INTRODUCTION TO PILATES MAT

INSTRUCTOR: SUSAN VOLKAN
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Course #U31 Dance 208, 2 units
TTH 5:15 – 6:30 pm

DESCRIPTION:
This course offers an introduction to the Pilates Method mat repertoire, part of the method developed by movement pioneer Joseph Pilates. The mat repertoire focuses on core strengthening, spinal articulation and stabilization. The exercises increase strength and flexibility and work towards correcting asymmetries and chronic weaknesses to bring the body into a balanced, neutral alignment. Students will gain body awareness and an understanding of the principles of Pilates including: control, breath, flowing movement, precision, centering, stability, range of motion, and opposition. Readings will be assigned that address topics in Pilates as well as related topics in exercise science and functional anatomy.

COURSE MATERIALS:
Mat, Optional Inner Thigh Prop
Please purchase a thick Pilates mat (recommended) or yoga mat. If you think you may need to make up absences by attending MB Movement, you may prefer a yoga mat as a spongy Pilates mat won’t work well for that class. Optionally, you may like to bring an inner thigh prop such as a Pilates Magic Circle, a Pilates mini ball or an inflatable small beach ball.

ATTIRE:
Footless dancewear or fitted athletic-wear is preferred; please avoid baggy styles that obscure body alignment. Our exercises will be performed in bare feet (socks or studio socks with rubber grips on the soles are acceptable but are not required).

COURSEWORK AND ASSIGNMENTS:
Class will begin with warm-up exercises designed to prepare the body for the mat repertoire. These preparatory exercises focus on postural alignment in neutral spine, breathing technique, and the fundamental movements that create the foundation for all Pilates exercises.

Students will then be guided through the beginning mat repertoire, including modifications that address specific issues relating to posture, range of motion, weakness, or injury. Intermediate and advanced exercises will be added as the class progresses.

Class announcements and course readings from various Pilates, movement and anatomy texts will posted to Blackboard. It is your responsibility to insure that you have access to Blackboard and that the instructor has a working e-mail address for you.

At the beginning and end of the semester you will write a brief entrance essay addressing your previous movement experience and your goals and expectations for the class. At the end of the semester you will write a brief essay re-visiting those goals and expectations and exploring your experience of the class, what you have learned, how you have applied this to your life outside of class, and any other relevant impressions.

There will be 2 short written exams addressing terminology and concepts covered verbally in class and in reading assignments.

There will be a practical exam at the end of the semester.
MIDTERM EVALUATION AND FINAL GRADE:
Throughout the semester, performance of exercises will be evaluated as follows:
Alignment, proper initiation/sequencing within individual exercises, fluidity, control, breathing, precision, stability, articulation, body awareness (most importantly, this includes an awareness of your own abilities and limitations, when to modify, when to move on to a more advanced variation).

Excellent effort and excellent form at individual's appropriate level – A
Good effort and good form – B
Good effort but needing improvement – C
Sloppy, poor effort – D
Deliberate lack of effort, apparent disinterest – F

I prefer that students take this class for “credit only” but I realize that some of you will choose to take the class for a grade because of WU's limit on Credit Only courses or because of personal preference. Somatics Certificate students must take this class for a letter grade.
There is a deadline to change your grade option so please change or confirm your grade option as soon as possible through webstac.

At the end of the term students will be evaluated as follows:
Individual progress and classroom participation * 20 points
Quizzes 20 points
Week 1 paragraph & Exit essay 10 points
Practical Exam 50 points

*Potential Negative Factors – see attendance and classroom protocol policies.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND CLASSROOM PROTOCOL:
You are allowed 2 free absences throughout the semester; I suggest you reserve them for real illness or emergency. Each absence beyond the initial two will reduce your grade by 5 points. A total of 6 absences (4 beyond your 2 free absences) will result in failure of the course. You may make up for a maximum of 3 absences by attending one of the following: Intermediate/Advanced Pilates TTH 6:30 – 7:45 pm, Mind Body Movement Friday 5:15 – 7:15 or, if necessary, one of my off campus classes. I am currently teaching a Pilates Mat class at the Wash U Rec Center on Fridays from 12:15 – 1 pm, as well as classes at Yoga Source, Wellbridge and The Jewish Community Center. Keep track of your absences; valuable class time is lost when the instructor has to tally them for you. Classes missed for a religious holiday, hospitalization or a death in the family will be excused. Classes missed for other reasons, including exams in other classes, travel, illness, and job interviews must be made up. The official policy is that you can attend make-up classes to cover a maximum of 3 absences but if you have a serious illness or injury or a major life event I will work with you to make up for absences. Please be on your mat and ready to practice at 5:15 sharp. University College classes begin promptly at the scheduled time; there is no 10-minute passing period as there is for day classes. Late entrances and disruptive behaviors (e.g. checking your phone during class) will negatively affect the classroom participation portion of your grade. Eating is not allowed during class, water is fine. Deactivate cell phones and other devices before class and stow them away in your bag. If you have a special circumstance that requires you to have your phone at your mat (e.g. sick child at home), please let me know.

INSTRUCTOR OFFICE HOURS
The instructor is available by appointment Fridays 7:15 – 7:30 or before class TTH.
INSTRUCTOR’S NOTE
Certain exercises may not be appropriate for individuals with chronic physical conditions or injuries – please alert the instructor if you have such a condition or if you become injured.