Performing artists have a special need to understand the body's full capacity. Enhancing kinesthetic awareness of our muscles and bones allows us to move and perform with more ease, control, confidence, and safety. Performers who have difficulty with faulty movement patterns may show improvement when they have a better understanding of the organization and function of their body. Increased awareness, understanding principles of strength and support, tension and release will enhance performance. In this body awareness course you will integrate kinesthetic experience, focused attention, movement and touch with factual and visual information.

In each class meeting you will tune into the body through body scans; focused attention on information/sensation from the body. You will learn flexibility exercises to enhance comfort and range of motion. We will explore one body part a week, learning specific exercises related to tension release, strengthening and function. Readings and class discussion will relate to functional anatomy as it regards that part. Viewing a model skeleton, palpating your own body and others, drawing and journaling will all support your learning. You are expected to practice exercises you have learned in class. You will have a midterm assignment and final project.

Wear clothing you can move in.
Goals

The overall goal of the course is to increase the awareness of your body. Specifically:

- Improve the ability to listen to and act on communication from your body
- Gain understanding of the relationship between muscle tension, posture, and movement
- Gain better understanding of the role of the bones and muscles in standing and movement
- Learn about the function of the joints, bones, and muscles
- Enhance understanding of the body as your instrument in artistic performance
- Better care for your body
- Find your own creative expression of your anatomy

Grading

Your Final Grade Will Be Based Upon:

- Your attendance
  Grades will be lowered after two absences, there are no "excused" absences
  20 minutes late or repeated lateness will be considered one-half of an absence
- Participation in class (10%)
- Journal/Essays (30%)
- Midterm (30%)
- Project (30%)

Incomplete grades must be discussed before the end of the semester

Journal

A full journal entry will include all of the following. Use headings below.

Note: Full entries are not due each week. Carefully read syllabus for weekly assignments. Even though you will not write all of this out each week please keep these instructions in mind when thinking about your body and your work.

Reaction to Class

- What did you learn about your body?

  (Felt stiff, shoulders relaxed after breathing, etc)
· What factual information did you learn? (from class and readings be specific)

· What was your reaction to the material as relates to your body?

How You Use Your Body

· During the week what have you noticed about your use of your body?

· Practice an exercise and write about it

Anatomy

· Draw, copy or cut out pictures that relate to the part you are studying

Midterm

This is the time to thoughtfully and thoroughly access your bodily learning and factual information to date. Use references to readings to support your examples. Use at least 3-4 references. 5-6 pages

· How has your attitude towards your body changed since the beginning of class?
· Has your relationship to your body changed?
· What have you learned specially about your body?
   Experiential, knowledge-wise?
· How do you view your body as a performance instrument?
· How has the care of your body changed since you began?

Project

Your project should be something that enhances and brings together your learning in an interesting, creative way. You will write up your project the fourth week of class and turn in on the fifth and begin your work on it as soon as it is approved. We will discuss topics in class and you can start earlier if approved.

You will write up your experience with your project at the end of the class. Including what you learned. Here are a few suggestions for projects as a guide, feel free to come up with your own.

· Film yourself in daily life or in performance throughout the semester and discuss changes in body use.

· Collect pictures of other family members and discuss body use/type, learned habits, etc. as relates to class learning.

· Create a performance based specifically upon your learning.

· Draw weekly how your body feels, looks, changes, etc.
Course Content

September 4  
**Introductions**  
Overview of Course  
Attitudes about the Body  
Experiential:  
- Body Scans  
- Flexibility Sequence  
- Sensing the Body - skin, bone, muscle  
- Writing about your body  
Readings for this Class:  
- Olsen, Attitudes About the Body pp. 11-14  
- Powell, Body Awareness Techniques (Hand Out)  
- Taking Root to Fly, pp. 1-6

September 11  
**The Skeleton/Spine**  
Posture/Alignment & Muscle Tension  
Spinal Curves/Weight Transfer  
About Bones  
Role of Diet and Exercise in Healthy Bones  
How Joints Work  
Experiential:  
- Standing Alignment/Plumb Line  
- Spine Flexibility  
- Roll Down with and w/o Partners  
- Sensing/Moving from the Bones  
- Alexander Directions  
Readings (that cover this weeks discussion):  
- Olsen  
  - Postural Alignment, pp.35-37  
  - The Nature of Bone, pp.39-41  
  - Axial Skeleton, pp.49-51  
  - Joints, pp.113-115  
- Dowd  
  - Finding Your Center, pp. 19-29  
  - Anatomy Coloring Book, p. 22 (Handout)

September 18  
**Head/Jaw/Neck**  
Atlas/Axis/Cervical Spine (Bones/Muscles)  
Alignment Review  
Terms of Movement  
Ideas for Project  
Experiential:
Jaw Movement
Neck Explorations
Kinetic Awareness Ball
Suture Massage with or without Partners

Readings:
Terms (Hand Out)
Olsen
Skull, Jaw, pp.43-47
Anatomy Coloring Book, p. 48 (Handout)

Journal:
See Journal Entry Instruction

Assignment:
Think about ideas for project

September 25

**Principles of Muscle Function**
Introduction to Skeletal Muscle Function
Muscle Terminology
Proprioception

Experiential:
Body/Muscle Experiments
Work with Partners with Function
Kinetic Awareness

Readings:
Muscle Terminology (Hand Out)
Olsen
Proprioception, pp. 15-17
Anatomy Coloring Book, p.23

Assignment:
Write up one page summary of project
What you will do
What hope to learn
Turn in Journal Entry

October 2

**The Thorax/Breathing**
Organs of Respiration
Vertebrac and Ribs

Experiential:
Breathing Work

Readings:
Dowd
On Breathing, pp. 13-18
Olsen
Breathing, pp.61-64
Powell,
On Breathing

Writing Assignment:
1. Keep a journal of your breathing during the week
   In sitting, walking, activity
2. Watch and describe another person's breathing
3. Watch and describe a performer's breathing

Assignment: Think about how semester is going

October 9

**The Pelvis/Lumbar Spine**
Anatomy/Structure (Bones/Muscles)
Review/How Semester Going?
Experiential:
   Movement Exploration
   Back Flexibility Exercise
   Feldenkrais Pelvic Clock
   KA Ball Work
Readings:
   Olsen,
      Pelvis pp.83-85
      Iliopsoas, pp.87-90
   Dowd,
      Finding your Center pp.19-29

Mid-Term Assignment:
   See Instructions for Mid-Term
   Turn in Journal/Essays/Writings (with comments to date)

October 16

Fall Break

October 23

**The Shoulder Girdle**
Anatomy and Function of the Shoulder
Experiential:
   Movement Exploration with Partners
   Wall Stretches
   Strengthening Exercises
   Kinetic Awareness Ball Work
Readings:
   Olsen:
      Shoulder Girdle, pp.65-69
      Forearm, Wrist, Hand, pp.72-73
   Dowd,
      The Upper Extremity, pp.45-53
   Anatomy Coloring Book, pp.54-56

Journal: ????
October 30

**The Nervous System/Stress Response**

Anatomy of Nervous System  
The Mind, Emotions, and the Body  
Fight or Flight Response  
Experiential:  
   - Moving and Emotions  
   - Relaxation Training - Progressive Muscle Autogenic Training  

Readings:  
   - Olsen, Nervous System, pp.119-125  
   - Powell, Understanding the Stress Response,  

Assignment:  
   - Practice Relaxation, Notice Response, Discuss in Class  

November 6

**The Upper Leg/Thigh/Knee Joint**

Structure and Function  
Caring for Your Knees  
Experiential:  
   - Standing Alignment  
   - Sitting/Walking/Moving  
   - Strengthening Exercises  
   - KA Hip Opening  

Readings:  
   - Olsen, Femur, pp.93-94  
   - Knee, pp.97-100  
   - Dowd, Standing on Two Legs, pp.30-36  

Journal:  
   - Discuss readings  
   - Draw or copy legs  
   - Practice exercise from class and describe  

November 13

**The Lower Leg/Tibia and Fibula/Feet**

Anatomy/Function  
Experiential:  
   - Standing/Walking  
   - KA Balls  
   - Exercise for the Feet  
   - Foot massage - Individual or Partners  

Readings:  
   - Olsen,  

Assignment:
Observe your walking and other peoples to discuss in class

November 20
**Body Image**
How We Form Body Image
Experiential:
   - Body Scans
   - Movement
   - KA
Readings:
   - Fisher, Body Image
Essay: (3 pages)
   - Write about your body image and how it was formed
   - Discuss family influences, friends, media
   - Refer to readings

November 27
**Caring for the Performing Body**
How do we care for our bodies?
Experiential:
   - Body Scan
   - Flexibility Sequence
   - KA
Reading:
   - Handout: Tool Box
   - Sweigard, pp. 138-143 (Handout)

December 4
**Review**
Review work to date
Share Projects
Experiential:
   - Review KA Exercises
   - Flexibility Sequence
Turn in all graded work from semester in folder

December 11
**Share Projects**
State of your Body
Application of Learning
Share Projects
Experiential:
   - TBA
Turn in Write-Up of Project
Think about and write using the following questions. Keep what you have written to refer to during the semester

How do you feel about your body?

What attitudes do you have about your body - its looks and its function?

What is one factual piece of information that you know about your body?

Do you take good care of yourself/your body?

How would you describe your body and its function