

MEGAN PITCHER

meglouisemoves@gmail.com

(216) 785-4938

www.meglouise.info

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I apply principles of critical pedagogy toward the development and application of body based artistic pursuits. Courses emphasize experimentation, risk, and rigor. I maintain a balance of embodied activities and conceptual research no matter the subject, empowering students to define their own practice. My approach emphasizes awareness, confidence and daring in much the same way as my larger art practice. I value deep investment over shortcuts and considered experiments above formulaic products. I approach the classroom as a laboratory – a place to strive without fear and learn beyond expectations. I share my scholarly research with students and impart body-centric philosophies in contrast to processes of acculturation. I draw from phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, philosopher and political scientist Iris Marion Young, and psychiatrist Chester Pierce to demonstrate the manipulation of contested bodies in contemporary culture. I apply these findings to courses taught and workshops facilitated, sharing a feminist perspective that emphasizes the intersectionality of movement studies, psychology, and sociology.

DANCE/MOVEMENT STUDIES

Studio and practice courses introduce Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and Bartenieff Fundamentals (BF) as a first reference point for moving with consideration to environment. Those modernist perspectives on physicality include considerations of space, time, and tone that can be understood and applied across creative disciplines. Ballet and modern courses emphasize anatomical awareness and introduce material in progressive patterns so that students condition functional strength and efficiency. I draw from release-based developments, especially Klein technique, as a method for achieving vulnerability and abandon in off center and falling phrasework. I teach students to be proactive learners who rely on a broad range of tools and act with confidence. I emphasize attentiveness and frequently review methods for catching visual, written and aural details. We revisit LMA principles as tools for enhanced learning. Students find their personal “in” for movement and phrases. For example, one person may quickly pick up on timing or time sensations, while another will gravitate toward visual shaping. Students use their strengths to establish a foundation that allows for versatility and range in diverse genres.

Composition courses include opportunities to stage movement within proscenium confines considering modern aesthetics. We examine the body as art material in the same way visual art emphasizes the canvas; film the frame. Intermediate and advanced courses extend beyond those concepts to consider postmodern approaches. We stage critical reactions against formalism and consider how theatrical conventions inform movement choices. That often includes constraint-based assignments. Studies based on pedestrian tasks, physical, spatial, or time limitations demand specificity and support development of individual choreographic voice. My role, to quote Tere O'Connor, is to help students “Make the thing more of what it is.” That is to say, I do introduce tools of my own practice – directed improvisation, somatics, devising, and action writing – while supporting students chosen methods and dance making goals.

Improvisation is practiced as a multipurpose tool and concert form. Students learn techniques established for personal investigation, partnering, ensemble development, and social practice. Gaga movement language inspired exercises promote qualitative range and identify anatomical holding patterns. Contact improv (CI) techniques reinforce a postmodern approach to weight, support the development of partnering acumen, and ready students for performances of instant choreography. Group scores and ensemble structures promote physical listening and demonstrate how structured improvisation can be used to generate set choreography. I welcome influences from Judson Church/Grand Union developments and equally affirm non-Western methodologies including capoeira and black vernacular dances. We explore improvisation's role as a form of dance resistance and sign of individual agency.

MEDIA PERFORMANCE

I define media as inclusive of sound, textile, electronics, and other extensions of the human presence in performance. Performance can include live or mediated acts by human or nonliving actors. I facilitate investigations of media and performance pairings through graduate studio and theory courses, undergraduate compositional or dance/tech courses, and workshops. When developing course offerings, I plan equal time for the development of relevant skills and the artistic application of those skills. In some cases media will appear as part of a performance, but in other cases the consideration of our mediated world serves to inspire new approaches to performance. Studio courses explore the power dynamics of a live body in competition with mediated image, live action layered with mediated sound, and so forth. Workshops and lab sessions focus on skill building, with advanced sessions encourage electronic hacking and other hardware experimentation. I am able to break down the complexities of technologic language and application so that even a novice can grasp their most basic components. On the other hand, I assisted master technicians in fine-tuning the use of advanced techniques. In the case of responsive or interactive art, the media may become the performer. I critique those developments with the same framework as live performance: addressing the use of space, time, and quality; discussing expectations and conventions; and examining the paradigms of interaction. I encourage frequent studies and multiple approaches to every project upholding the new media aesthetics that recognize failure as a step toward progress. Indeterminancy and glitch become valuable mascots for studio developments.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Dance Technique	(Modern, Ballet, Jazz : Beginning – Advanced Levels)
Intro to Dance Survey Course	(Dance as an Art Form, Dance Literature & Language, Dance Appreciation)
Dance Composition	(Beginning – Advanced Levels)
Improvisation	(Including Free & Structured Improv, Contact Improv, Viewpoints, and Gaga based)
Pedagogy	(Critical Pedagogy, Hybrid Pedagogy, Adolescent Pedagogy, Community Programming)
Capoeira	(ASCAB Traditional Movement, Music, and Arts of Brazil)
Dance Production	(Especially Costume Design & Construction)
Dance & Technology	(Media Performance, Dance on Film, Interactive Media, Motion Capture, Digital Portfolio)
Interdisciplinary Art	(Theory & Practice)
Performance Art	(Theory & Practice)
Installation Art	(Theory & Practice)
Intro to Screen Media	(Digital Design, Motion Graphics, Video & Sound Editing)