Introduction to Laban Movement Analysis
E89.2044.001: 2 Credits
Spring 2010
Tuesday, 4:35-6:30 p.m.
35 W. 4th St., Studio 305
Dance Ed. Program, Dept. of Music & Performing Arts Professions
Steinhardt School, New York University

Instructor: Frederick Curry, M.A., C.M.A.
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Mailbox: 7th floor hallway, 35 W. 4th Street

Class Objective:
This course focuses on developing conceptual and experiential knowledge of Laban Movement Analysis, a comprehensive framework for understanding, observing, describing, notating, performing, and teaching all forms of movement.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Students will gain conceptual and experiential knowledge in the four main categories of LMA (Body, Effort, Shape, Space) and in Motif Notation;
2. From studio classes, assigned readings, video viewings and classroom discussions, students will understand the historical development of LMA, including a focus on the career of its originator, Rudolf Laban (1879-1958), and understand some ways that LMA can be applied to dance education;
3. Students will be able to demonstrate embodied understanding of LMA concepts.

Class Content:
1. **Body**: Body Parts; Body-Part Initiations (core, proximal, mid-limb, distal); Body Actions; Body Sequencing (Sequential, Successive, Simultaneous); Symmetry/Asymmetry; Posture/Gesture;
2. **Effort**: Effort Factors (Weight, Space, Time, Flow); Effort Graph; States; Basic Effort Actions (Action Drive); Effort Phrasing (Impulse, Impact, Swing, Rebound, Even);
3. **Space**: Personal Space (Kinesphere)/General Space; Reach Space (near, mid, far); Directions; Levels; Dimensions, Planes, Diameters; Forms (Octahedron, Cube, Icosahedron); Pathways in the Kinesphere (Central, Peripheral, Transverse); Pathways in General Space (Straight, Curved, Circular, Zig-Zag); Scales (Dimensional, Diagonal);
4. **Shape**: Basic Shape Forms (Ball, Wall, Pin, Screw); Modes of Shape Change (Shape Flow, Directional [Arcing/Spoking], Carving/Molding); Shape Qualities (Rising/Sinking, Enclosing/Spreading, Advancing/Retreating);
5. **Motif Notation**: Body Parts; Body Actions; Effort Graph; Effort Phrasing; Shape Graph; Spatial Directions/Levels/Pathways.
6. **Required Readings**: Students will post personal responses to assigned readings onto the Blackboard Discussion Board.
Course Notes on Body, Effort, Shape, Space


7. Video: Students will view videos from the Laban tradition to provide historical context for their acquisition of theoretical and embodied knowledge.

8. Final presentations: In four groups, students will plan and present movement experiences for their peers based on LMA theory in the categories of Body, Effort, Shape or Space. Presentations should integrate Motif Notation, where applicable. Groups are allotted 30 minutes for their experience followed by 15 minutes of Q&A and discussion. See Final Presentation assignment for full details.

Assessment:
Attendance: 25%
Participation in technique classes and class discussions: 25%
Reading responses: posted onto Blackboard: 25%
Final Group Presentations: 25%

Course Guidelines:
- Attendance: You are expected to attend every session of the course. One excused absence is permitted with a doctor’s note or other acceptable evidence. If you are going to be absent please send an email to the instructor. Additional absences will decrease the cumulative grade by one letter grade increment.
- Late arrivals/Early departures: Being on time and staying throughout the duration of the course is to be expected. Three late arrivals, three early departures, or any three combinations of late arrivals and/or early departures to/from class will equate to an absence. A late arrival or early
departure of more than 15 minutes will be counted as an absence. An unexcused absence will decrease the cumulative grade by one letter grade increment.

• **Grading:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Number Grade</th>
<th>Legend</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>Excellent</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>Extremely Good</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Failure</td>
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• **Incomplete Grading:** Incomplete grades are not a grading option. Under exceptional circumstances, such as those with a serious illness or other emergency, and at the discretion of the course instructor, an incomplete grade may be granted, based on the student’s performance throughout the course of the semester.

• **Special Accommodations:** Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities located at 240 Greene Street, phone: 212.998.4980, or website address: www.nyu.edu/csd.
**Schedule**, Spring 2010  
Note: The schedule is subject to change.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| Jan. 19 | **Introduction**: Who was Rudolf von Laban? What is Laban Movement Analysis? Overview of the LMA framework (BESS)  
*PRE-READING: Davis and Groff; Post reading responses by Jan. 26.* |
| Jan. 26 | **Body I**: Posture/Gesture (Part/Whole); Symmetry/Asymmetry; Body Parts and Body-Part Initiation (Core, Proximal, Mid-Limb, Distal)  
*PRE-READING: Ullmann; Course Notes on Body; Hackney Appendix (Body, pp. 217-219); Post reading responses by Feb. 2.* |
| Feb. 2  | **Body II**: Some Body Actions (e.g., Flex, Extend, Rotate, Travel, Support, Jump, Balance, Fall); Body Sequencing (Sequential, Successive, Simultaneous) |
| Feb. 9  | **Space I**: “Choreutics”; Personal Space (Kinesphere)/General Space; Body Reference/Room Reference; 26 Spatial Directions; 3 Spatial Levels; Spatial Dimensions; Dimensional Scale (Stabile Scale); the Octahedron  
*PRE-READING: Course Notes on Space; Hackney Appendix (Space, pp. 223-228); Post reading responses by Feb. 16.* |
| Feb. 16 | **Space II**: Planes and the Icosahedron; Introduction to Diagonals and the Cube |
| Feb. 23 | **Effort I**: “Eukinetics”; Effort Factors (Weight, Space, Time, Flow); Effort Graph; States  
*PRE-READING: Course Notes on Effort; Hackney Appendix (Effort, pp. 219-221); Post reading responses by March 2.* |
| Mar. 2  | **Effort II**: Action Drive--Basic Effort Actions (Float, Punch, Glide, Slash, |
Dab, Wring, Flick, Press) in the Diagonal Scale; Effort Phrasing (Impulse, Impact, Swing, Rebound, Even)

Mar. 9  **Shape I:** Basic Shape Forms (Ball, Wall, Pin, Screw); Modes of Shape Change (Shape Flow, Directional [Arcing, Spoking], Carving/Molding)

*PRE-READING:* Course Notes on Shape; Hackney Appendix
*(Shape, pp. 221-223); Post reading responses by March 23.*

Mar. 16  **SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS**

Mar. 23  **Shape II:** Shape Qualities (Rising/Sinking, Enclosing/Spreading, Advancing/Retreating) in the Dimensional and Diagonal Scales

Mar. 30  BESS Review/Synthesis/Questions

Apr. 6  Assign Final Presentation Groups/Planning Session

Apr. 13  Final Group Presentation Tutorials

Apr. 20  Final Presentations: Body and Space Groups

Apr. 27  Final Presentations: Effort and Shape Groups