Field-of-Study Course Proposal

1. Field of Study: Visual and Performing Arts
2. Course Number: DANC 248
3. Course Title: Introduction to Movement Improvisation
4. Catalog description: The practice and study of movement improvisation, chance and planned composition
5. Prerequisites: None
6. Hours of credit: 4
7. Typical estimated enrollment: 20
8. How often and by whom the course will be offered: Every other Fall, by Cheryl Pallant, Adjunct Instructor
9. Staffing implications for the school/department/unit: Existing staff adequate
10. Adequacy of library, technology, and other resources: Adequate
11. Any interdepartmental and interschool implications: Supports students pursuing dance minor or theater major
12. Contact person: Myra Daleng, Director of Dance

HOW THE COURSE FULFILLS THE PURPOSE OF THE FIELD OF STUDY

The field of visual and performing arts considers questions having to do with the forms, traditions, meaning and historical contexts of works in visual and performing media, and explores issues of method, process and personal resources in the media.

Dance 248 focuses on unraveling habitual ways of moving to discover impromptu motion and new patterns, in groups, duets, and alone. Class will look at how to articulate and communicate experience through motion; how to explore the differences between planning and chance; how to develop moment to moment kinesthetic awareness; and how to recognize cultural differences in techniques. Students will learn how to develop compositions simultaneous with their with performance.

With attention focused on responsiveness in the moment, students learn to think quickly and creatively and are encouraged to investigate differences between familiarity and risk. The class stimulates new perceptions, news ways of thinking, and develops flexibility and strength. Students will explore conventions and experimentation. The class improves body awareness, kinesthetic ability, perceptual range and increases strength and flexibility. It especially supports those pursuing a dance minor or a theater major.

A range of contemporary theoretical, artistic, and ethnographic techniques from American and
international improvisers will be explored for strategies, techniques, motivations, and process.

Improvisers such as Anna Halprin, Steve Paxton, Remy Charp and cultures who incorporate dance improvisation such as Yoruban masked dance, Japanese butoh, and South Indian bharatanatyam will be studied. Students will read articles, fiction and poetry, keep a journal, write a research and narrative essay, and attend several dance performances that they will critique.
Course Overview: This class is devoted to the art of movement improvisation. Students will move and think about improvisational strategies in groups, duets, and alone. We will unravel habitual ways of moving to discover impromptu motion and patterns. We will explore a range of contemporary theoretical, artistic, and ethnographic techniques from American and international improvisers. We will discuss technique, motivation, chance, and process. The body is the prime medium, however, props, music, text, and other materials will be used.

Students are urged to approach class with an open mind and a willingness to explore new material and processes. This class journeys into new territory, into the wilderness of personal being, and varied modalities of critical thinking. Be prepared to collaborate, improvise, explore, take risks, and awaken senses.

Objectives:
- To investigate the body and improvisational movement
- To articulate and communicate experience through motion
- To explore the differences between planning and chance
- To develop moment to moment kinesthetic awareness
- To release tension and enjoy breath

Dress: Wear loose fitted, comfortable clothes that support ease, like a t-shirt and sweat pants. Shoes and jewelry should be removed.

Movement: With impromptu motion the focus of the class, I encourage you to explore a full range of movement possibilities. The aim is to get you using the mass of your body and the surrounding space dynamically and improvisationally. You will be expected to compose/design an improvisational structures.

Writing:
Report/Researched Writing: Select a topic mentioned in the readings, from class discussions, or from your own investigation. You may choose a historical figure, compare two approaches to movement, or explain the cultural significance of a type of improvisation. Summarize the idea and explain in what ways it impacts movement. What is its significance? How does it reflect on the understanding of the body? You may include personal reflections, however, the majority of the paper will be a report. Specifics: 4-6 pages; bibliography will include a mix of outside sources to include journal articles, books, dance encyclopedias, and reputable online material. Due: October 8

Narrative Writing: For this paper, outside sources are optional. The majority or entirety of the paper focuses on your reflections from the class. Comment on your somatic journey through the class, a particular revelatory moment, an insight that challenges assumptions, a comparison of your movement experience to another field of study. Specifics: 4-6 pages, with bibliographic references, or not. Due: November 26
**Required Attendance of Dance Performances:** You are required to see three of the concerts listed below. Write a two-page critique of two shows and hand in a ticket stub for the third. Critiques consist of a show summary and your assessment of the performance.

- **Diavolo:** Friday, September 14th, 2007 @ 7:30 PM, Modlin Center for the Arts, University of Richmond, $5 w/ voucher. Reservations required. Box office; 289-8980.

- **Symbiosis: Ground Zero Dance Company:** Thursday-Saturday, September 27-29, 8:00 pm, VCU Grace Street Theater, 934 W. Grace Street. Tickets required $10.00 w/student ID. Ticket info call 828-2020 or online vcu-dance@erols.com

- **Tania Isaac Dance:** Friday-Saturday, October 12-13, VCU Grace Street Theater, 934 W. Grace Street. Tickets required $10.00 w/student ID. Ticket info call 828-2020 or online vcu-dance@erols.com

- **Hubbard Street Dance Chicago:** Monday, October 22nd or Tuesday, October 23rd, 2007 @ 7:30 PM, Modlin Center for the Arts, University of Richmond, $5 w/voucher. Reservations required. Box office; 289-8980.

- **Gamelan Cudamani, “Odalan Bali: An Offering of Dance and Music:** Thursday, October 25th, 2007 @ 7:30 PM, Modlin Center for the Arts, University of Richmond, Free w/ voucher. Reservations required. Box office; 289-8980.

- **Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández:** Sunday, October 28th, 2007 @ 7:30 PM, Modlin Center for the Arts, University of Richmond, $5 w/voucher. Reservations required. Box office; 289-8980.

**Extra Credit:** You can attend two of the following for extra credit, to make up for an absence or raise your grade. A one-page summary with ticket stub is due.

- **VCU Dance Salon:** Tuesday, October 16 @ 8:00pm, VCU Dance Center, Conter os Floyd and Brunswick Streets. Free admission. Tickets 828-2020 or online vcu-dance@erols.com

- **For Africa:** A benefit performance & celebration for the children of Ghana (All proceeds go to Sovereign Global Mission in Ghana); November 1-3 at 7:30 . Grace Street Theater, 934 W. Grace Street, Tickets 828-2020 or online vcu-dance@erols.com

- **VCU Fall Senior Project Concert:** Friday-Saturday, November 16-17 @ 8:00, Grace Street Theater, 934 W. Grace Street, Tickets $10 w/student ID, 828-2020 or online vcu-dance@erols.com

**Attendance and Tardiness:** Most of the learning in this class is participation based. Therefore, it is extremely important that you not miss class. One absence is permitted; subsequent absences lower your grade; three absences lower it an entire letter. Your dean must authorize excuses absences. Two lates equal an absence.

**Grading:** Students will be evaluated based on the following:
Effort and participation : 37%  Assignments: 37%  Attendance: 25%