

THE MOVING BODY

Colleen Sullivan

Office Location & Phone: Katzen 230, 202-885-1496

Office Hours: TH 12-3, FR 10-11 and by appt.

Best Contact Info: csulliva@american.edu, 516-439-1599 (text or leave msg)

Fall 2017

PERF-308

Wednesdays, 11:20-2:10

Katzen, Room 154

WELCOME TO THE MOVING BODY

"PHYSICAL THEATRE ... WHAT A BIZARRE CONCEPT! THE IDEA THAT THEATRE CAN BE NON-PHYSICAL, IT'S ACTUALLY A NONSENSE" – Giovanni Fusetti (artist, performer, teacher, clown)

It was a long but free-ing journey for me as a performer and teacher to make this discovery – that the body cannot be denied. We cannot not use our body as a performer. Everything is movement. Stillness is movement. Emotion, text, breath, voice, ideas, inspiration...all movement. The psycho-physical connection is innate, a powerful and integral force of creation. Yet, as performers, as humans, we can lose that awareness of our body and its capabilities. In The Moving Body, we will take a journey of awareness, to discover our individual body's unique humanity and its capacity to create, and play in a space of openness, vulnerability, specificity and risk taking. We will work to connect physically with others, to allow kinesthetic and organic emotional responses to emerge from movement.

Much of the work will be practical and experiential. While working in depth on a few different techniques, we will celebrate diverse movement cultures. Expect to work in contemporary practices like Viewpoints, Suzuki, Laban, Le Coq and Physical Performance creation inspired from ensemble theatre companies like Frantic Assembly and Elevator Repair Service. The overall approach is eclectic, recognizing the vast and intersecting landscape of movement theory and practice around the world. To that end and to add to our collective breadth of knowledge about the role of the body in performance, you will each research a different movement approach that we do not specifically work with in class, write a short research paper and lead us in an exercise from this approach. Throughout the course, you will also reflect upon your learning and growth in a journal, the life of an artist is necessarily a reflective one. Finally, we will work to synthesize and connect our training to practical applications: creating work from scratch, as well as applying what we learn to scripted texts in group presentations.

Your fellow classmates are your ensemble. Together, we will collaborate as a team; work for the progress of our ensemble mates as well as ourselves. I will ask you over and over again to take care of each other. We can accomplish great things when we have the support of our group. Wear comfortable clothes, bring water and an open mind...it will very likely get sweaty. Welcome, Colleen

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Moving Body explores awareness of physical instincts, and the skill set to utilize those instincts in the act of physical creative expression on stage. Students use their bodies as exploratory tools to embrace the power of personal creativity and authentic expression. With a focus on physical theatre, the course is designed primarily for actors, but the techniques explored are also applicable to dancers and others in the performing arts.

MORE INFO

READINGS

There is no required textbook. Other readings are either noted on the course outline or I'll let you know in class. These readings will either be available online, or I will provide them or they may be on reserve in the library.

PERFORMANCES

Watching live theater with the express intention of observing the physical life of the performance is a critical component to your growth and understanding of the body as a vital creative instrument for the performer. We will look at a lot of video examples in class, but you will also need to see the two Department performances this semester and critically evaluate them in your journal. We will also discuss our observations in class together.

1. *Little Women* - American University production, October 19 - 21, 27-28. (required)

2. *Le Ronde* - American University production, Nov 9-11. (required)

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Participation: Preparation, Rehearsals, Participation, Attendance (14 @ 5pts each)	60 points
<p>Attendance is mandatory. This is an experiential course and dependent on your attendance and participation. Every class builds on skills and theories we practiced and learned from the previous class. Also though your journey is individual, we are also working to build an ensemble and will work together a lot. Your classmates are depending on you to be there, to grow and deepen the work, together, week-by-week. I will take attendance every class. For the purposes of grading, I don't distinguish between "excused and "unexcused" absences or tardies. You are allowed ONE absence without penalty. Each absence after the ONE absence will result in lowering your Participation Grade 1/2 letter grade per absence after the One. Two tardies count as one absence.</p>	
Movement Journal	50 points
<p>The practical and reflective nature of the course is highlighted in the keeping of a working journal. Please make full use of your journal as you analyze and reflect upon your work. The journal also helps to inform me of the extent of your consideration of movement and performance. Make an entry for <u>each class</u> meeting of at least <u>one typed page per class</u>. You are of course free to write more. Include what we did, what you learned, what questions you have about movement, yourself, life, being human. Be honest, be thorough. Also include an entry about the two AU performances that you will attend, with particular attention to the movement and actors. More thorough guidelines on performance reflections forthcoming in the next couple weeks. I suggest starting a file on your computer, record the day, give it a title, and start writing. Then keep one continuous file throughout the semester. I will collect, read, give feedback, and grade them twice during the semester, submitted either on paper or electronically.</p>	
Movement Technique - Paper and Presentation	25 points
<p>Each of you will research a different movement approach that we do not specifically work with in class, write a short research paper and lead us in an exercise from this approach. As the semester gets going, I will provide a list of movement techniques from which you may choose or you can find your own. Specifics on the assignment forthcoming.</p>	
Final - Group Presentation and Individual Paper	30 points
<p>Your Final and culminating experience will be the creation of a performance piece with a small group, 2-3. The nature of the piece is up to your group, but it should involve a synthesis of techniques and inspirations we have discovered and learned during the course. Accompanying your presentation will be an individual paper about your work on the project as well as a final self-evaluation.</p>	
TOTAL	165 points

PERSONAL STANDARDS

We will work a lot in pairs and in groups, so taking care of each other, respecting opinions and ideas, creative collaboration is absolutely necessary. Movement courses can be fun, scary, a sea-change every day. Because the work is ourselves, up there being vulnerable and honest, bravery is required. For this reason, we must demand respect in class. It is vital that we have the support of the group. Let's call this our class protocol:

- Everyone plays, every class, graciously
- Wear clothes that you can freely move in
- Everyone has the right to feel free to work, explore, and take risks in an environment that is free from judgment and disapproval.
- The first job of a performer is to show up on time, prepared, focused. I expect you to arrive to class on time, ready to work, leave your cell phones behind, be ready to take care of each other.

If you ever have any trouble understanding expectations or assignments or activities, please let me know. Find me, let's talk, I care a great deal about not leaving anybody behind. Come by my office hours anytime or let's set up a time to talk.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

We will observe and embrace American University's Academic Integrity Code. <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm>

COURSE OUTLINE

The Course Outline is an expectation of the pace, topics, and experiences of the course. If we find that we need to spend more time on some concepts or move more quickly through others, or our group dynamic takes us on a detour, we will adapt the schedule as needed. Not all homework assignments are on the syllabus, but I'll let you know the class prior.

PART ONE - THE POSSIBILITY OF THE BODY, MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES

Week 1 Aug 30	Intro to Course, Building our Ensemble <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course Introduction• Ensemble Exercises & Body Inventory
Week 2 Sept 6	Viewpoints <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intro to the 9 Viewpoints• Extended Viewpoints exercises
Week 3 Sept 13	Viewpoints & Composition <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to create pieces through Viewpoints and Compositions
Week 4 Sept 20	Suzuki <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intro and exercises in Suzuki training* Select the Movement Technique for your Presentation & Sign up for a date
Week 5 Sept 27	Laban & LeCoq & The Clown <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intro and exercises in Laban & LeCoq
Week 6 Oct 4	Using Source Material to Create Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TURN IN JOURNAL• Bring in two source materials: video, painting, poem, photograph, dance, etc
Week 7 Oct 11	Movement Technique Presentations
Week 8 Oct 18	Character Creation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Techniques for creating character from the outside-in
Week 9 Oct 25	Contemporary Physical Theater Companies & Devising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercises, discussion and performance creation from Frantic Assembly, Elevator Repair Service, Synetic, Pig Iron and others

* See Department production of *Little Women*: October 19 - 21, 27-28

PART TWO - WORKING WITH SCRIPTED TEXTS

Week 10 Nov 1	Movement and Words: Speaking from the physical experience <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring found text, 5 lines max, memorized.• Incorporating text and movement• In pairs, choose a short 1-2 minute scripted scene from a contemporary or classical play to present for next class
Week 11 Nov 8	Working with scripted scenes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rehearse and present scenes• Form Final Project Groups, meet to discuss ideas

* See Department production of *Le Ronde*: November 9-11

PART THREE - FINAL PROJECT

Week 12 Nov 15	Pitch Final Project Idea <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pitch idea to class - Come prepared with script, images, music, etc. Whatever you need to share your idea with us
Week 13 Nov 22	THANKSGIVING BREAK - NO CLASS
Week 14 Nov 29	Rehearsals: Final Project <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rehearsals in and outside class
Week 15 Dec 6	Rehearsals: Final Project <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rehearsals in and outside class• TURN IN JOURNAL
Wed, December 13 11:20pm - 1:50pm	FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATION Paper & Presentations due

AU RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

During the semester, there may be times when you can benefit from the resources that AU makes available to students. Please do not hesitate to take advantage of these resources.

Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC) MGC 243, 202-885-3360. All students may take advantage of the Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC) for individual academic skills, counseling, workshops, tutoring and writing assistance, as well as Supplemental Instruction. All services are free. The services include the Writing Center (first floor of Bender Library), which assists students with academic writing and assignments. The Math/Stat Lab (Myers Building, 202-885-3154) which provides mathematics and statistics tutoring. Additional content tutoring is also available in the ASAC's Tutoring Lab.

Students with Disabilities- American University is committed to making learning and programming as accessible as possible. Students who wish to request accommodations for a disability, must notify me with a letter of approved accommodations from the ASAC. As the process for registering and requesting accommodations can take some time, and as accommodations, if approved, are not retroactive, I strongly encourage students to contact the ASAC as early as possible. For more information about the process for registering and requesting disability-related accommodations, contact ASAC.

Counseling Center MGC 214, 202-885-3500 is here to help students make the most of their university experience, both personally and academically. We offer individual and group counseling, urgent care, self-help resources, referrals to private care, as well as programming to help you gain the skills and insight needed to overcome adversity and thrive while you are in college. Contact the Counseling Center to make an appointment in person or by telephone, or visit the Counseling Center page on the AU website for additional information.

Center for Diversity & Inclusion MGC 201, 202-885-3651 is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, Multicultural, First Generation, and Women's experiences on campus and to advance AU's commitment to respecting & valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy.

OASIS: The Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence McCabe Hall 123, 202-885-7070, oasis@american.edu, provides free and confidential advocacy services for students who experience sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, sexual harassment, and/or stalking. Please email or call to schedule an appointment with one of the two victim advocates in OASIS.

American University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The university is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operated in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases under federal or local laws in its programs and activities.

If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with the **AU Department of Public Safety 202-885-2527** or the **Office of the Dean of Students 202-885-3300** dos@american.edu. To file a Title IX complaint, contact the Title IX Program Officer 202-885-3373 or [TitleIX@american.edu](mailto>TitleIX@american.edu). Please keep in mind that all faculty and staff - with exception of counselors in the Counseling Center, victim advocates in OASIS, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center - who are aware of or witness this conduct are required to report this information to the university, regardless of the location of the incident.