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DAC531, 3 credits
University at Buffalo – SUNY
Spring 2023
T 1:30-4:10pm
Alumni 188

DAC 531: Political and Cultural Approaches to Dance

Course Description

This course examines dance as a reflection and generator of society and culture from the early 20th century to today. Focus is placed on the development of dance, dancers, choreographers, and significant dance works in relation to existing and emerging social, economic, and political contexts. Students will apply their knowledge of contemporary dance theory to understanding the impact of cultural and political phenomena on the development of dance as an art form. The course introduces interpretation of historical evidence in political and cultural contexts and culminates in the student's development of an original piece of dance scholarship, shared via written, oral, and movement-based modalities, that engages cultural dimensions of dance production.

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Method(s) of Assessment
A breadth of understanding in dance and related disciplines and the ability to think independently, to integrate, and to synthesize information within the dance discipline and across disciplines.	Class participation, dance studies assessment, theory-in-practice, reading responses, final project
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, events, movement theories, and dance science and somatics.	Class participation, dance studies assessment, theory-in-practice, reading responses, final project
Awareness of current issues and developments that impact the field and the potential to contribute to the expansion and evolution of the art, to advocate for the arts, and to explore and address new questions and issues on local, regional, national, and global levels.	Class participation, theory-in-practice, final project

Writing and speaking skills to communicate clearly and effectively to the dance community, the public, and in teaching situations.	Class participation, dance studies assessment, reading responses, final project
Familiarity with current technologies utilized in the creation, documentation, preservation, and dissemination of work.	Class participation, dance studies assessment
A knowledge of bibliographic resources in dance, including Web-based resources, and the skills to access these resources.	Dance studies assessment, reading responses, final project

Required Materials

[Kraut, Anthea. *Choreographing Copyright: Race, Gender, and Intellectual Property Rights in American Dance*. 2015.](#)

Access to UBlerns for all additional readings.

Methods of Assessment

Participation (20%) – 200 points
TBD by the class collective.

Dance Studies Assessment (15%) – 150 points
Students will choose one reading for the term for which they will complete the Dance Studies Assessment (a method of deep reading and evaluation designed to sharpen the student's critical capacities as a reader and writer of academic research, as developed by Dr. Brandon Shaw). Detailed guidelines will be distributed in class. Graded pass/fail.

Theory-in-Practice Exchange (15%) – 150 points
Please bring one video clip of movement-based performance (max 3 minutes) that illustrates, complicates, and/or counters the theoretical models of embodiment/movement/dance/choreography that week's texts offer. Be ready to share and explain your choice, as well as offer a discussion question. Graded pass/fail.

Reading Responses (10%) – 2 responses at 50 points each for 100 points total
Students will complete two formal reading responses throughout the term. Responses should be 3 pages, double-spaced, standard margins. In your reading response please identify a quotation from **each** of the day's readings, and reflect on how the ideas in those quotations relate to one another, to previous discussions, and to your own research and practice. Please conclude your response with two

discussion questions for the group. **Reading responses should be submitted via email by 12pm on the day of the class meeting.** Graded pass/fail.

Choose-Your-Own-Adventure Final Project (40%) – 400 points (150 points first draft [graded pass/fail], 250 points final draft [letter graded])

FIRST DRAFT: 4/16

FINAL: 5/7

There are three options for the final project:

- 1) Preparation of a scholarly essay. First drafts of this assignment will be at least 8-12 pages long. Final drafts of this assignment will be 15-18 pages long. This option asks you to advance an argument focused on some facet of dance's political and cultural lives, supported by a robust archive of primary and secondary sources, articulated primarily through academic writing aimed at publication.
- 2) Preparation of a conference presentation. First drafts of this assignment will be 6 pages long and include ideas about audiovisual or participatory material to be included in the presentation. Final drafts of this assignment will be approximately 10 pages long and will be shared via a 20 minute presentation. This option asks you to advance an argument focused on some facet of dance's political and cultural lives, supported by a robust archive of primary and secondary sources, articulated primarily through academic oral communication.
- 3) Preparation of a movement-based creative work and written reflection. You can choose between A) a 10 minute long work or B) a series of 3 interrelated 2-4 minute works. The written reflection is a component of both options. First drafts of this assignment will be work-in-progress of at least 6 minutes. Final drafts of this assignment will be complete versions of either A or B accompanied by an 8-10 page written reflection that situates your creative work in a broader intellectual and aesthetic conversation about embodiment. This option asks you to advance an argument focused on some facet of dance's political and cultural lives articulated primarily through creative work and supported by writing that situates your creative work in the context of an archive of primary and secondary sources.

Grade Scale

You will be assessed based on your absolute performance (i.e., not relative to other students' performance). Your final grade will be calculated as follows: A = 940-1000, A- = 900-939, B+ = 870-899, B = 840-869, B- = 800-839, C+ = 770-799, C = 740-769, C- = 700-739, D = 600-699, F = below 600.

Course, Departmental, and Institutional Policies

University Resources for Graduate Students:

<https://grad.buffalo.edu/study/progress/resources.html>

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. No exceptions.

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

Students are allowed one absence. One additional absence may be made up by reading response. Additional absences will impact your participation assessment. Please contact me if you are experiencing a life event or prolonged illness/injury that will result in multiple missed classes so that we can figure out together a way to support your work in this class.

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.

Coursework in theatre and dance is also a physical endeavor, and we hold to a standard of affirmative consent for physical contact. Students may withhold or withdraw consent for physical touch at any time, and at no point should any student submit to unwanted touch or physical engagement from peers, guests, or faculty.

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>

Netiquette sidebar: my goal is that our class will be a warm and welcoming space, yet it is also a professional space. Please review the following if you need to brush-up on communicating with your professor:
<http://web.wellesley.edu/SocialComputing/Netiquette/netiquetteprofessor.html>

INJURY-INCIDENT REPORT POLICY

In the event of injury, 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

schedule subject to change at instructor's discretion

*indicates reading available on UBLearn, all readings due on the day assigned

WEEK ONE 1/30 – Introductory material

1. *George Yúdice, "Keyword: Culture," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, 3rd ed., eds. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (New York: NYU Press, 2020), pp. 77-82.
2. *Kandice Chuh, "Keyword: Politics," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, pp. 189-191.
3. *Ana Vujanovic, "Notes on the Politicality of Contemporary Dance," in *Dance, Politics, & Co-immunity: Current Perspectives on Politics and Communities in the Arts*, eds. Stefan Hölscher and Gerald Siegmund (Zurich: Diaphenes, 2013), pp. 181-191.
4. *Mark Franko, "Dance and the Political: States of Exception," *Dance Research Journal* 38, Nos. 1 & 2 (2006): 3-18.

WEEK TWO 2/6 – Introductory material, continued

1. *Hentyle Yapp, "Intimating Race: Tao Ye's 4 and Methods for World Dance" in *Futures of Dance Studies*, eds. Susan Manning, Janice Ross, and Rebecca Schneider (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), pp. 489-504.
2. *Ananya Chatterjea, "States of Contemporary Dance," in *Heat and Alterity in Contemporary Dance: South-South Choreographies* (New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 39-88.
3. *Sarah Conn, "The Superfluid Curation of Darkness," *Dance Research Journal* 55, No. 2 (2023): 76-92.

WEEK THREE 2/13 – Politics of Method

1. *Rosemary Candelario and Matthew Henley, "Research Ethics, Orientations, and Practices," in *Dance Research Methodologies: Ethics, Orientations, and Practices*, eds. Candelario and Henley (New York: Routledge, 2023), pp. 20-38.
2. *Hannah Kosstrin, "Kinesthetic Seeing: A Model for Practice-in-Research," in *Futures of Dance Studies*, eds. Susan Manning, Janice Ross, and Rebecca Schneider (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), pp. 19-35.
3. *Jessica Berson, "Live Nude Girls: Notes on Being a Naked Participant-Observer," in *The Naked Result: How Exotic Dance Became Big Business* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), digital edition.
4. *Adesola Akinleye, "Keeping Movement at the Center as We Dance into Interdisciplinary Research," in *Dance Research Methodologies*, pp. 389-400.

WEEK FOUR 2/20 – Key Political Cruxes for Dance

1. *Grace Kyungwon Hong, "Keyword: Property," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, n.p.
2. Anthea Kraut, *Choreographing Copyright*, Preface, and
3. Introduction.
4. *Joanna Dee Das, "Dancing Dahomey at the World's Fair: Rethinking the Archive of African Dance," in *Futures of Dance Studies*, pp. 56-73.

Theory-in-Practice:

WEEK FIVE 2/27 – Entwinements of Race and Gender

1. *Keywords Feminist Editorial Collective, "Keyword: Race," in *Keywords for Gender and Sexuality Studies*, eds. Kyla Wazana Tompkins, Aren Z. Aizura, Aimee Bhang, Karma R. Chávez, Mishuana Goeman, and Amber Jamilla Musser (New York: NYU Press, 2021), pp. 178-184.
2. Kraut, *Choreographing Copyright*, Ch. 1.
3. *Royona Mitra, "Unmaking Contact: Choreographic Touch at the Intersections of Race, Caste, and Gender," *Dance Research Journal* 53, No. 1 (2021): 6-24.
4. *Rebecca Chaleff, "Activating Whiteness: Racializing the Ordinary in US American Postmodern Dance," *Dance Research Journal* 50, No. 3 (2018): 71-84.

Theory-in-Practice:

WEEK SIX 3/5: Agency, Ownership, and Movement

1. *Hershini Bhana Young, "Keyword: Agency," in *Keywords for Gender and Sexuality Studies*, pp. 17-19.
2. Kraut, *Choreographing Copyright*, Ch. 2.
3. *Ariel Nereson, "Myself, Dancing: Choreographies of Black Womanhood in US Dance and History," *Dance Research Journal* 53, No. 2 (2021): 49-66.
4. *J. Lorenzo Perillo, "If I was not in prison, I would not be famous': Discipline, Choreography, and Mimicry in the Philippines," *Theatre Journal* 63, No. 4 (2011): 607-621.

WEEK SEVEN 3/12 – Dance and Cultural Production

1. Kraut, *Choreographing Copyright*, Ch. 3.
2. *Danielle Robinson, "'Marvelous, New, Dirty Steps': Appropriation, Authenticity, and Opportunity in Broadway Jazz Dance Teaching," in *Modern Moves: Dancing Race during the Ragtime and Jazz Eras* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), digital ed.
3. *Colleen Kim Daniher, "Looking at Pauline Johnson: Gender, Race, and Delsartism's Legible Body," *Theatre Journal* 72, No. 1 (2020): 1-20.
4. *Melissa Blanco Borelli, "Choreographing Displacement in Sankofa Danzafró's *La Ciudad de los Otros* (*Theatre History Studies* Vol. 41 [2022]: 148-165).

Theory-in-Practice:

WEEK EIGHT: SPRING BREAK!

WEEK NINE 3/26 – Dance and Commercial Production

Guest visit from Adrienne Gibbons Oehlers

1. Kraut, *Choreographing Copyright*, Ch. 4.
2. Adrienne Gibbons Oehlers, "Ensembles in Motion: Formations, Spectacle, and Unison," in *Dance in Musical Theatre: A History of the Body in Movement*, eds. Dustyn Martincich and Phoebe Rumsey (New York: Methuen, 2023), pp. 69-87.
3. *Betsy Cooper, "The Body Censored: Dance, Morality, and the Production Code During the Golden Age of the Film Musical," in *Dance on Its Own Terms: Histories and Methodologies*, eds. Melanie Bales and Karen Eliot (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), digital ed.

Theory-in-Practice:

WEEK TEN 4/2 – Dance, Technology, and Globalization

1. Kraut, *Choreographing Copyright*, Ch. 5, and
2. Conclusion.
3. *Harmony Bench and Kate Elswit, "Visceral Data for Dance Histories: Katherine Dunham's People, Places, and Pieces" (*TDR: The Drama Review* 66, No. 1 [2022]: 37-61).
4. *Amanda Reid, "Dancing Shay-Shay: Katherine Dunham, Marcus Garvey, and Jamaican Decolonization" (*Theatre Journal* 74, No. 1 [2022]: 59-75).

Theory-in-Practice:

Last week for DSA assignment!

WEEK ELEVEN 4/9 – Elemental Politics

1. *Lily Mengesha, "Deceleration as Decolonial Intervention in Lara Kramer's *NGS: Native Girl Syndrome*," *ASAP/Journal* 4, No. 3 (2019): 575-600.
2. *Kemi Adeyemi, "Beyond 90: the angularities of black/queer/women/lean," *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 29, No. 1 (2019): 9-24.

3. *Hershini Bhana Young, "Falling and Crawling," in *Falling Floating Flickering: Disability and Differential Movement in African Diasporic Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 2023), pp. 39-73.
4. *Ananya Chatterjea, "Heat: An Entropic Practice of Contemporary Dancing," in *Heat and Alterity*, pp. 255-273.

Theory-in-Practice:

WEEK TWELVE 4/16 – First Drafts of Final Assignments

In-class salon and feedback.

WEEK THIRTEEN 4/23 – Visit from Distinguished Visiting Scholar Rosy Simas

1. *Rosy Simas and Sam Aros Mitchell, "Playing Indian, between Idealization and Vilification: Seems You have to Play Indian to be Indian," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 43, No. 3 (2019): 133-139.
2. *Ahimsa Timateo Bodhrán and Rosy Mitchell, "Sovereign Movements: Building and Sustaining Native Dance and Performance Communities," *Movement Research* 52/53 (2019): 4-6.
3. *Rosy Simas and Christopher K. Morgan, "Longer Scores: Native Choreographic Turns, Curatorial Visions, and Community Engagement," *Movement Research* 52/53 (2019): 31-33.
4. *Dakota Camacho, "Matao: Queerly Navigating Indigenizing Creative Practice," *Movement Research* 52/53 (2019): 58-61.
5. *Marla Regina Fermino Castillo, "Dancing the Pluriverse: Indigenous Performance as Ontological Praxis," *Dance Research Journal* 48, No. 1 (2016): 55-73.

WEEK FOURTEEN 4/30 – Approaches to Indigenous Performance

1. *Stephanie Nohelani Teves, "Keyword: Tradition and Performance," in *Native Studies Keywords*, eds. Teves, Andrea Smith, and Michelle H. Raheja (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015), pp. 257-269.
2. *Jacqueline Shea Murphy, "Introduction: Choreographing Relationality," in *Dancing Indigenous Worlds: Choreographies of Relation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2023), pp. 1-68.
3. *Monique Mojica and Brenda Farnell, Prologue and Ch. 1, in *Chocolate Woman Dreams the Milky Way: Mapping Embodied Indigenous Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022), pp. 1-26.

Last week for reading responses!

WEEK FIFTEEN 5/7 – class colloquium

Final project sharing!