Welcome to The Knowing Body. In this arts workshop you will learn about the theory and practice of body awareness techniques (along with imagery and qi qong) and apply these methods to specific areas of performance and performance preparation. You will deepen your understanding and abilities in the area of breath, posture/alignment, tension, energy, concentration and care of the body. You will perform a short piece of performance (or body use) the fourth week of class, once during the semester and again at the end of the semester. This course is about you improving the use of your performing instrument - the body.

You will be expected to work weekly outside of the classroom, practicing and applying mind/body methods that you have learned each week to your performance piece and daily life.

To help focus on ideas presented in class you will write reflective essays and journal entries. All assignments must be turned in, in hard copy not electronic. You will keep all of your work during the semester in a binder/folder, turning in the binder at midterm and the end of the semester. There will be a midterm and final assignment.

Your reading assignments will enhance your understanding of the material presented in class. They are assigned the week before each class. You are expected to be an active participant in discussions, to attend every session, arrive on time and to wear clothing you can move in.

I am available to discuss anything that has come up during or after class. Please call me to talk, or e-mail me about any concerns or questions you have. You are also encouraged to schedule an in-person appointment. You may speak with me after class as well.
Class Objectives

The overall goal of the class is to improve your performance work whether you are an actor, dancer, or musician.* Objectives include:

1. To gain awareness of your performance instrument - your body in daily life and performance using methods presented.

2. Learn specific exercises which address; breath, posture, tension, energy, concentration and integration.


4. Learn methods to deal with performance anxiety or blockages.

5. Learn to take better care of your performance instrument.

* There are those of you who are not performers but for whom the class is appropriate. We are all body users and you will identify how or what you will do for your performance. We have had a variety of artists, readers, models, jump ropers, and an ice skater. Speak with me about what you are comfortable doing.

Class Format

· Discussion
  
  Response to Material - What Noticing about Practice
  Discussion of Readings and How Relate to Class
  Introduction of Week's Topic

· Experiential
  
  Body Scans
  Flexibility Exercises
  New Exercises Related to Weekly Topic

· Performance
  
  View Performance Each Week as Relates to Topic
Course Requirements

Written Assignments

This is an experiential class. You will learn and practice methods for your body/mind that will enhance your performance as well as your daily living. Yet, your personal experience can only be measured/graded in terms of your reflection on the experience. This reflection, whether essay or journal, will enhance and deepen your learning experience.

All written work is to be handed in, in person, in hard copy on the day it is due. Your writing, with my comments, is to be kept in a folder with sleeves (found at Staples) and will be turned in, in total, at mid-term and at the end of the semester.

Performance /Experiential

You are required to practice methods learned in class each week and apply them to your daily body use and your performance area/piece.

Performance Write Up

After your first performance, identify areas to focus on, using class criteria, class feedback and your own observation. Be specific, not "I think it went well". Why did it go well, in terms of what we are looking at, ie, performance criteria.

Mid-Term Learning Assessment

1. Discuss what have you learned and understand so far in terms of body awareness theory, cite at least 3-4 sources.
2. How do these methods relate to your understanding of performance? How does having this theoretical knowledge enhance your performance?
3. What experiential methods have specially enhanced your performance and daily body use?
Length 4-5 pages.

Journal Entry

Read these instructions carefully. When assigned (you have 2 assignments) you are required to make five separate entries. 1. reaction to class; 2. noticing body use; 3. application/practice; 4. rehearsal; 5. readings. Use these headings.

Reaction to Class
  · What did you notice specifically about your body in class? For example:
    How did your body fit against the floor?
    Did your breathing change after the body scan?
    What did you notice about your spine after the flexibility work?
  · What did you learn about your body and performance?
Noticing Body Use
· During the week what have you noticed about how you use your body in daily activities? In general and as it relates to the week's topic
· In performance practice?

Application
· Practice one exercise from class and write about it

Rehearsal/Application
· What have you noticed during the rehearsal of your piece or in performance class, in relation to the topic presented this week?

Readings
· What are the authors key ideas presented in the reading?
· How do they relate to what you are studying in class?
· What is your reaction to the reading?

Final Assignment

The final assignment may change based on the needs of the class

Grading Policy

Your grade is influenced by the following:

· Regular attendance (grade will be lowered after two absences)
  There are no "excused" absences, all are the same

· Coming prepared to discuss, in class, reaction to readings, course work (15%)

· Showing improvement in performance (30%)

· Written assignments (15%)

· Perform and write up observation of performance (P)

· Mid-Term Learning Assessment (20%)

· Final Analysis Essay (20%)

Incomplete grades must be arranged in advance with instructor.

Read through the syllabus carefully and make sure you understand all the assignments and time lines. Then sign the sheet provided stating that you have done so.
I have carefully read the contents of this syllabus and understand the requirements, assignments and time lines.
January 29: Introduction/Overview/Use
Introductions/Class Expectations
Body/Mind Use in Performance
Developing Evaluation Criteria for Performance Pieces
Experiential:
   Body Scan and Breathing
   Flexibility Sequence
   Hang Out
In Class Writing:
   How do you use and see your body as an instrument in performance (or daily life)?
   How do you feel about your body in performance?
   Keep what you wrote
Reading For Next Class Discussion: (Read this Week to discuss 2/5)
   Steinmann, The Body as Home, The Knowing Body
   Powell, Using Breathing Exercises, Working Woman's Guide

February 5: Breath
Body Awareness and Performance
Breath and Performance
Experiential:
   Body Scan
   Breathing Work
   Jaw/Sounding
   Animal Movement
Performance:
   Look at Performance Focusing on Breath
Reading Next Class Discussion:
   Knaster, Discovering the Body's Wisdom, Chapters 1
   Powell, Body Therapies, Journal of Holistic Nursing
Assignment:
   Journal Entry (see instructions)

February 12: Posture/Alignment
Performance and Posture
Body Awareness Techniques and Performance
Experiential:
   Plumb Line
   Hang Out (Review)
   Chair Work
   KA Balls
Performance:
   Notice Alignment
Reading Next Class:
   Knaster, Discovering the Body's Wisdom, Chapter 3
Assignment:
   Prepare for Performance
   Practice exercises learned in class

**February 19: Show Performance Pieces**

Experiential:
   Body Scan/Breathing/Flexibility
   Performance Pieces/Performance Criteria
Assignment: Due 2/26/12
   1. Write up your own performance experience and what you will be working on during the semester and turn in (if you performed) Keep a copy for your self.
   2. What did you see in general in these performances in terms of the criteria?

**February 26: Show Performance Pieces**

Experiential:
   Body Scan/Breathing/Flexibility
   Performances Prep

Reading Next Class Discussion: (Read this Week)
   Knaster, pp. 263-266
   Ann-Sargent Wooster, Drama Journal
   Frances Becker, Kinetic Awareness, Contact Quarterly
   Green, The Use of Balls in Kinetic Awareness, JOHPER Journal
Assignment: Due 3/5/12
   1. Write up your understanding of Kinetic Awareness from your readings
   2. How does it relate to your performance study and practice?

**March 5: Tension/Use**

Discuss Knaster and Kinetic Awareness
Habitual Tension/Effort
Experiential:
   Exploring Tension Use
   Extension/Tension
   Flexibility Sequence
   KA Ball Work
Performance:
   Finish Performances

Reading Next Week Discussion:
   Knaster, Ch. 2 plus pp. 209-222
   Crow, "The Alexander Technique as a Basic Approach to Theatrical Training"
Midterm Assignment: Due 3/12/11
Write Learning Summary (See Instructions)

**March 12: Nina D'Abbracci Alexander Guest Lecturer**

Alexander and Performance
Experiential:
  The Alexander Technique
Reading:
  Minton, "Exploring the Mind/Body Connection with Imagery"
  Powell, "Creative Visualization: A tool for Change"
Assignment:
  Journal Entry

March 19: Spring Break

April 2: Imagery and Performance
  Use in Performance
Experiential:
  Visualization Exercises
  Mental Rehearsal for Performance
Reading for Next Class Discussion:
  Barba & Savarese, The Secret Art of the Performer

April 2: Energy
  Evaluate Class and Rate Learning Experience
Energy and its Use in Performance
Experiential:
  Using Energy in Standing/Walking
  Sensing Chi Energy
  Qi Qong Exercise
  Pulling up Energy (Sitting)
Performance:
  Notice Energy
Reading for Next Class:
  Powell, "Using Your Mind to Decrease Stress"
  Knaster, Chapter 6
Assignment: Take notes to share in class
  Think about yourself as a performer (or a body user) and write
  about any performance blocks, beliefs, concerns, anxieties or
  behaviors that influence your performance
  How have you handled these in the past?

April 9: Beliefs and Behaviors that Affect Performance
  Identifying Problems in Performance
Experiential:
  Visualization
  Positive Statements
Reading: (Read this Week)
  Kohnlein, "Listening from the Physical Body"
Assignment: Take notes and bring to class to discuss (can keep in folder)
  Think about how you prepare for performance
  Talk to another performer and ask about how they prepare for performance
April 16: Performance Preparation
The Performer Prepares/How to Use Methods
Review all Methods of Performance Preparation
Experiential:
   Body Scan/Breathing/Flexibility
   Energy
   Mental Rehearsal
   Kinetic Awareness
Final Assignment: TBA Due April 23

April 23: Concentration/Integration/Review
Concentration and Performance - How to Achieve
Review
Experiential:
   Focusing
   Body Scan and Focus
   Review Methods
Performance:
   Concentration/Integration
Assignment:
   Prepare for Performance
   Turn in Notebooks (Journal/Essays from the whole semester)

April 30: Final Performances
Experiential:
   Performance Preparation
   Performances

May 7: Final Performances
Assignments

Two Full Journal Entries
Performance Write Up
Kinetic Awareness Discussion
Mid Term Assignment
Final Assignment

Personal Notes for Files

    Performance Use
    Attitudes Toward Performance
    Performance Preparation
THE KNOWING BODY: AWARENESS FOR PERFORMERS

MIND/BODY CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Use these categories to view each performance piece. Use them as guidelines when thinking about and working on your own work. Bring to class when viewing performance.

· Overall Posture/Alignment
  Balanced?
  Stiff?
  Collapsed?

· Tension
  Use - appropriate to performance?
  Excess? Lack of?
  Frozen tension - how manifest?

· Breath
  Visible?
  Flowing/integrated/appropriate?
  Held?
  Shallow?
  Irregular?

· Energy
  How much?
  Low? High?
  Integrated/appropriate?

· Concentration/Focus
  Consistent?

· Integration
  Head/Body?
  Words/Body?

· Grounding