

Week 7 OLLI Class – Message from Instructor

I am sorry to say I am sick and we are cancelling class for Wednesday March 11. However, please proceed with the following self-guided class activities in place of our regularly scheduled class.

1. Visit the Blues Dance and its African American Roots Exhibit at the Spurlock Museum, 600 South Gregory, Urbana. There is no entrance fee. This exhibit addresses many of the concepts of this class and provides even more context through oral histories, artwork, label text and video. I think you will enjoy it! And I look forward to hearing your comments, feedback and questions on the exhibit to at our next and final class on March 18.

2. After you have visited the exhibit or if you don't have an opportunity to go to the Museum, you can view a few of the oral histories here: <https://www.spurlock.illinois.edu/exhibits/online/blues-oral-history/> In the future the Museum will be posting many more stories from the nine people we interviewed about dance in their lives as members of the African American community in and around Champaign-Urbana.

3. Individuality is a key characteristic of blues dance that is also highly valued in African American social dance, and culture in general. Historically blues dancing was often learned from watching others or from friends and family. Cool moves were copied and changed over time and from place to place as people borrowed them and adapted them into their own dance and added their own individual unique style. In the exhibit you will hear this too in the oral histories. Building on this same tradition, we will work on Individuality in our own dance next week.

Find a move, a movement or a step that you like, you think is especially cool, and would like to learn. It should be just a single move or movement. Choose something that you feel is achievable for your body. For example, if you are have limitations with your knees find a cool shoulder or upper body movement instead.

You can watch videos from the following sources to get ideas:

- a. Videos we have watched in class (you should have access to the weekly summary's with video links posted through OLLI)
- b. Videos of blues dancing online which you can find by going to Youtube. Try searching for 'BluesShout! Solo Cuttin' to get some fun examples.

Next week we will share the video with the class if possible. Remember where you found the video and key words in its title/description.

4. If you still haven't had enough dancing, you can:
 - a. Practice the camel walk at your own speed. In this video, the second half is done in slow motion.
<http://www.bluesmoves.com/the-camel-walk.html>
 - b. Practice Shake Your Money Maker Line Dance
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8OP_dUCqgY
 - c. Practice Hound Dog Line Dance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgeCcidHPP4>

*remember you can slow down videos on Youtube by selecting the little cog symbol in the bottom right corner, select playback speed, select normal and choose options 0.75 or 0.5. This is a great way to break down moves to figure out what is happening and to practice at a slow tempo, then gradually increasing the speed once you are comfortable with it.

5. Have fun and dance on!