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DAC506, 3 credits
University at Buffalo – SUNY
Spring 2021
T 9-11:30
Remote

DAC506: Dance Studies I, Aesthetics, Theory, and Criticism

Course Description

This course investigates critical and aesthetic theory in relation to dance. Throughout the semester we will explore critical vocabularies of embodiment across arts and humanities research, considering these vocabularies in conversation with our own embodied nature as researchers. Special consideration is given to historical change in understandings of movement and the body, genealogical excavations of key terms, and emerging technologies and their impact on dancing bodies. Students develop their analytical thinking and writing skills as they formulate, articulate, and analyze these theories, and critically evaluate dance scholarship as a) criticism and b) ethnography. Our course objectives are for students to be conversant in the interdisciplinary field of dance studies via several points of contact with theories of embodiment, and to be able to locate themselves as a researching/practicing body in relation to these discourses. In spring 2021 this course will be anchored by critical discourse on climate change and embodiment, and Indigenous theories of embodiment.

Land Acknowledgment

I will be facilitating this course from Buffalo, NY USA on the territory of the Seneca Nation, a member of the Haudenosaunee/Six Nations Confederacy. This territory is covered by The Dish with One Spoon Treaty of Peace and Friendship, a pledge to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. It is also covered by the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua, between the United States Government and the Six Nations Confederacy, which further affirmed Haudenosaunee land rights and sovereignty in the State of New York. Today, this region is still the home to the Haudenosaunee people, and we are grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and share ideas in this territory. I encourage you to visit <https://native-land.ca/> to explore the histories of Indigenous stewardship of the land on which you reside.

Required Materials

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Additional readings per the course calendar are available on UBlearns.

Performance viewing will be part of this course and scheduled TBD.

Course Outcomes

By the conclusion of this course, students will:

| Learning Outcome | Method(s) of Assessment |
|---|------------------------------|
| A breadth of understanding of critical approaches to embodiment related to dance and other disciplines, and the ability to think independently, to integrate, and to synthesize information within the dance discipline and across disciplines. | TBD by the class collective. |
| Knowledge and understanding of the forces that have shaped dance throughout history and as an evolving contemporary art form, including representative works, individuals, styles, cultural contexts, and movement theories. | TBD by the class collective. |
| Writing and speaking skills to communicate clearly and effectively | TBD by the class collective. |
| Familiarity with current technologies utilized in the creation, documentation, preservation, and dissemination of work. | TBD by the class collective. |
| A knowledge of bibliographic resources in dance, including Web-based resources, and the skills to access these resources. | TBD by the class collective. |

Course, Departmental, and Institutional Policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is unacceptable. Do not sell yourself short by pirating someone else's ideas: do the work yourself, be brave, and share it. This does not mean we are not inspired by others' work, nor does it mean we should not acknowledge where others have influenced us or can support our ideas. This is done through proper citation not just of scholarly work, but also of creative work. You MUST cite anything that does not originate with you. Pick a style – MLA, APA, or Chicago – and stick to it. Please see me with any questions about plagiarism and citation BEFORE you turn your work in. If you plagiarize, you will fail the assignment.

UB Official Academic Integrity Policy: Academic integrity is a fundamental university value. Through the honest completion of academic work, students sustain the integrity of the university while facilitating the university's imperative for the transmission of knowledge and culture based upon the generation of new and innovative ideas. For the complete policy please visit: <http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml>

ACCESSIBILITY

I am committed to the academic success of all students in this course. If you have a disability of any kind that will affect your participation in this course, please let me know so that accommodations can be arranged in advance. University resources are available at <http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/>.

ATTENDANCE

Your presence helps all of us learn more effectively. Please attend to your needs as they arise during class, including caregiving of yourself and others.

CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

We are committed to cultivating an inclusive learning environment devoted to dialogue across intellectual and cultural differences. The study of theatre and dance routinely involves sensitive and challenging material, and although we do not know all the complexities that individuals bring to the classroom, studio, or rehearsal space, we remain committed to making those spaces supportive, collaborative, and inclusive. In order to achieve this, students and faculty alike are expected to engage with class materials and each other with respect and professionalism.

Students are encouraged to bring issues of harassment, exclusion, or discrimination to the attention of the instructor, a faculty member with whom they feel comfortable, or the department chair. In addition, UB's office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) exists to ensure that issues of harassment, discrimination, and accommodation are addressed in a timely and effective manner, and to foster and sustain a working and learning environment where each member of the community can succeed. If you experience harassment, discrimination, or a lack of accommodation, you are encouraged to speak with EDI confidentially, with no threat of retaliation:
<http://www.buffalo.edu/equity.html>

INJURY-INCIDENT REPORT POLICY

In the event of injury on campus, an incident report should be filed immediately. To file an incident report, contact campus police at 716-645-2222.

CRITICAL CAMPUS RESOURCES

Sexual Violence

UB is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking. If you have experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), UB has resources to help. This includes academic accommodations, health and counseling services, housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and assistance with reporting the incident to police or other UB officials if you so choose. Please contact UB's Title IX Coordinator at 716-645-2266 for more information. For confidential assistance, you may also contact a Crisis Services Campus Advocate at 716-796-4399.

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. These might include strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, health concerns, or unwanted sexual experiences. Counseling, Health Services, and Health Promotion are here to help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn more about these programs and services by contacting:

Counseling Services: 120 Richmond Quad (North Campus), 716-645-2720, or 202 Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-5800. Health Services: Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-3316. Health Promotion: 114 Student Union (North Campus), 716-645-2837.

Basic Needs Insecurity

If you are experiencing food insecurity, UB has a variety of services available to assist you with food access. Please visit the following for details:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/help/emergency/food-support.html>

If you are experiencing housing insecurity, UB's Emergency Fund may be able to assist you. Please visit the following for details:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/help/emergency/emergency-funds.html>

Course Calendar

subject to change at instructor's discretion
all readings are due on the day indicated

WEEK ONE – 2/2

Introduction

1. *Fred Moten, "Anassigment Letters," in *Stolen Life* (Durham: Duke UP, 2018).
2. *Sara Ahmed, ["Making Feminist Points."](#)
3. *Elizabeth Bell, *Theories of Performance*, pgs. 12-28 (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008).

4. *Eva Cherniavsky, ["Keyword: Body,"](#) in *Keywords for American Studies*, 3rd ed.

WEEK TWO – 2/9 *Histories*

1. Grosz, pgs. vii-xiii and Introduction.
2. *Bell, *Theories of Performance*, pgs. 173-183.
3. *Hentyle Yapp, "Intimating Race: Tao Ye's 4 and Methods for World Dance," in *The Futures of Dance Studies*, eds. Susan Manning, Janice Ross, and Rebecca Schneider (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2020).
4. *Susan Leigh Foster, "Choreographies of Gender," *Signs* 24, No. 1 (1998).

WEEK THREE – 2/16 *Phenomenology*

1. Grosz, Ch. 4.
2. *Sondra Fraleigh, "A Vulnerable Glance: Seeing Dance Through Phenomenology," *Dance Research Journal* 23, No. 1 (1991).
3. *Phillipa Rothfield, "Differentiating phenomenology and dance," in *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, eds. Jens Richard Giersdorf and Yutian Wong (New York: Routledge, 2018).
4. *Albright, "Situated Dancing: Notes from Three Decades in Contact with Phenomenology," *Dance Research Journal* 43, No. 2 (2011).

WEEK FOUR – 2/23 *Foucault and Power*

1. Grosz, Ch. 6.
2. *Bell, pgs. 224-229, *Theories of Performance*.
3. *Jane Desmond, "Dance Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies," in *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*, ed. Jane Desmond (Durham: Duke UP, 1997).

WEEK FIVE – 3/2 *Rhizome*

1. Grosz, Ch. 7.
2. *Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, "Introduction: Rhizome," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
3. *Petra Kuppers, "Toward a Rhizomatic Model of Disability: Poetry, Performance, and Touch," *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 3, No. 3 (2009).
4. *Nadine George-Graves, "Diasporic Spidering: Constructing Contemporary Black Identities," in *Black Performance Theory*, eds. Thomas F. DeFrantz and Anita Gonzalez (Durham: Duke UP, 2014).

WEEK SIX – 3/9 *Watching Bodies: Criticism*

1. *Madison Mainwaring, ["Death of the American Dance Critic,"](#) *The Atlantic*, August 6, 2015.

2. *Brenda Dixon Gottschild, "Some Thoughts on Choreographing History," in *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*, ed. Jane Desmond (Durham: Duke UP, 1997).
3. *Ann Cooper Albright, "Mining the Dancefield: Spectacle, Moving Subjects, and Feminist Theory," in *Engaging Bodies: The Politics and Poetics of Corporeality* (Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 2013).
4. *Julie Malnig, "But How Do I Write About Dance, Thoughts on Teaching Criticism," *Dance Research Journal* 41, No. 2 (2009).

WEEK SEVEN – 3/16

Spectatorship and Power

1. *Charmian Wells, [“Strong and Wrong: On Ignorance and Modes of White Spectatorship in Dance Criticism.”](#)
2. *Gregory King et. al, [“Decolonizing Dance Writing: Who is Writing For?”](#)
3. *Ariel Nereson, “Allergies, Allegiances, and Authenticity: Bill T. Jones’s Choreography for Broadway” *Studies in Musical Theatre* 13, No. 1 (2019).

Workshop with Dr. Kate Mattingly on "Digital Dance Criticism: Frameworks and Futurity"

WEEK EIGHT – 3/23

Economics of Embodiment and Labor

1. *Anusha Kedhar, Introduction & Ch. 4, *Flexible Bodies: British South Asian Dancers in an Age of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford UP, 2020).
2. *Harmony Bench and Kate Elswit, "Katherine Dunham's Global Method and the Embodied Politics of Dance's Everyday," *Theatre Survey* 61, No. 3 (2020).

Friday 3/26, 1:30-3pm: guest lecture from Dr. Anusha Kedhar

WEEK NINE – 3/30

REST

WEEK TEN – 4/6

Watching Bodies: Ethnography

1. *Deidre Sklar, "Reprise: On Dance Ethnography," *Dance Research Journal* 32, No. 1 (2000).
2. *Ramón Rivera-Servera, "Quotidian Utopias: Latina/o Queer Choreographies," in *Performing Queer Latinidad: Dance, Sexuality, Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012).
3. *Evadne Kelley, "Introduction: Fijian by Decree," in *Dancing Spirit, Love, and War: Performing the Translocal Realities of Contemporary Fiji* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019).
4. *Tami Spry, "Bodies of/as Evidence in Autoethnography," *International Review of Qualitative Research* 1, No. 4 (2009).

WEEK ELEVEN – 4/13

Indigenous Worldmaking I

1. *Jacqueline Shea Murphy, Introduction & Ch. 1, *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).
2. *Colleen Kim Daniher, "Looking at Pauline Johnson: Gender, Race, and Delsartism's Legible Body," *Theatre Journal* 72, No. 1 (2020).
3. *Marla Regina Fermino Castillo, "Dancing the Pluriverse: Indigenous Performance as Ontological Praxis," *Dance Research Journal* 48, No. 1 (2016).

WEEK TWELVE – 4/20

Indigenous Worldmaking II

1. *Monique Mojica, "In Plain Sight: Inscripted Earth and Invisible Realities," in *New Canadian Realisms*, eds. Roberta Barker and Kim Solga (Toronto: Playwrights Canada, 2012).
2. *Daystar/Rosalie Jones, Rulan Tangen, Tanya Lukin Linklater, Rosy Simas, Jack Gray, and Emily Johnson, *Indigenous Choreographers' Statements, *Dance Research Journal* 48, No. 1 (2016).
3. *Tria Blu Wakpa, "Culture Creators and Interconnected Individualism: Rulan Tangen and Anne Pesata's *Basket Weaving Dance*," *Dance Research Journal* 48, No. 1 (2016).

WEEK THIRTEEN – 4/27

Indigenous Worldmaking III

Workshop and movement practice with Rosy Simas, TBD

WEEK FOURTEEN – 5/4

Aesthetics of the Climate Crisis

1. *V.K. Preston, "Queer and Indigenous Art: Performing Ice Times in Climate Crisis," *Theatre Journal* 72, No. 2 (2020).
2. *Peta Tait, "Enveloping the Nonhuman: Australian Aboriginal Performance," *Theatre Journal* 71, No. 3 (2019).
3. *AfterEarth, a short film by Jess X. Snow, Kit Yan, and Peter Pa.