

DANCE 2501-285R AFRICAN Dance Class

Maputo Mensah: Instructor

720-280-2242 (C)

email – Maputo.mensah@colorado.edu

Spring Semester 2016

T,Th 3:30-5:00

Libby Hall –basement

Office Hours: By appointment

Mawuenyega Mensah : Lead Drummer

Selasee Atiase: Drummer

****NOTE 1**** Due to the fact that this is a dance class the instructor will use touch to help guide students in the dance. If at any time a student feels uncomfortable he/she should talk immediately and directly to the instructor.

****NOTE 2**** It is the student's responsibility to make at least Two appointments (beginning + middle and/ or end of the semester) to speak with the instructor about their grade and their efforts in the class. These appointments will occur outside of class, during non-class times, and are a way for the instructor to connect with the student on a one-on-one level. This also gives both the instructor and student a strong sense of what needs to be accomplished and in what way to do so. If a student does not comply with the two meeting rule, half a letter grade will be deducted. {EX: A becomes A-} Making more than two appointments is encouraged. *******

Course Description:

This course is an instruction to African Dance technique. The style and methodology of instruction is based on the way African Dance is taught and experienced in Ghana, West Africa. The course will primarily consist of dance technique demonstrations, and student repetition of instructors' demonstration. The instructor will periodically lecture on the culture context of dances, teach songs associated with dances, or tell stories related to African culture. Students will be required to actively participate in all dance and song exercises. The dance is physically challenging.

It should be noted that students might experience unfamiliar or uncomfortable emotions as they try unfamiliar movements and singing. Occasionally, the teaching methodology is unfamiliar and uncomfortable to Western students, and may also bring up emotions. Every student will be required to hold an attitude of willingness to try unfamiliar movement and to hold an attitude of openness toward fellow students as they experience awkwardness and unfamiliar bodily movements. As college students, you will be expected to maintain an

attitude of respect for the instructor and use mindful speech in having questions answered at all times.

The students, instructor, and drummers all form a class community based on African cultural values. If students experience difficulty in communicating with anyone in the community about course requirement or expectations, how class is being taught, or how they are being treated, it is the student's responsibility to make an appointment to speak with the instructor. You should speak to the instructor outside of class if you want to process issues about the class. It is your responsibility as a college student to handle your feelings and thoughts in an appropriate and thoughtful manner.

There are a few beginning principles to help guide you through the teaching of the course. There will be more to learn beyond these principles, but this is a good starting point:

1. The culture of Ghana: Elders are given great reverence. If someone is older than you, then you are expected to listen with attention to whatever they say. As an adult student, you will make your own choices about how to integrate and act on the information, stories, and teaching given once you are outside class. In class, however, listening with a positive and open attitude, following directions, and participating are expected. Arguing with the instructor is considered very disrespectful.
2. If you have a conflict with the instructor, you're required as part of this course to contact the instructor after class to set a time to talk with him.

General Description of the Day-to-Day Operation of the Course:

- Students arrive at 3:20 p.m.
- The beginning of class is an active study time. Students organize themselves into lines for practice. A student leader for the day, chosen by the instructor, begins practice of moves learned on the previous day.
- Students ask each other questions about moves they do not know. (The instructor will demonstrate every movement during class time.)
- The instructor will be working with the drummers, working on arrangements, but evaluating how students are working together on their own.
- The instructor will begin class when he is ready. The instructor will ask for individual students to perform moves from the previous class and make corrections. The instructor may evaluate the progress of the class or individual students.
- The instructor will demonstrate dance moves and then ask the students to try the moves. He will repeat them and students will try them again.

Course Requirements:

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

1. You must be on time, dressed, and ready to dance for each class.
2. You must call or text the instructor if you will miss class for any reason. Ideally, contact the instructor before class if you know you will not be in attendance. This helps the planning of each class session.
3. You can only miss two classes without affecting your grade. Any absence after the second class will have to be made up or it will lower your grade. Each missed class will lower your final grade by a half grade (e.g., 2 missed classes not made up = A becomes A-).
4. You may make up classes (thus not lowering your grade) by attending Maputo's community dance classes at Kake's Dance Studio (Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m.) and (Sundays, 4-5:30 p.m.). The student is responsible for the cost of the make-up classes.

DRESS CODE:

1. You are expected to show up on time to each class in proper dress.
2. Lapas for women, loose fitting shorts and pants for men are required for every dance class. Women's lapas is \$30 and Men's top and pants is \$45.
3. Students will be required to pay \$30-\$45 for dance costumes (this is considered equivalent to the cost of books for the course).

OUTSIDE OF CLASS (HOMEWORK):

All students are required to practice outside of the class 30 minutes 3 times per week. Students are expected to know all the dance moves so that class time can be spent learning timing with drums. Many students form small practice groups outside of class as a way to help each other and build community.

Course Outline:

OUTSIDE PERFORMANCES, WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS, AND IN-CLASS QUIZ:

1. Students will be required to attend two traditional African Dance performances outside of class. Most performances are held on weekends. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate work schedules and other outside commitments so that you can attend these performances.
2. Students will be required to write two 1- or 2-page typed analyses of the outside performances. This paper must be typed, double spaced, and stapled. The paper should include:
 - ❖ The name of the group performing and all members of the group, with accurate spelling (keeping the program from the performance is helpful)
 - ❖ The date and place of the performance
 - ❖ The name and a description of the dance performed

- ❖ How the dances are similar or different from the ones studied in class
- ❖ Your own unique observations about the dances performed (\$5- \$15 for each performance)

PAPERS ARE DUE ON THE TUHRSDAY AFTER THE PERFORMANCE THAT YOU CHOOSE TO ATTEND!!!

3. Students will be given two quizzes throughout the semester. One in-class quiz will be administered mid-semester. The other in-class quiz will be administered toward the end of the semester.

Student Leadership:

Students may be asked to lead practice in class or lead small practice groups outside of class. Leadership is an important part of community. Leading the groups helps to build communication and organization skills.

Community Day:

Everyone will be required to participate in the celebration of arts where we share what we learned from the class and give appreciations to fellow students, the drummers, and the instructor for what they brought to the class. Celebration of Arts is on Wednesday, April 27th and all the students must be there at 5:45 p.m.

Grading:

❖ Attendance/Attitude	50%
❖ Homework	20%
❖ Papers	30%
TOTAL	100%

Important Dates To Remember:

January 18th Martin Luther King {Campus Closed}
 Spring Break March 21-25 {Campus Closed}
 Final Exam will be May 5th at 1:30 p.m. to 4p.m.

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Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions: Injuries, Surgeries, and Illnesses guidelines under Quick Links at Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor. (2) **On Religious Observances:** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please let me know if you need to be absent for religious purposes and I will be glad to work with you. See full details at: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

If you are planning to miss a class, please contact me by the third week of

class. (3) **On Classroom Behavior:** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at: http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code (4) **On**

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