Faculty in the Spotlight presents the inside scoop on the life of assistant professor, Clare Croft. Clare is a scholar in the fields of dance studies and performance studies with interests in the intersections of dance and cultural policy, 20th and 21st century American performance, feminist and queer theory, dramaturgy and critical race theory. Clare received her Ph.D. in Performance as Public Practice from the University of Texas-Austin and an M.A. in Performance Studies from NYU. She is also an active dramaturg and has recently collaborated on creative projects with choreographers Rachel Murray and Andee Scott.

What is something random that the Department would benefit from knowing about you?
I participated in a dance history club during college, so I have a random knowledge of social dances. My favorite was the Charleston; I always had a solo during that section. Some thing that I love about the Charleston are the facts that you don’t need a partner, and there is an aspect of losing control and freedom in it.

Do you have any particular interests or hobbies?
Currently I am working on gaining more hobbies, because I am finding that dance, which was my hobby has turned into something that I do; so it is no longer my hobby. But otherwise I enjoy running, (recently I completed a half marathon in Austin) hiking, traveling (specifically leaving the country) and reading (I am an avid book worm). Another hobby/interest is country music. I learned how to two-step while in Texas, and I am very disappointed that there are not that many two step opportunities in Ann Arbor. Also I am the biggest Willy Nelson fan alive.
What made you start questioning the social aspect of dance?
While in college I was interested in politics and American studies. Also I started grad school at NYU a few days before 9/11 and this greatly influenced why I started to think about the social aspect of dance. At NYU I obtained my masters in Performance as Public Practice, and I was noticing that everything (not just dance) contains rehearsals before the “performance”. Then I realized that dance is a part of how I look at the world as a whole.

Any words of wisdom to the undergraduates?
Its easy to become enraptured with time spent in the studio, so see as much work as you can and, most importantly, see everything not JUST dance. It is equally important to read the newspaper and in general attempt to understand the world.

What were your childhood goals? Did they involve dance or were you planning on going in a completely different direction with your life?
I was captured by dance from very early on, but I also loved reading. During a slumber party hosted by my ballet teacher, I found out that people write about dance for a living. You can do both, write and dance and it can be a career. It was at this point that I realized I wanted to do both in my life.

If you were stuck on a desert island and could only bring six dances with you, what would they be?
George Balanchine’s, Serenade; Miguel Gutierrez’s, Everyone; Doug Varone’s, Home; Alvin Ailey’s, Revelations; Christopher Wheeldon’s, After Rain; Pina Baush’s, Vollmond.