U31 285 Introduction to Somatic Practices
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About this Course
This course is a survey of topics covered in the curriculum for the Certificate in Somatic Studies, offered in University College. We will investigate the growing field of somatics, which emphasizes the unity of mind and body as experienced from within, through conscious, guided movement and self-awareness. In-class work is supplemented by readings and complemented with guest lectures in related disciplines, such as biology, psychology, and philosophy. Required course for the Certificate in Somatic Studies.

“Somatics" a term first coined by Thomas Hanna in 1976, is derived from the Greek word for the living body, soma. Today, the term defines a diverse spectrum of practices for studying and knowing the unity of mind and body as experienced from within. In addition to disciplines of inquiry that study the human body and mind from an objective observation perspective, somatics also acknowledges subjective experience as a mode of skillful knowledge and domain of research.

Over the past century, somatic investigators have been closely allied with artists and educators of all kinds, and especially with contemporary dance training because these disciplines share a process of investigating the experience and skill of movement. Consequently, many dance classes, informed by and taught from these principles, are effectively a kind of somatic study.

The courses in University College's Somatic Studies Certificate Program, while listed in “Dance," are not specifically directed toward artistic or performative goals. Rather they offer a broad spectrum of movement techniques, providing the student with skilled instruction and guidance aimed at personal experience toward self-awareness and knowledge. Such knowledge is fundamentally valuable, and can provide experiences that may be related to knowledge in such areas as education, biology, neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, physics, medicine, physical therapy, nutrition, etc.

Topics to Be Introduced
Introduction to Somatic Theory & Practice
Somatic Pioneers
Survey of Practices available in Dance & Somatic Studies Certificate Program with Related Theoretic Lectures
Yoga
Body-Mind Centering
Grading Criteria
Grading will be based on the following criteria and proportions:
Attendance/Reading/Participation in Class Discussions and Activities 60% (note: absences can be made up by attending other somatic classes. see note below)
Pioneers Assignment 5%
Forum Posts 10%
Midterm Paper 10%
Final Summary Paper 15%

Attendance Policy/Making up Absences
This class meets only once per week, and absences can quickly damage a good grade. Students are responsible for their absences and have the option to make up absences by visiting other courses in the Somatic Studies curriculum. Contact instructors directly by email and request permission to attend as makeup. They will let you know if that is possible. If so, then attend the class, and bring me a note (or cc me on an email between you and the instructor) indicating that you were there.