

Erinn Liebhard

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Statement of Teaching Philosophy

In my classes, students experience and analyze embodiment as a versatile, effective, personal and interpersonal way to communicate. I provide students with a laboratory to explore how dancing connects us to ourselves and one another through historical and contemporary perspectives. I specialize in teaching academic lecture courses and all levels of jazz dance with keen attention to the form's base in African diasporic aesthetics, and I also have extensive experience teaching modern, ballet and tap, and American vernacular styles including Appalachian clogging and Old School and House hip-hop styles. In technique classes, I weave my objectives together through a rhythmic perspective, delivering improvisation, phrasing, intention and focus cues through a musical lens. I believe rhythm and musicality skills to be deeply pertinent across genres of dance and approaches to composition, making them important tools necessary for dancers who wish to be versatile.

I deeply value dance learning as a means for students to find self and community expression, and to gain abilities to be specific, articulate and creative in the ways they approach the world. My physical investigations emphasize rhythmically complex musicality, counterpoint, spacial and focus patterning and intentionality, weight-shift and groundedness, alignment for movement efficiency, and improvisation. These explorations enable students to develop their abilities to simultaneously thrive as an individual and a member of communities as they move through life, thinking on their feet.

By emphasizing competency in applied somatic awareness, basic music theory and understanding of historical context in both technique and lecture classes, my teaching prioritizes the liberal arts approach of interdisciplinary learning as a way to encourage original and critical thinking. I am also very interested in the ways social and concert dance forms influence each other. I believe that by exploring historical and contemporary perspectives in their separate courses of development and their artistic interactions, students mine valuable information on how both social and concert dance are practices significantly affecting and being affected by sociocultural development.

I am committed to effectively delivering key concepts while encouraging revelry in moving musically, socially and intentionally. I achieve these goals by creating a classroom in which enthusiastic work ethic is the base, visceral movement is the driver, and humor is key. I encourage the development of work ethic by empowering students to explore individuality in their movement choices, to provide feedback, and to ask questions. I keep a forward momentum by teaching cardiovascularly-challenging, traveling movement set to infectious music. I conduct class with intent focus yet lighthearted humor, which I have found to be successful in fostering an energetic, supportive environment for learners of various backgrounds, interests and abilities. In my classroom, students can comfortably explore territory that is new for them as they progress in their understanding of American vernacular styles and dance in general as historically and contemporarily significant art.

Teaching Capabilities

Specialties:

- Beginning through Advanced Jazz
- Vernacularly-inspired Concert and Theatrical Choreography
- History and Theory Lecture Courses
- Improvisation

Capabilities:

- Modern
- Ballet
- Appalachian Clogging
- Rhythm Tap
- Selected Hip-Hop Styles
- Composition