

**Duke Ellington School of the Arts**  
**Dance Department**

African Dance Technique Level II

Instructor – Mr. Melvin Deal

**Course Description:**

African Dance Technique 2 is designed for all students in the ninth or tenth grade who have successfully completed Level I and is a department requirement for graduation. The focus of the course is to continue the development of the technical and rhythmical format of traditional West African dance & music styles.

Each class session will use the traditional format of center floor warm-ups and rhythm application to specific movement nuances. The syllabus content for technical development is based on research journals that chronicle specific styles and techniques of African dance per specific tribal groups.

The students will have experiences designed to help them further learn the nuances of a variety of African dance forms. Specific ritual dances will be taught as concert performance pieces to be showcased in the annual student concert in May of each year. This course is one semester and the student will earn ½ Carnegie unit credit.

**Content Standards:**

- #1 Identifying and demonstrating movement, elements and skills in performing dance.
- #3 Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning and cultural values.
- #4 Applying and demonstrating critical and creative thinking skills utilizing nuances of specific dance forms.
- #5 Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods.
- #6 Making connections between dance. Healthful living and moral character.
- #7 Making a connection between dance and other disciplines such as music, drama and mime.

## **Technical Objectives:**

Through consistent classroom participation the student will begin to demonstrate technical growth, clear body objectives through combinations created to teach the interrelated perspectives of rhythm and music to movement comprehension and definition.

Students will begin the process of:

1. Strengthening their feet, legs, thighs and back
2. Increasing their range of movement in the torso, pelvis and legs
3. Attaining balance, control and agility
4. Awareness of working with contractions and body awareness
5. Rhythm agility in demonstrated foot work patterns
6. Improved rhythm acumen and creative application for solo virtuosity

## **Texts:**

This class does not have text book requirements, however, reference polemics will be provided at appropriate times to reinforce and familiarize students with course content and historical information. The following source material provided will come from: Dietz, Warner and Michael Babatunde Olatunji., **“Musical Instruments of Africa”**, New York, John Day Co., 1965; Hanna, Judith Lynne., **“African Dance As Education”**, Impulse Annual of Contemporary Dance, 1965; Sunkett, Mark., **“Mandiani Drum and Dance”**, White Cliff Media, Inc., 1995; Huet, Michel, **“The Dance & Ritual of Africa”**, New York, Random House, 1978; Deal, Melvin., **“Dances of West Africa”**, African Heritage Center, 1981; Hanna, Judith Lynne, **“Black Dance, 1619 to 1970”**; and extensive research conducted by Mr. Melvin Deal for more than 45 years of study and acclaim.

It is suggested that each student in the dance department program begin to build his/her own personal library with references specific to the content area.

## **Course Content:**

### **Basic concepts**

- Correct stance of the body, forward tilt of torso
- Positions of the feet, parallel stance & natural turnout
- The use of the feet, natural progression in sink with down beat of basic rhythm
- Trajectory of the leg, opening and closing first and second positions, in rhythmic natural progression
- Weight distribution; as dictated by kinetic or movement trust initiated by rhythm & nuance
- Positions of the head, as dictated by emotions and meaning of movement nuances
- Positions of the arms, as dictated by kinetic or movement nuances of rhythm and meaning
- Concepts of up and down as determined by movement progression & propulsion
- Head action when turning, natural progression and specific in nuance of rhythm and meaning
- Introduction to the nine directions of the body as it relates to poly rhythm and ambidextrous movement nuances
- State directions, relating to direct and antiphonal movement created by poly rhythm & ambidextrous movement nuances
- Running and walking in specific & general traditional African dance rhythmic styles & nuances

### **Exercises on the floor**

- Pelvic stretches
- Ham string stretches
- Torso twist
- Leg lifts

### **Exercises standing on the floor**

- Torso stretches
- Ham string stretches
- Demi and grand plie
- Contractions petite & grand
- Arm stretches

## Course Requirements/Grading Rubric

## Grading Score

### Daily Applications:

**60%**

#### *A. Grooming/Uniform*

15 points each

1. See uniform & Grooming policy in Ellington's Dance Handbook

#### *B. Attendance/Tardiness*

1. Completely uniformed & groomed for a class by roll call
2. Participation in all classes, Master  
Classes /Workshops/Seminars, performances, rehearsals & Auditions

#### *C. Conduct/Behavior/Etiquette*

1. Appropriate conduct & behavior as it relates to the students' understanding consequences of their personal cause & effect action/reactions
2. Understanding & demonstrating traditional etiquettes of dance
3. Positive approach & attitude

#### *D. Technical Development*

1. Demonstrate the ability to execute movement sequence from beginning to end w/consistent improvement/development in technical growth.
2. Application & retention of verbal & technical corrections
3. Demonstrates initiative to independently enhance the value of information received.

**\*\*Non Attendance or No Participation results in "0" points for that day\*\***

**Excused Absences, Early Dismissals, Late Arrival to class must first be officially cleared & documented by Ellington's Office of Administration before the Department's acceptance**

### Literacy Plan:

All written assignments are to be typed and submitted on the requested due date. Late assignments will be penalized by a grade drop from the grade actually received. Assignments more than one day late will not be accepted resulting in a grade of "**F**".

## **Rubric**

(a)Applies wide range of strategies  
To comprehend, interpret & evaluate texts,  
Knowledge of word meanings. (b)  
Employs a wide range of strategies to  
Write using conventions style, vocabulary  
And/or different writing process to  
Effectively and appropriately communicate.  
(c)Apply knowledge of language/sentence  
structure, figurative language, & conventions  
(spelling & punctuation). (d) Demonstrates ability  
To use a variety of technological & information  
resources to create & communicate knowledge.  
(e) Demonstrates reflective, creative &  
Critical thinking skills.

## **Requirements**

Research  
Essays  
Journals  
Critiques

## **Grading Score**

**15%**

*Written Exams are solely based on the students' knowledge of the unit of technique studied (History & Terminology)*

## **Physical Exams**

Physical Exams are based on the information received during studio time. Adherence to the examination date is imperative. Make-up physical examinations are at the discretion of the instructor.

## **Rubric**

### **(a) Movement Execution**

Clarity in body alignment, technique, transitions,  
Coordination, & articulation

### **(b) Movement Comprehension**

Understands terminology, applies movement concept to individual body,  
level changes, directional changes & spatial use.

### **(c) Movement Sequence**

Designed order of movement demonstrated from beginning to end.

### **(d) Movement Musicality**

Movement to proper counts, movement dynamics, movement fluidity,  
rhythm & tempo changes

### **(e) Movement Presentation**

Use of individual style, movement quality, energy, facial expression  
& engage the audience.

## **Grading Score**

**25%**

*Additional Rubrics may be used for other project and/or physical presentations, to be verbally informed, written dated/posted on bulletin wall.*

*Scheduled dates of classes, assignments, exams, course content, etc.. are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and/or in the event of extenuating circumstances (School closings, Unscheduled school activities, etc...)*

## **Ellington's Dance Department Uniform & Grooming Policy**

**Girls** – Black Tank Leotard, Flesh tone Convertible tights, flesh tone ballet shoes.

**Boys** – White Tank T-shirt, Black convertible tights, white leather ballet shoes, white Crew socks, black dance belt and leather waist belt.

**Hairstyle for girls:** Hair pulled back neatly, away from face in a secure bun w/hairnet. (except short bush hair cut)

**Hairstyle for boys:** Neatly close-cropped hair.

### **Hairstyles Unacceptable for girls & boys:**

**NO** braids, twists, extensions, locs, bantu knots, corn rows, Mohawks, sculpted hair, ponytail, hair color, dyes, hennas, head wraps and/or scarves. Hair weaves must be able to pull into bun near the crown of the head. *Any hair style different from standard grooming policy is not acceptable.*

### **Girls & Boys Jewelry & Body Adornments:**

**ABSOLUTELY NO** – rings, nose rings, lip rings, and body adornments, watches, bracelets, necklaces and double ear earrings. Only small studs are permitted for girls (one in each ear)

**NO** nail or toe polish (nails must be no longer than fingertips)

**NO** make-up permitted

**Visible Tattoos** must be covered with make-up daily.

*(Refer to Dance Department Handbook)*

## **Electronic Device Decorum**

**ALL** Electronic Devices (including cell phones, & iPods) should be turned off and secured in students' lockers before and during class.

*(Refer to 2009-2010 Dance Department Handbook)*

## **Grading Scale**

At the secondary level, sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) grade through twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) grade, marks/grades of A through F shall be assigned by the teacher to indicate the degree of achievement by the student of the content standards in each course. Results of the end of course exam will count for no more than 20% of the final grade. (*Refer to Ellington's Community Handbook 2009 - 2010*)

### **Marks/Grades shall be as follows:**

**A = 94 – 100**

**A- = 90 – 93**

**B+ = 85 – 89**

**B = 84 – 86**

**B- = 80 – 83**

**C+ = 75 – 79**

**C = 74 - 76**

**C- = 70 -73**

**D+ = 69 – 67**

**D = 64 – 66**

**F = 63 and below**

**I = Incomplete (too little work submitted)** Students have until 2 weeks after issuance of report cards to submit cards to submit assignments and make-up individual physical assignments/exams (physical group projects excluded). Failure to complete work required within the above stated time frame will result in the Incomplete grade converting to an "F" (Failure).

**M = Medical** – Once an injury has been verified by a physician and the student is deemed unable to participate for a minimum of two weeks and not more than one advisory, a letter grade of "C" or below will be administered for that period. If the injury is longer than one advisory, the student's tenure at Ellington must be revisited by parent, principal, student and dance faculty. (*Refer to Dance Department 2009-2010 Handbook*)

**\*\*The Medical Excuse Guidelines shared in the Ellington Community Handbook relates to academic courses/classes only, not physical intense Arts classes such as Dance.**

## **Attendance**

*Ellington's Attendance/Absence & Physician policies must be adhered; documented & verified. (Refer to Ellington's Community Handbook 2009-2010)*

Students and parents/care givers are held accountable for reporting all absences within 48 hours of the student's return. All letters must be submitted to the dean of Students or his designee for verification/approval and submitted to course instructor. Students with chronic unexcused attendance, may result in awarding a letter grade of "F".

For each class to which a student is tardy three (3) times, students will accrue one unexcused absence. Five (5) or more unexcused absences per advisory for any class may result in the student receiving a grade of "FA" (failure due to absence) in that subject.