

## FOLK DANCE CLASS

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American Heritage School  
Folk Dance Class

### Instructor Information:

Amy Robinson

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### **Course Description:**

Learning dance steps, and styles of folk dances from different countries. Understanding basic dance formations, positions, and terminology.

### **Benefits of Folk Dance:**

1. Exercise and increased coordination – we will move our bodies each class period, and complexity of steps and styling will increase along the course of the class
2. Individual awareness within team class and school culture – Folk dance is social by nature. Not just dancing with a partner, but partners within groups, or whole neighborhoods. There is a synthesis that is tangible in these interactions. Working as individuals to remember, to master, to complete the dances with others brings people together in a unique way
3. Social connection – Folk Dance is obviously a social activity. It is done with others from a community, or it brings people together who then feel the communal connection. Dance is one of the easier ways to communicate. We may not know the language of the people we are dancing with, but dancing can be learned without too much of a spoken language barrier.
4. Cultural awareness – Folk Dances have been created for celebrations, for pivotal events of life, for the telling of legends, for bringing neighbors together, for courting of men and women. These layers of meaning on top of the steps of the dance infuse awareness different peoples and help the dancers connect with cultures in a more intimate way than they may have done before. We have a new sense of how humans are similar and go through similar life events.
5. Cross curriculum learning potential – social events, cultural history, geography, music, foreign language, vocabulary can come into play when folk dancing. The “why” behind each dance brings together the humanities of that culture. We can’t learn the dancing without also learning something more!

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### **Goals for this class:**

- Learn Folk dances that will strengthen basic folk dance steps and then add upon these skills with more folk dances – and have a blast doing it!
- Enjoy and strengthen friendships and feeling of community within the class and in the school
- Increase coordination and dance skills
- Increase awareness of cultures and countries and expand our connection to our culture and others

### **Units:**

#### **UNIT 1** (January)

1. Intro to Class Procedures
2. Definition and Origins of Folk Dancing and dance terminology
  - Dance is B.E.S.T in folk dance context) >> B = Body shaping/styling; E = Energy qualities (soft, percussive, lyrical/smooth, etc.); S = Space – dance formations: circle, contra, linear, combination; T = Time: music qualities – tempo, rhythm of footwork etc.
3. Circle formation dances: Las Bastrigue (French Canada), Od Lo Ahavti Dai (Israel), Dona Dona (Israel), Gallopade (England), Doubleska Polka (Czech Republic)
4. begin Mexican footwork

#### **UNIT 2** – (February)

1. Contra formation dances of US and UK: Oh Susanna (US), Merry Merry Milkmaids (England), DAsHING White Seargent and Strip the Willow (Scotland)
2. Focus on Eight hand jig (Ireland) for Girls and Morris (England) dancing for Boys
3. Intro to Polka

#### **UNIT 3** – (March)

1. Partnering essentials – Troika (Russia), Sternpolka (Germany), La Cucaracha (Mexico), Hungarian dance
2. Learn Kalinka dance for Russian and Ukrainian styling
3. Performance quality

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### **Unit 4** – (April)

1. Greek and Romanian line dancing
2. Festival Prep

### **Unit 5** – (May)

1. Turkish or Indian dance styling
2. End of Year review and final prep

### **Class Particulars:**

We will move a lot each class period. We will sweat! Students will have 5 minutes to get changed into practice clothes and ready to their places for roll call.

### **Dance class uniform:**

**Girls** – practice skirt, BIKER Shorts, AHS PE shirt/or AHS Spirit wear shirt, tennis shoes, character shoes

\*\* Important: girls will be lent a practice skirt and will be responsible for caring for it, and wearing it! They need biker shorts for underneath their skirt EVERY class period.

Shoes – girls need to bring both athletic shoes/sneakers/tennis shoes and character shoes – DO NOT BUY character shoes yet! I will be sending home more information about this.

**Boys** – Joggers/sweatpants black or navy, AHS PE shirt or AHS Spirit wear T-shirt, tennis shoes, and character shoes.

### **Performances:**

April 12 – at SLC AHS. 2pm and 6pm. School wide “Inheri-dance festival.” I am hoping to perform 2 or 3 dances as a folk dance team!

May 23 – Folk Team class performance during school period. More information to come.

### **Grading, Assignments, Quizzes (show what you know)**

Grading in a dance class is notoriously hard to do. I am not so worried about how they look or how coordinated they are – as that they are having fun, feeling more confident, and gaining knowledge!

To accomplish these objectives, I feel that more than just a participation grade is necessary.

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There will be 4 contributions to the grade:

1. Participation: (100 pts per month of class – 400 total) In order to get full participation points students need to be on time, in uniform, on task, and working hard. Excessive talking beyond rehearsal work with partner or group at appropriate times will be discouraged and can affect overall points. We have over 50 students in the class – so it will require group effort to keep focused.
2. 4 quizzes (25pts each)– which we will call “SWYK”s – one for each month of work. These will have questions that will be easy to answer for those coming to class. It may include country information, names of steps or formations, general folk dance info, etc. Students can expect these on the first week of the months of February, March, April and May. We will talk about them beforehand.
3. Action report (100 pts): Students will be assigned a day in March/April/ or May to come with information on one folk dance. Students can request a certain country, I will send a safe link of a dance from that area for them to watch on Youtube. If they don't care which country – I will assign something interesting! They need to look up the dance origins and tell something of the costuming, reasons, and styling for the dance and then teach 16-32 counts of the dance to their group/part of the class. This is to get them looking at all the amazing types of dance in the world, and using their new skills to watch and break it down to share with others.

### **Great Folk Dance experience Expansion OPPORTUNITIES!!!**

FEBRUARY 10, 2024: BYU LIVING LEGENDS dance group is performing at the Conference Center Theatre at 2pm and 7pm

Tickets: <https://pam.byu.edu/events/?P=international-folk-dance-ensemble>

MARCH 16, 2024: BYU INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCERS are performing at the Conference Center Theatre at 2pm and 7pm

Tickets: <https://pam.byu.edu/events/?P=international-folk-dance-ensemble>

BYU Folk Dance Summer Camp:

June 10-12, 2024

Registration and information: <https://folkdancecamp.ce.byu.edu/>

Springville Folk Festival:

August 2024

Info here: <https://www.worldfolkfest.org/>