

The Joy of Contra Syllabus*

Summer 2026, Thursdays, 12:30–2:00 pm

Cactus Valley (Auditorium)

Instructor: Robert Hofkin

contrajoy@middlej.com

Course Description

Step into a world of rhythm, connection, and community in this welcoming and relaxed introduction to Contra Dancing. Sometimes described as "social dancing for people who love to walk," Contra is an easy-to-learn American folk-dance form.

The focus is on foundational patterns, gentle movement, and cognitive engagement, no partner or prior dance experience required. By interacting with other class members each session, you will make new friends and stay "on your toes" in a supportive, low-impact environment.

Beyond the physical benefits of improved balance and cardiovascular health, "The Joy of Contra" offers a unique mental workout through pattern recognition and spatial awareness. Expect a comfortable pace that focuses on just a few choreographic concepts each week, so you can feel confident and successful.

About the Instructor

Bob enthusiastically joined the contra dance community in the early 1990s after exploring ballroom, swing, and waltz. Shortly after, he studied the art and craft of calling contras and squares, and has led sessions for many local groups and special events. Bob and his wife organized their wedding around a dance weekend, and even hosted a monthly series in their own home. Bob's teaching style emphasizes safety, encouragement, connection, acceptance, and fun.

Course Materials

You will be on your feet and moving for most of the class time, so clean, comfortable shoes are essential. Wear smooth soles (like leather or hard rubber) so you can glide or turn easily on the wood floor. Avoid high heels, boots or "grippy" running shoes, which can be tough on knees.

Choose lightweight, breathable layers of clothing, such as tee shirts, casual slacks, skirts with some twirl, or comfortable jeans. Please avoid perfume or cologne: Many dancers are sensitive to scent!

Bring water to stay hydrated. Some dancers like a small hand towel for sweat.

*** Content and classes are subject to change if needed**