

Summer
2026

Course Descriptions & Details



NDEO's Online Professional Development Institute (OPDI)

Summer 2026 Semester – Schedule as of 3-16-2026 - Questions? Email opdi@ndeo.org

How do OPDI Online Courses for dance teachers work?

Our “online” courses are guided by a professor and include a co-hort of students (other dance teachers) with whom you will collaborate. They also include graded assignments, feedback, final grades, and Professional Development Credits (PDCs). Our OPDI online courses require on average between 6 to 8 hours of work each week, but it all depends on your learning style. It could be less or could be more. You can also register as an Audit student and do as much or as little work as you want and will not receive a grade



We utilize the Sakai online learning platform to deliver the course materials and instruction. **Our courses are asynchronous, so there are no required meeting dates or times but we do have a Course Start and Course End date; however, our courses offer at least 2 optional live Q&A-Feedback zoom sessions during the course to enhance opportunities for connection with other students and the professor.** Every week of the course there are assignments that you will need to complete with due dates listed in the course outline / syllabus.

Assignments can be done at any time during the week prior to the due date and may include reading, watching videos, posting answers to prompts on a discussion board, writing an essay, reading and responding to other students' posts on the discussion board, taking a cell phone video of yourself completing a particular movement, taking a quiz, or completing a final project. The professor provides written feedback and grades and you get to connect with other students (who are actually dance teachers) via our discussion board and the optional live Q&A feedback sessions.

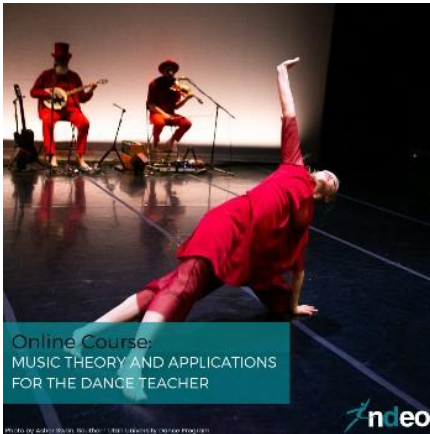
List of Course Titles for Summer 2026

Starts on May 18, 2026	Starts on June 8, 2026	Starts on June 22, 2026
OPDI-120: Music Theory and Application for the Dance Teacher OPDI-M2: Elements of Dance OPDI-M40: Building a Mission-Based Dance Studio	OPDI-125: Dance History in the USA OPDI-M25: Hip-Hop: History and Heritage OPDI-M13: Modern Dance Theory and Composition OPDI-M27: Functional Awareness: Mindfulness Practices in Embodied Anatomy for the Dance Educator	OPDI-M12: Jazz Dance Theory and Practice OPDI-M32: Using Dance Science to Enhance Curriculum NEW~ OPDI-128: Foundations of Dance Education Research

[View Upcoming Courses Webpage](#)

Courses that start on May 18, 2026

OPDI-120: Music Theory and Applications for the Dance Teacher (May 18 to August 9, 2026)



Professor: Jon Anderson; Member Tuition \$550; Non-Member Tuition \$625; 3 NDEO-Endorsed PDCs; 12 weeks; Understanding music is an essential tool for a successful dance teacher. In a classroom setting, it is beneficial to be able to articulate to your students where rhythmic patterns lie, and where specific accents of movements occur.

The first half of this course will raise awareness of the relationship between music and dance, covering the concepts of Beat, Pulse, Meter, Tempo, Dynamics, Articulation, and Phrasing. You will be given an opportunity to explore and apply to dance the concepts learned and write a short musical score to demonstrate your overall comprehension.

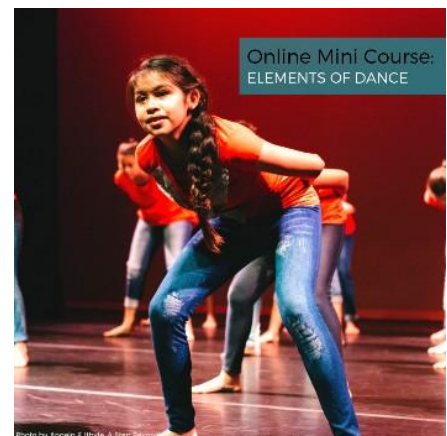
In the second half of the course, we will continue to examine the symbiotic relationships that exist between music and dance, finding meaningful ways

to express those relationships in your teaching. Based on newly acquired musical knowledge and aided with a cadre of tools, you will identify musical resources that support teaching and choreography needs. You will learn how to make effective music choices reflecting choreographic intent, build personal music libraries, and how to effectively communicate with live musicians in class and performance. In practicums, you will deconstruct a musical score and build a choreographic study derived from the musical structure.

Finally, each student will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with Professor Anderson in a composer/choreographer project with the instructor composing music for you based on your articulated choreographic intent. By the end of this course, you will have a very organic understanding of your relationship with music.

OPDI-M2: Elements of Dance (May 18 to June 14, 2026)

Professor: Pat Cohen; Member Tuition \$215; Non-Member Tuition \$290; 1 NDEO-Endorsed PDCs; 4 weeks; This course explores the language we use to describe movement, and dance in particular. Through movement and discussion we will examine how the body moves in space, in time, and with energy (dynamics). A working knowledge of this material allows us to identify and describe movement with specificity and clarity, which serves both teachers and students. Ultimately, the goal of movement is to communicate meaning. We will explore the tools with which the body communicates. We call these tools the elements of movement. Our bodies are the instruments of communication. We will examine what moves, where, how, and when it moves in space, and with certain qualities that enhance meaning.



OPDI-M40: Building a Mission-Based Dance Studio (May 18 to July 12, 2026)



Professor: Jessie Levey; Member Tuition \$365; Non-Member Tuition \$440; 2 NDEO-Endorsed PDCs; 8 weeks; Dance Studio Owners and Teachers: Take a deep dive into what, how, and why you teach in this transformative mini-course!

Through active online discussion groups, readings, and journaling, you will examine, compare, and reflect upon different leadership styles, studio options, and student-centered education practices. This course is designed to help you acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to become the most authentic teacher, leader, or director you can be.

You will engage in research and develop tools that will empower you to lead effectively, whether you are forming, directing, or teaching in a dance studio. As part of your journey, you will craft both a teaching philosophy and mission

statement, honing in on your personal and professional goals. Additionally, you will collaborate with fellow course participants to create a business resource guide that consolidates ideas, tools, and best practices for leading a dance program. By the end of the course, you will have the tools necessary to move forward confidently in your leadership role.

Optional Live Virtual Meetings:

- Wed, May 20th, 6:30-7:30 PM EST
 - Agenda for the meeting:
 - Review of Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process, which is used for all feedback
 - Students will discuss and choose topics for the final research project
- Thurs., June 9th, 6:30-7:30 PM EST
 - Agenda for the meeting:
 - Final project check-in
 - Share: How will you use the information gained from this course to move forward with your career?
 - Last questions

Book Required: *Dance and Belonging: Implicit Bias and Inclusion in Dance Education* by Crystal U. Davis. It can be purchased [here](#).

Courses that start on June 8, 2026

OPDI-125: Dance History in the USA (June 8 to August 30, 2026)



Professor: Elizabeth McPherson; Member Tuition \$550; Non-Member Tuition \$625; 3 NDEO-Endorsed PDCs; 12 weeks; Embracing dramatic similarities, glaring disjunctions, and formal innovations, this online course will be an immersive experience through the trajectory of dance in the United States from the 1700s to the present day. By the end of the course, you will have developed an organic view of dance in the United States—breaking traditional forms, stretching genres, confronting racist practices, provoking social and political change, driving cultural exchange and collision, treasuring indigenous wellsprings of inspiration and expression, and catapulting into the future. Subjects explored include, but are not limited to, an American take on ballet, the impact of Black women on jazz and tap, Native American dance, the female dancing body, and cultural appropriation

in dance. **Book required:** *Milestones in Dance in the USA (1st edition) 2023. Edited by Elizabeth McPherson. NY, NY. Routledge.*

OPDI-M25: Hip-Hop: History and Heritage (June 8 to July 19, 2026)

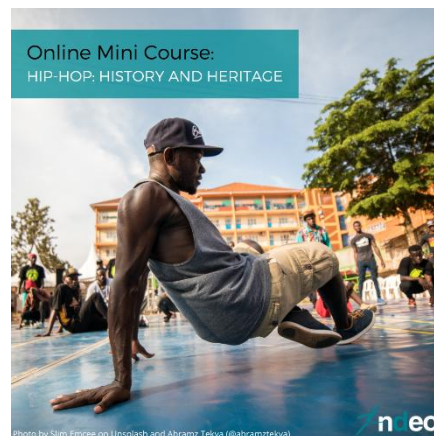
Professor: E. Moncell Durden; Member Tuition \$310; Non-Member Tuition \$385; 1.5 NDEO-Endorsed PDCs; 6 weeks; As dance

educators, we have a responsibility to give credit and respect to all forms by including context, heritage, and history in our lessons.

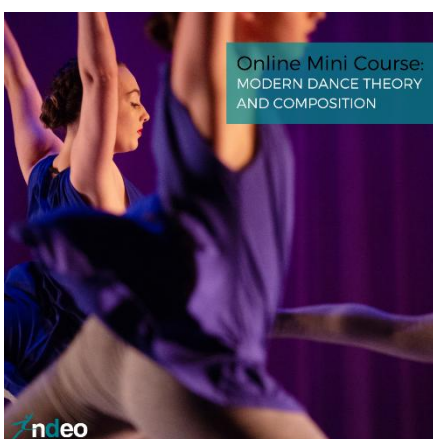
Understanding and sharing the rich cultural context and stories behind hip-hop dance can not only enhance your teaching, but also grow respect for the hip-hop genre and those who created it. Shaped by cultural and political circumstances in the 1970s and developed during economic struggles and environmental turmoil, hip-hop dance gave voices to the restless and tumultuous inner-city youth. Hip-hop's roots are found in the social fabric of African and Afro-Diasporic concepts of communication that have re-inventions in ragtime, jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll, funk, and soul which culminated in hip-hop.

This course will help you understand hip-hop vocabulary, terminology, and fundamentals as well as gain a contextual and historical overview of hip-hop dance and culture; its recurring cultural modes of discourse and practices woven into black vernacular / social dance, and its intersecting economic, political, and social dynamics of race, gender, sexuality, and class. In this online course, you will engage in reflection, choreographic explorations, and written dialogue with your classmates to illuminate your personal, social and cultural dynamics of ethnic diversity. Additional course components include reading, video viewing and analysis, and writing assignments that allow you to focus your understanding of hip-hop dance. **Book required:** *Durden, E. Moncell (2018) Beginning Hip Hop Dance: An interactive dance series. Human Kinetics. [View book order option here or https://www.amazon.com/Beginning-Hip-Hop-Dance-Interactive-ebook/dp/B07CV4LKZ9](https://www.amazon.com/Beginning-Hip-Hop-Dance-Interactive-ebook/dp/B07CV4LKZ9)*

Professor Durden will host a live weekly Q&A Zoom discussion with the class on TBD Date in lieu of written feedback to each student. He will be on hand to answer your questions and provide additional insight into the weekly topics. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend the Live session. Attendance at these live sessions is not required. Due to the unique nature of the M25 course, all students (including those auditing) are encouraged to fully participate in this course as peer-to-peer written feedback is a critical component of the Discussion Board posts



OPDI-M13: Modern Dance Theory and Composition (June 8 to July 19, 2026)



Professor: Mary Sprague; Member Tuition \$310; Non-Member Tuition \$385; 1.5 NDEO-Endorsed PDCs; 6 weeks; In this course, we will engage in research and reflection on the following questions: As a teacher, what long term dance learning or enduring understanding do you wish to pass on to your students regarding modern dance? As a choreographer, do you know the lineage, from where your personal expressive style is rooted and developed, of your modern dance style? As a performer, how can an understanding of modern dance styles aid in clarity of execution in repertory pieces? From where do we develop our personal movement preferences and expressive capabilities? What or who has influenced these preferences and capabilities? Even if you are a “rebel”, as opposed to one devoted to passing on a legacy, you need to know from what or whom you are rebelling. By applying a known family genealogy, one is given a deeper sense of identity and so knowing the modern dance

historical genealogy gives a deeper sense of one's place in the modern dance world and thereby improve one's dance products and students' training experience. **Book required:** Legg, Joshua. (2011). *Introduction to Modern Dance Techniques*. Hightstown, NJ: Princeton Book Company Publishers.

OPDI-M27: Functional Awareness: Mindfulness Practices in Embodied Anatomy for the Dance Educator (June 8 to July 19, 2026)

Professors: Nancy and Allegra Romita; Member Tuition \$310; Non-Member Tuition \$385; 1.5 NDEO-Endorsed PDCs; 6 weeks;

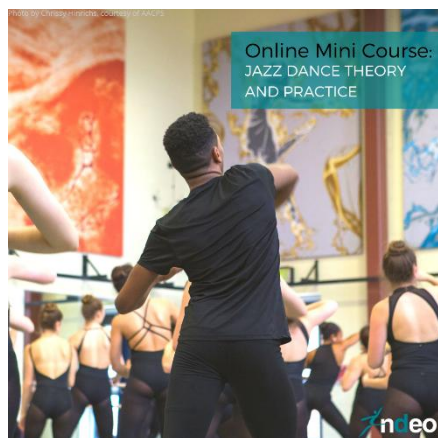
Functional Awareness® (FA) is a practical approach to dance pedagogy using anatomical imagery and reflective practices to enhance movement potential, facilitate ease in action, and improve dynamic alignment. This 6-week course curriculum is an opportunity to reinvigorate teaching practices and renew personal movement practices for self-care. This mini course utilizes engaging lectures, readings, and active movement explorations that present current research on motor learning skills for core strength, improving standing leg balance, and other dance skills.

Each week, participants learn strategies to improve movement skills while employing tools for dancer wellness and injury prevention. The course content is appropriate for all movement populations and is applicable for all dance styles. The modules integrate practical applications in functional anatomy and somatic mindfulness practices to support inclusive learning and diverse perspectives in dance. **Book Required:** 2nd edition of the *Functional Awareness: Anatomy in Action for Dancers*. Order it [here](#).



Courses that start on June 22, 2026

OPDI-M12: Jazz Dance Theory and Practice (June 22 to August 2, 2026)



Professor: Pat Taylor; Member Tuition \$310; Non-Member Tuition \$385; 1.5 NDEO-endorsed PDC; 6 weeks; This course traces the continuum of jazz dance from its roots to its many manifestations today. You will explore your own jazz dance identity through a process of examining historical jazz eras and styles (authentic, vernacular, theatrical, and contemporary) and by engaging in reflection, choreographic explorations, and dialogue with classmates.

Additional course components include reading, video viewing and analysis, and writing assignments that will allow you to focus your understanding of jazz dance. Whether you teach in a privately-owned dance studio, in K-12, or in higher education, this course will also offer you the opportunity to practice a historically-rooted approach for teaching jazz dance that is relevant today in contemporary jazz dance practices. By applying essential jazz dance

characteristics that are derived from the origins of jazz but are often forgotten in dance studios today, you will be able to integrate a rich understanding of jazz dance to classroom exercises that are already in your tool box.

Feedback from classmates and instructor will open the doors to a dialogue where, as a community, we can share successes and challenges. You will leave this course with a series of class exercises that can be explored and integrated into regular studio classes.

Please note that audit students will not be receiving personal feedback or grades on the assignments they turn in.

Book required: *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches* by Lindsay Guarino and Wendy Oliver. (2014). Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida. Available on Amazon [here](#).

OPDI-M32: Using Dance Science to Enhance Curriculum (June 22 to August 16, 2026)

Professor: Maria Haralambis; Member Tuition \$365; Non-Member Tuition \$440; 2 NDEO-Endorsed PDCs; 8 weeks; In this dance science course, you will be taken on a unique journey towards unraveling the relationship between the artistry of codified dance technique and traditions and how they can (and should) coexist with modern movement science. A deeper understanding of this relationship will ultimately uplevel your dancers' technique and future careers. The curriculum covered is designed to apply to all dance styles, environments, and ages of dance; making the course accessible and applicable to dance educators of all kinds. We will investigate and examine the scientific underpinnings that collectively assist dancers in executing movements such as powerful leaps, refined pirouettes, and elegant arabesques. This course will build the bridge between modern science and traditional dance pedagogy in a specific and practical way that prioritizes (1) teaching Anatomy & Dance Science from a young age and (2) implementing anatomy lessons into teaching dance movements (such as pirouettes). Whether you're a ballet instructor, an early-childhood teacher, or an educator who teaches all styles, the content of this course will trickle into all environments and contexts within the dance sphere. **Book required:** [Dance Anatomy by Jacqui Green Haas](#)



Disclaimer: *While this course incorporates anatomy and movement science, it is not structured as a traditional, comprehensive anatomy course. A strong background in anatomy is not required for enrollment. In fact, one of the first assignments in Module 1 invites students to reflect on their own anatomy upbringing and how it has shaped their understanding of dance. Many past participants entered the course without a deep anatomy foundation and still found it both accessible and valuable. The focus is on meeting each student where they are, supporting their growth, and helping them integrate these concepts into their teaching practice in a meaningful, judgment-free way.*

NEW ~ OPDI-128: Foundations of Dance Education Research (June 22 to September 13, 2026)



Professor: Matthew Henley; Member Tuition \$550; Non-Member Tuition \$625; 3 NDEO-Endorsed PDCs; 12 weeks; This course introduces novice dance education researchers and “research curious” dance educators and students to the goals, logics, and practices of social science-based dance education research. We will begin by situating educational research within the broader landscapes of cultural knowledge production and academic research. We will develop research literacy by reading research methodology texts and analyzing examples of dance education research. Along the way, students will discuss and identify areas of curiosity in their professional and personal dance practices and propose possible research designs to address those curiosities. This course is appropriate for students and educators who might not see themselves conducting research, but are interested in reading and understanding research. It is appropriate for novice researchers who are

interested in conducting research and are seeking to expand their formal education in research methods. It is also appropriate for more seasoned researchers who are interested in reinvesting in the basics of research in order to reinvigorate their practice. Overarching the activities of the course is a goal to build the community of knowledgeable dance education research consumers and producers who advocate for the diverse roles dance education can play across the lifespan and communities.

Important Information

NDEO Membership Policy: Members and Non-Members may take these courses. Members receive a discounted tuition rate compared to non-members. If you are not a current NDEO member and only want to take one course, then it makes financial sense to register as a non-member. But if you plan to take more than one course in any 12-month period, then it makes sense to sign up for an NDEO membership so you can receive the discounted tuition rate. To learn more about Membership [NDEO > Membership > Member Types, Benefits, Dues Rates](#).

College Credit for OPDI Courses from our Partner, Oakland University (OU) in Michigan:



**SCHOOL OF MUSIC,
THEATRE AND DANCE**

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

The National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) and Oakland University (OU) in Michigan are proud to announce a partnership that expands access to high-quality dance education training and certification opportunities for educators across the nation. **To earn college credit for Summer OPDI courses, you need to apply to Oakland and register and pay them by April 15, 2026.** To get started, fill [out this FORM to set up an Advising Appointment](#) with Oakland.

- 1) **Earn College Credit for Individual OPDI Online Courses** - For those who need it for salary or advancement opportunities or to fulfill existing undergraduate or graduate degree requirements from another college or university.
- 2) **Earn an Oakland University K-12 Certificate in Dance Education** - For those seeking certification who already have either a Bachelor's degree in dance or those who already have a Bachelor's degree in any endorsed content in K-12 Education.

OPDI Tuition:

OPDI Tuition Chart	4 week course	6 week course	8 week course	12 week course
Member Discounted Tuition	\$215	\$310	\$365	\$550
Non-Member Tuition	\$290	\$385	\$440	\$625

* *Oakland University college credit is an additional fee. If going the college credit route, you will make all tuition payments directly to Oakland – their tuition fee plus the OPDI tuition fee.*

How to Register for a Course (if you don't need college credit): Visit the Upcoming Courses webpage, <https://www.ndeo.org/Learn/Online-Courses/Upcoming-Courses> and click on the Register for Courses button.

NDEO's Refund Policy:

In order to be eligible for a refund, the student must notify NDEO by email at opdi@ndeo.org and confirm that the email was received. They also need to notify their Professor in Sakai if the course has already started. Refunds are provided according to the schedule below. It is your duty to stay in touch with the Professor (during the course, not after) if you are having issues staying on track with assignments and need extra time. Granting of extra time is at the professor's discretion based on NDEO guidelines.

- 85% refund available until 1 week before the course starts
- 70% refund available until day 7 of the course

- Absolutely no refunds after day 7 of the course
- If you are unable to complete a course after the refund window has closed, you cannot transfer that payment to any other courses in that semester or future semesters.

NDEO's Professional Development Credits (PDCs): Upon successfully completing an NDEO OPDI course the student earns PDCs. They earn 3 PDCs for a 12-week course; 2 PDCs for an 8-week course; 1.5 PDCs for a 6-week course; 1 PDC for a 4-week course. Prior to 1-1-22, NDEO used CEUs (continuing education units) instead of PDCs for its OPDI / CiDE program. CEUs are still used with our Conference events, as 10 hours of lesson/session time equals 1 CEU. PDCs are used to differentiate the type and amount of professional development involved in an online course that spans a month or more.

NDEO's Certificate in Dance Education (CiDE): The CiDE is for those who want a deep dive into dance education and do not need to pay extra for college credits. Awarded after 33 credits of OPDI coursework have been successfully completed. Previous dance teaching experience is a must, but no previous college degree is required, nor is an application required. Students who earn a total of 33 PDCs will be awarded NDEO's Certificate in Dance Education. A student can declare their intent to earn a CiDE after completing 9 PDCs. For more information [Certificate in Dance Education \(ndeo.org\)](https://www.ndeo.org/cide).