DANC 1202: WORLD DANCE –  
From Oral Traditions to the Stage  
Winter 2013

- Instructor: Nina Haft, Department of Theatre and Dance;  
- Office Hours: Monday 1-2pm, TTh 3-4pm and by appointment.  
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
- This course examines dance traditions and cultures from around the world in an exploration of the human search for meaning. From ritual dances that prepare us for weddings and wars, to social dances that reinforce cultural order, to artistic dance performances that express the human condition —dance is alive and evolving where we live. In this way, it tells the story of who we are and who we may become.

- In this course, you will learn how to think, read, watch, talk and write about dance.
- We will study world dance forms and artists in the context of spirituality, myth, folklore, history and music. We will also study the nature of the creative process in dance. As we examine dance traditions from around the world, we will study their influence on dance practices here in the Bay Area. Through active participation in dance activities (our daily ‘lab work’), you will gain firsthand knowledge of contemporary modern dance, a North American dance tradition that constantly grows in response to world dance, music and spiritual culture.

- No previous dance experience is necessary for this class, only the willingness to learn!

COURSE OBJECTIVES
- Students will:
  - Learn about selected cultures through learning and experiencing the dance and the music of different regions;
  - Gain appreciation for the aesthetic of traditional dance and culture;
  - Experience the language, myths, stories and songs of different cultures;
  - Explore the similarities and differences in dance and music of various cultures;
  - Understand the social and cultural context in which world dance forms arise;
  - Relate the cultural meanings of dance to the search for meaning in every day life.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
- Students will:
  A. communicate in writing, orally, non-verbally, and visually about dance in relation to music and religious ritual;
  B. employ historical, contemporary, and cultural performance techniques and production technology appropriate to their study of dance rituals as spiritual acts of resistance;
  C. reflect on performance techniques and concepts of other performers and apply high standards of reflection to their own production work;
  D. solve problems of production by dancing in and choreographing performances that address issues of life in striking and remarkable ways.

TEXTS
You will receive several articles to read for this course, some in hard copy and others in digital format.

VIDEOS
Videos will be viewed in class. You will sometimes receive links to youtube sites to watch for homework. All links will be posted on blackboard. All videotapes screened in class will also be available under Course Reserves, when possible.

POLICIES
Attendance & Classroom Activity: Each class will cover a mixture of dance activities, short lecture, class discussion, and small group projects. I will present material during lectures that is not covered in the readings, so I recommend taking notes. Your attendance is required, and roll will be taken at the beginning of each class meeting. Excess absences, chronic tardiness, and early departures will adversely affect your grade.

You are responsible for what goes on in class even if you are not there. Find one or two classmates to consult for notes, missed announcements, material covered, etc. If for some reason you must arrive late to class, please come in quietly and join in the current class activity.

Attitude and Participation: Be prepared to dance in every class, and dress appropriately in comfortable clothing as you would for an exercise or dance class. Also, be ready to work with every other member of your class. Cooperation and respect will enhance your understanding of dance, and your experience in class. Late arrivals and early departures may affect your participation grade.

Cell phones and other electronic devices (including laptops) must be put away/turned off during class. If you have a special circumstance that requires you to use a computer, come see me and I will need a note from a doctor or Student Services.

Absence Due to Illness: I care about my students, and this means you! If you develop a long-term illness or other problem, please contact me immediately. I will make evaluations on a case-by-case basis. It is not appropriate to disappear from class for two or three weeks and expect to skip missed assignments. If your current problem is affecting your ability to meet class deadlines, please speak with me in advance. More than three absences without a written doctor’s excuse will affect your participation grade.

Late Work, Make-Ups: Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date assigned. There will be a penalty for assignments turned in after this time. Make-ups will be arranged only in cases of verifiable emergencies.

Evaluation: Your grade will be based on in-class participation, journals, quizzes, written assignments and written final exam and a final oral presentation. Occasionally there will be additional short writing assignments done in class.

Plagiarism: Using other people’s work without proper documentation, including quoting or paraphrasing is plagiarism. Copying other students’ work is also plagiarism. The consequences of plagiarism are quite serious, including a permanent Academic Dishonesty report on your record, failing an assignment, and/or failing an entire course. If you are not clear about what plagiarism is, please feel free to talk to me about it.

Special Needs: If you have any special needs that affect your participation in this class, please don’t hesitate to tell me so we can address them. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss your
approved academic accommodations, discuss with me as soon as possible.

**Writing Assistance:** The University provides free help for writers of all levels. Contact the Student Center for Academic Achievement (Library) at 885-2953 on the Hayward campus.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Consistent and active participation** in dance instruction, class discussions, demonstrations, field trips and group projects or activities is required in this course. **30%**
2. **Journal** - you will do reflective writing about each reading assignment and at certain assigned times, about dance and your own personal search for meaning. You may also be asked to write reflections on certain videos. Journals will be submitted on **2/28** and again at the end of the quarter **3/6. 10%**
3. **DANCE EVENT Essay** – Typed, 2-3 pages, 1 inch margins, 12 pt. font, double-spaced. Attend one dance event and write a paper in response to what you experienced. Possible events could include taking a dance class in a style that is unfamiliar to you or participating in a community or social dance event. Specific ideas will be given. Consult with the instructor for appropriate topics for fieldwork. **Rough Draft Due: 3/6 Final Draft Due: 3/14. 25%**
4. **Performance Critique** – you will see one performance: **Our Daily Bread** on Thursday, November 15 at 8pm at CounterPULSE in the Mission District of San Francisco. Tickets will cost $20. See guidelines below. **Due 2/22. 5%**
5. **Final Project** – working in groups of 2-3 students, you will research one dance artist or world dance form in depth, including historical and cultural contexts, the artist’s relationship to music and spirituality, and examples of how the dance or dancer’s work illustrates the themes of Tradition, Syncretism and/or Globalization. Oral presentations of Final Projects will be 10-15 minutes and will be held during the last week of class **3/4 and 3/6. 15%**
6. **Final Exam** – A Written Take Home exam will reflect knowledge of the videos, discussions, readings and experiences included in the entire course. **Exam Due Date: 3/12. 15%**

*Journals:* Please date and label each entry—and write legibly!

Please Note: Do not turn in loose sheets of paper. Each journal must have some kind of cover, and all pages must be attached. I recommend something you can take paper in and out of (like a 3-ring binder,) since at one point I’ll be collecting the journals to read, yet you still need to be writing entries.

1. **Readings:** In tandem with each reading assignment, write at least a one page reflection answering these questions (number questions clearly for clarity).
   1. Explain what you find to be three most compelling ideas of the reading and why they are important in the context of what we’re learning in class. For clarity, list them as “a” “b” and “c”.
   2. Favorite quote and why
   3. How does this information apply to your life/politics/culture/spirituality/experience with dance?
   4. Other comments and insights

2. **Other Assignments:** You will be given other assignments as homework or in class from time to time.

3. **Creative Component:** Optional—any creative expression (poetry, artwork, etc.) you wish to include.
**Guidelines for DANCE EVENT Essay**

Pick a dance class you have never taken or a social dance gathering, and write about what you experienced. Write a THREE - FIVE PAGE double spaced, 12-pt. font typed essay that includes your answers to the following observations:

1) What kind of dance and movement took place here?

2) What kind of music or accompaniment was used?

3) In this culture or community, what does dancing mean? What did it mean to the dancers themselves? What did it mean to those watching and/or celebrating? Include yourself in this response.

Be sure to include an introductory paragraph that states the name of the event you observed or participated in, the date, time and place, and a brief (2 sentence) description of the look and feel of this event. Also include a conclusion, reflecting on how this dancing or event made you feel, what questions it raised for you, or if it made you think differently about anything in your life or your dancing.

List of recommended events to partake in or observe:

- Take or observe ANY dance class at Malonga Casquelord Center in Downtown Oakland [http://www.malongacenter.org/](http://www.malongacenter.org/)
- Observe one of the other dance technique classes that happen at CSUEB (ballet, ballroom, jazz, hip hop, modern)
- Attend a social dance event (wedding, dance party, cotillion, quinceanera, etc.) and describe the role of dance in that family or cultural event.

***Guidelines for Performance Critique:***

Write a two to three-page (12 pt. Font, typed, 1 inch margins) paper that follows these guidelines:

**Introduction**

Include WHAT you saw, WHO the artists were, WHEN and WHERE. This can be summed up in one sentence.

Next, briefly give your context (have you seen a lot of this type of dance before? Is this your first experience?). Then quickly transition to what you feel the choreographer’s INTENT for the work was. Intent can be defined as the issue(s) the choreographer was dealing with (ranging from abstract, such as time and space, to more human issues, such as love, gender, racism, etc.), combined with WHAT THE CHOREOGRAPHER WAS TRYING TO SAY about that issue. (Note: If the evening of dance you attended consisted of many works, you can briefly mention them all but say which ones—pick one or two—you will be focusing on.)

**Body**

Continue to address the choreographer’s intent by using SPECIFIC examples of HOW she/he portrayed that intent. That is, which ELEMENTS of dance (body, space, time, force/states of emotion, multimedia) were used to express the intent and how. (Multimedia can be lights, costumes, props, sets, video, etc.)

Example of how the use of Costumes illustrated the theme of rebellion:
At first, all of the dancers were dressed in bright red jumpers. Halfway through the work, one dancer appeared in a white costume. Seeing her suddenly so different from the group amplified (the choreographer’s) theme of being a single voice going against the mainstream.

Example of how the elements Body and Space illustrated the theme of oppression: The dancers twisted and tangled themselves into all sorts of strange, restrained positions. They were unable to move freely and used labored, weighted movements, as though something heavy was on their backs. This suggested the weight of society's prejudice that these characters feel every day--the compromised positions that life has put them in.

Some other things to look for:

- Dynamics—did things stay at the same level of intensity, or were there exciting, surprising contrasts in mood, timing, level, lighting, use of space, etc.?
- Dancers’ Performance—did the dancers seem to have a command of their material? Did their presence grab your attention? How? Were they able to approach the movement with subtlety? Did they work together well? Were they a homogenous chorus or did each dancer have his/her own personality?
- Themes of the Course: How did the performance address issues of deviance, conformity, creativity, violence, punishment, difference, social change? Was it useful in understanding any of themes in a new way?

Conclusion
- In your opinion, did the choreographer do a good job at exploring their chosen theme?
- Were you moved? Did it make you think?
- How do you feel this work relates to issues in society/the world at large?
- Would you recommend this show to others?

NOTE: DO NOT give a blow-by-blow description of the show. Pull out the important events and discuss them in relation to your points about the choreographer’s intent, not necessarily in chronological order.