

Mark Adrian Harootian

E-mail: markharootian@gmail.com

Website: www.markharootian.com

Teaching Philosophy

Since I began ballet lessons at the age of eight, I have gone through a series of enlightenments where I experienced firsthand the values and opportunities the performing arts naturally offers to students and professionals, such as developing good work ethics and adaptability, collaboration and communication skills. As a dance educator, I aim to achieve a series of personal goals where teaching a variety of high-quality dance classes is at the top. As a result, holistic teaching has become my main and preferred teaching style due to how well its type of immediate demonstrations have helped me prove that anyone from any background with any body type, can practice and execute classical ballet technique. Holistic teaching also helps me teach students to avoid injuries in my dance technique courses in addition to improving their critical thinking skills as well as personalize assignments, feedback, and discussions in my lecture courses and workshops. I make sure that every class supports all types of learners, starting with a core pedagogical foundation of encouragement that is appropriate to each class and level. Meaning, I adapt the amount and intensity of my feedback and expectations based on students' long-term objectives and career plans.

I always teach using positive reinforcement because it is not only my teaching preference and suits my character, but because through it, I am able to stimulate passionate self-motivation and discipline from students and create an atmosphere where they feel comfortable to take risks, make mistakes and ask questions. I also strive to be dynamic with my instructions and class material to help ensure all students are mentally present and fully engaged throughout an entire class. To avoid students feeling overwhelmed or discouraged, I make sure that each exercise/lesson is presented in a variety of ways that are relevant to the class such as clear, verbal or written instructions and feedback or visual and multi-media demonstrations. I also assign or prompt live or online self-assessment exercises and discussions that provoke and enhance critical thinking skills, which I find helps students retain the skills and knowledge learned long after they have taken my course, such as asking students to identify any struggles they had in a class and how they can lessen those issues next time. Another example is a thorough evaluation I give to each conservatory or college student on their skill development and class participation, which better informs them of their progression, work-ethics and etiquette as well as how to prepare for their graded final presentation at the end of a semester and training afterwards.

The most frequent class I teach is classical ballet technique, which is constructed from the Cecchetti, Vagonova and French methods. Through these methods and as another goal of mine, I stress the importance of being versatile as a dance professional for the sake of increasing one's proficiencies and employability. Therefore, I also help students navigate through and consider studying other forms and areas of dance to illustrate how collaborative the performing arts are, and broadening one's skills in other practices in the field, refines their knowledge and skill in their focused expertise. I also teach courses in classical ballet pas de deux and contemporary partnering, men's and pointe techniques, variations, choreography composition, internship connections, dance history and dance appreciation. I also aspire to create college courses teaching dance and theater majors how to utilize a variety of digital technology to enhance and market their work.

Another goal I have as a dance educator is informing and motivating people and students to increase their involvement in the arts, for I truly believe practicing or attending events in any art form can better one's wellbeing and inspire new developments in a dance students' and professionals' work. During these discussions with students, I find that the expectations and demands of the dance industry are

better understood and practiced. For example, I help them identify current trends in one's field while they witness the necessary work skills and knowledge one needs to reach their full potential in their craft. Throughout a semester, I also nurture my students' love and appreciation for dance for I realize that many of my students will also be future audience members. This relates back to my holistic teaching style and view of life -- that there is a circular nature to all that we do and experience.