entire time! Beginnings are VERY IMPORTANT. Lateness will seriously affect your grade.
Stay healthy! This is a professional responsibility to yourself and to others.
Do NOT come to this class if you are sick.
Bring kneepads to each class.
Bring warm clothes in case the studios are cold.
Bring a notebook/computer to class to keep an ongoing journal of ideas, notes, choreography.
CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to change):

Wed, 8/29: In Class creative process exploration (30 minutes)
Introductions, with each grad presenting 5-10 minute live/dvd examples of choreography and/or performances. (45 minutes)
review of syllabus (15 minutes)
Marjane Satrapi’s “Persepolis” response paper due
YouTube: Chunky Move (three different pieces including "Glow")
Viewing assignment: each person please select one choreographer's work to share via YouTube

Mon, 9/3: Labor Day- CAMPUS CLOSED

Wed, 9/5: Summer choreography assignment showing (3-15 minutes)
(please post via Elms your responses to the showing)
YouTube: Hofesh Schecter, Akram Kahn, Batsheva
Viewing assignment: Maya Lin “A Strong Clear Vision” (PWDT/dvd)

Mon, 9/10: Introduction to Pearson and Widrig’s choreography and creative process

Wed, 9/12: FIRST WORK-IN-PROGRESS SHOWING
YouTube: Queens for a Day, Fischli and Weiss"The Way Things Go"
Viewing Assignment: Noémie LaFrance “Descent” (PWDT/DVD)

Mon, 9/17: Site- Specific choreographic exploration

Tue, 9/18: Creative Dialogue- Ann Bogart, Liz Lerman, Hasan Elahi

Wed, 9/19: Preparation for teaching Stephanie's class
YouTube: Busby Berkeley, Anna Schuleit, Christian Marclay
Viewing assignment: Sasha Waltz (PWDT/DVD)

Thu-Fri, 9/20-21: SITI Company

Fri, 9/21: Site-Specific choreography explorations on Stephanie's technique class 11-12:20

Mon, 9/24: preparation for teaching Stephanie's class (Sara and Patrik on tour)

Wed, 9/26: In Class site-specific choreography exploration: prep for Stephanie's class #2 (Sara and Patrik on tour)
YouTube: Sidi Larbi/ Shaolin Monks, Yin Mei, Shen Wei
Viewing assignment: Yang Ban Xi (PWDT/DVD)

Thu-Sun, 9/27-30: A Midsummer Nights Dream

Fri, 9/28: Site-Specific choreography explorations on Stephanie's technique class 11-12:20
(Sara and Patrik on tour)

Mon, 10/1: Lucky Plush Master Class
Creative Dialogue Lucky Plush

Wed, 10/3: creative process choreographic exploration
YouTube: Bebe Miller, Camille Brown, Reggie Wilson, Kyle Abraham
Viewing /reading assignment: Andy Goldsworthy

Thu-Fri, 10/4-5: Lucky Plush
African Women Choreographers at the Kennedy Center

Fri, 10/5: Makeup Class 10-11:30 or 12:30-2

Sat-Sun, 10/6-7: Tzveta Kassabova/Nathan Andary at Dance Place

Mon, 10/8: Creative Process choreographic exploration
Music playlists due

Wed, 10/10: SECOND WORK-IN-PROGRESS SHOWING (15 minutes each person)
YouTube assignment: Ratmansky, Diana Vishneva
Viewing assignment: Ballets Russes

Tue, 10/16: Rinde Eckert Creative Dialogue 7:30 Gildenhorn

Wed-Fri, 10/17-19: Rinde Eckert "And God Created Great Whales"
Wed, 10/17: Creative Process choreography exploration
YouTube: Jonah Bokaer, Miguel Gutierrez, John Jasperse
Viewing Assignment: Pina Bausch documentary on "Kontacthof" (PWDT DVD)

Thu-Fri, 10/18,19: Shared Grad MFA Concert/CSPAC
Fri, 10/19: Makeup Class 10-11:30 or 12:30-2
Sat-Sun, 10/20+21: Dan Hurlin at ADI
Mon, 10/22: In Class choreography exploration (Choreography Studio)
Wed, 10/24: Creative Process Exploration
YouTube: Nicole's Choice
Music listening assignment: Mozart's Requiem
(listen to entire requiem without interruption, in the dark, lying on the floor)
Fri, 10/26: Makeup Class 10-11:30 or 12:30-2
Mon, 10/29: Creative Process Exploration
Wed, 10/31: Creative Process Exploration
YouTube: Lynn's Choice
Viewing Assignment: Nora
Fri, 11/2: Possible Makeup Class 12:30-2
Mon, 11/5: Nora Chipaumire master class with second year grads( scheduled to go to 5:30)
Wed, 11/7: THIRD WORK-IN-PROGRESS SHOWING
YouTube: Robin’s Choice
Film Assignment: Metropolis (PWDT DVD)

Mon, 11/12: Artist-of-Choice Presentations (20 minutes each) (Dance Conference Room)
Wed, 11/14: TBD
YouTube: Megan's Choice
Viewing assignment: Dan Hurlin “Disfarmer” or “Hiroshima Maiden” (DVD)
Fri, 11/16: Makeup Class 12:30-2
Sat-Sun, 11/17+18: Brian Brooks at ADI
Mon, 11/19: TBD
Wed, 11/21: class cancelled - Happy Thanksgiving!
Mon, 11/26: TBD
Wed, 11/28: View Meredith Monk’s film “Ellis Island” (watch in class)
YouTube: Basil Twist
Fri-Sat, 11/30+ 12/1: Maryland Dance Ensemble Concerts/CSPAC
*** you are required to go to the matinee Sat performance ***
Mon, 12/3: Final Showing of new work
Wed, 12/5: class cancelled
Final reflection paper due (email to me please)
Mon, 12/10: class cancelled
12/1-12: Online course evaluation-please fill out

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION
"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. CourseEvalUM will be open for you to complete your evaluations for fall semester courses between Tuesday, December 1 and Sunday, December 13. You can go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations starting December 1. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing the summary reports for thousands of courses online at Testudo."
SYLLABI POLICY INFORMATION

SCHOOL OF THEATRE, DANCE, AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES

PLUS MINUS GRADES: The implementation of plus minus grade factoring will begin in fall 2012. Under the new policy, quality points for each letter grade from A through D will reflect plus and minus components of the grade, as shown below. The plus/minus system will apply to both undergraduate and graduate courses. A+ = 4.0, A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, D+ = 1.3, D = 1.0, D- = 0.7, F = 0. The University’s present marking system defining the standards for letter grades is retained under the new plus/minus policy. The present marking system is as follows:

- 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
- D+, D, D- denotes borderline understanding of the subject, marginal performance, and unsatisfactory progress toward a degree

F denotes failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance

Students are required to earn a grade of at least C-in their major and have a minimum 2.0 Cumulative GPA in their major in order to graduate. [http://www.testudo.umd.edu/plusminusimplementation.html](http://www.testudo.umd.edu/plusminusimplementation.html)

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](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/](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](http://www.orientation.umd.edu/VirtualFolder/academicintegrity.pdf)

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](http://www.president.umd.edu/legal/policies/sh.html) and [http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/52/s/943_](http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/52/s/943_)

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](http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/v100g.html). A student may provide a self-signed note when missing a single lecture, recitation, or laboratory, 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-continuous 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](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.