

RLST 3838: Dancing Culture and Religion

Summer 2011
Online Session A

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Please use CULearn mail function to contact Gabrielle rather than her personal email.

“Dancing Culture and Religion” is 1) a critical examination of the received cultural, religious, and academic understandings of dancing and the body, 2) the construction by your instructor of a richer body of theory of dancing that will more adequately support comparative studies of culture and religion, 3) the study of dancing in cultures and religions in a representation of diverse cultures and religions, and 4) a celebration of the beauty, vitality, and joy of dancing. Notably the theory of dancing developed in the course places dancing as foundational to religion and ritual as well as many other distinctively human concerns such as language, art, symbolism, and metaphor.

Assignments:

Structure of Online Course: As an online or “virtual” course students will obviously not be coming to a designated classroom at a scheduled time to listen to lectures, participate in discussion, and be evaluated. Students taking the class may be located anywhere in the world that has Internet access. Nonetheless as offered by the University of Colorado, online courses are not totally self-paced learning experiences to be completed at any time elected by the student. These courses are to be completed within the standard “resident” class schedule.

Rather than attempting to imitate the daily routine of an “actual” class, this course will be organized so that course materials (readings and video podcasts of lectures illustrated with images and videos) are available online to students to be read and experienced in a designated sequence. They are all available at the beginning of the course and can be consumed at the pace convenient and elected by students with just a few deadlines. A sequence of required student writing assignments followed by prompt critical feedback will provide the most successful learning experience. Therefore, structured into the course are dates by which students must have certain work completed and submitted for evaluation. Student produced “works” for this course are of two types: journals and a course project which has four specific assignments. These are both described in detail below. The structure of the course is designed to provide the greatest flexibility to student scheduling, while providing regular on-going production and critical feedback leading to improving and developing student performance.

Readings: Readings available as PDFs correlating with many of the lecture topics are available by clicking the appropriate links on your course syllabus. Students are required to read the assigned

materials prior to and as preparation for the lectures that correspond to the topic. Follow the syllabus schedule below.

The text version of every video podcast lecture is available as a PDF (the syllabus has clickable links to take you to these PDFs). The written lectures often vary significantly from the video podcast presentations. You are encouraged to read the lectures particularly for the sections that you find complex. These written lectures should also be valuable for the course project.

Lectures: A number of video podcast lectures (illustrated lecture presentations) are available for each of the main topics of the course. These are available for download from www.Sam-Gill.com and they are available through clickable links on the syllabus. Students are required to view every video podcast in the sequence indicated. See course schedule below.

Journal: Each student will write entries for each section of readings and video podcasts. The journal entries should not be notes on the relevant materials or summaries or reports. These entries must be narratives that express your understanding of and otherwise engage the section topics. Entries should cover discrete topics and refer specifically to and interrelate both reading materials and the video podcast presentations. The major ideas/concepts of the course should be carefully discussed in the journal entries. You may use a personal and creative narrative voice in these writings and include images and videos as they serve you.

Each journal entry must be *at least* 350 words and there must be 2 entries per section heading in the lecture series (excluding Section 1: Introduction). Two entries for each of 7 lecture sections totals 14 required journal entries for the course. Journals for the relevant sections are due on 3 dates, June 8, 17, and 29. Students will promptly receive critical comments and letter-grades on each journal submission and each is worth 15% of the course grade.

Discussion: One aspect of an online course that is challenging in the “virtual” environment is interactive discussion. We are providing something of a “surrogate” class discussion by offering a chat between Gabrielle and Sam at the end of each section in the course. These are available as video podcasts and are required viewing. These conversations should inform your journal writings.

Project: Each student will develop and conduct a course project throughout the term. The purpose of this project is to apply the central concepts of the course to a specific topic of personal interest to each student. The topic must be a dance tradition that can be clearly connected to a cultural or religious context. The project will unfold in several stages, each stage building on, revising, extending, and expanding the project. Each segment will be critically evaluated and graded; students are advised to carefully incorporate the substance of these comments in the ongoing developing projects.

A paper written by your Course Assistant Gabrielle Biscaye is available on the course blog (“Class Project Tab” select “Class Project Example” or <http://rlst3838.wordpress.com/class-project/class-project-example/>) as a guide for this project. The written form of the lectures, available as a PDF, will be

valuable in doing this project. You are encouraged to cite these written lectures in your project presentations.

Project Assignment #1 (due June 6): Write a brief 2-page statement identifying your selected subject; that is, identify and briefly describe the dance tradition and its cultural/historical/religious identity. Include a brief statement of your interest in this topic. Submit a list of resources including images and videos (with active hyperlinks as relevant) you will have available for the project.

Project Assignment #2 (due June 12): Write an engaging 5-page narrative about your topic describing important information about the dance tradition and include comments on your interest in the subject as you present it. You are encouraged to include videos, images, music and other rich materials, yet they do not count in the page-length recommendation.

Project Assignment #3 (due June 23): Write a 4-page paper about your selected dance tradition interpreting it from the perspective of one of the central ideas presented in the course. Focusing on the details of your selected topic is strongly encouraged. Provide a careful discussion of the perspective you are using and its relevance and importance. This perspective must be clearly identified with the course lecture presentations. You must show how understanding your subject from this perspective enriches your understanding and appreciation of your subject. Inclusion of media resources is encouraged, but do not count these in the length requirement. Your work will be evaluated on the degree to which you demonstrate your understanding of the interpretive perspective by your careful and sophisticated application to your selected topic.

Project Assignment #4 (due July 1): Write a 4-page paper about your selected dance tradition interpreting it from the perspective of a second central idea presented in the course. This perspective must be clearly different from or a major development upon the perspective taken in Assignment #3. Focusing on the details of your selected topic is strongly encouraged. Provide a careful discussion of the perspective and its relevance and importance. You must show how understanding your subject from this perspective enriches your understanding and appreciation of your subject. Inclusion of media resources is encouraged, but do not count these in the length requirement. Your work will be evaluated on the degree to which you demonstrate your understanding of the interpretive perspective by its careful and sophisticated application to your selected topic.

Due Dates: No assignments will be accepted after the stated deadline due date, Boulder time.

Submitting Work:

Journal entries must be turned in as posts on the class blog <http://rlst3838.wordpress.com/> , under the tab "Discussions~Journal Entries." You may also respond to and comment on other student's/instructor's posts/comments on the course blog site. You must sign up for an account with the class blog (<http://rlst3838.wordpress.com>). To sign up on the class blog go to <http://rlst3838.wordpress.com> . At the top of the page above the course title "Dancing, Culture and Religion" you will see a WORDPRESS TOOLBAR. The second link from the left is "Subscribe to Blog." You must create a Wordpress account if you do not already have one. If the account username does not

include your first and/or last name, please email your username and real name to the T.A. so that she may grade the work that you submit on the blogsite. Gabrielle Biscaye’s username is “anthropologab” and she will be using the Wordpress blog to communicate with you. You will then be able to make comments and to submit your journals.

Class Project Assignments will remain private but you may post them on the course web blog and discuss your ideas, thesis etc. with your peers. In any case, you must email the project assignments to the TA using the CULearn mail system. Do NOT use the CULink (@colorado.edu) address to turn in work.

How to use the CULearn mail system: Log into your CULearn account at <http://culearn.colorado.edu> using your identikey and password (given to you when you first began your CU student career). At your left is a Course Tools bar. In the middle of it is the “Mail” tool. Click on it. Go to “Create Message.” Above the “To:” field, click “Browse for Recipients.” Select “Gabrielle Marie Biscaye.” Include assignments title under subject field, write your message and attach assignment materials using the “add attachments” button under the message box. Then click send. Your T.A. will respond to you within 24 hours of the time you submit your assignment unless otherwise noticed.

Couse Grading: Journals (3 @ 15%) and course project (1st 10%, 2nd 10%, 3rd 15%, and 4th 20%).

Course Schedule –

Summary of Deadlines:

May 31	1 st day of term
June 6	Project Assignment #1 (10% course grade)
June 8	1 st Journal (15% course grade)
June 12	Project Assignment #2 (10% course grade)
June 17	2 nd Journal (15% course grade)
June 23	Project Assignment #3 (15% course grade)
June 29	3 rd Journal (15% course grade)
July 1	Last day of term, Project Assignment #4 (20% course grade)

Dancing Culture Religion Lectures & Readings

VPC = Video Podcast PDF = Text Readings interspersed

Lectures & Readings to be completed by June 8

Project Assignment #1 due June 6

First Journal (at least 4 entries) due June 8

Section 1: Introduction

1. Intro to Sam & Course Overview (26:10) [VPC](#)
2. Intro to Gabrielle (10:01) [YouTube](#)

Section 2: Dancing in the Context of Popular Western Cultures

3. Contemporary American Folk Theories of Dancing—Part 1 (19:04) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)

4. Contemporary American Folk Theories of Dancing—Part 2 (36:23) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
5. Contemporary American Folk Theories of Dancing—Part 3 (32:53) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
6. Contemporary American Folk Theories of Dancing—Part 4 (37:07) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
7. Christian and Western “High Culture” Perspectives on Dancing (35:19) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
8. Dancing in Public Education (39:08) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
9. Dancing in University Education (22:36) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
10. The Importance of Dancing to World Religions and Cultures (21:25) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
11. Conversations with Gabi and Sam on Dancing in Popular Culture (36:09) [VPC](#)

Section 3: Moving

12. Dancing is Moving, but not all Moving is Dancing (25:26) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body*, “Meaning is More than Words and Deeper than Concepts,” pp. 1-15 [PDF](#)
13. Primacy of Movement (15:43) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Sheets-Johnstone, *The Primacy of Movement*, pp. 131-39, 232-46 [PDF](#)
14. Kinesthetic Sense—The Dancer’s Sense (19:49) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
15. Movement and Perception (10:28) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body*, “The Movement of Life,” pp. 19-32 [PDF](#)
16. Demanding Self-movement: the Key to Acuity (29:01) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
17. Movement “In Itself” (9:54) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body*, “The Origin of Meaning in Organism-Environment Coupling,” pp. 113-34 [PDF](#)
18. Movement & Meaning (18:12) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body*, “The Corporeal Roots of Symbolic Meaning,” pp. 135-54 [PDF](#)
19. Breakin’ and Ballet (45:00) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
20. I’d rather Throw like a Girl than Dance like a Guy (25:47) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
21. Movement, Plasticity, and Life Cycle (8:54) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
22. Moving and Dancing, Dancing and Gesturing (10:30) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
23. Conversations with Gabi and Sam on Moving (41:16) [VPC](#)

Lectures & Readings to be completed by June 17

Project Assignment #2 due June 12

Second Journal (at least 6 entries) due June 17

Section 4: Gesturing

24. Gesture, Visible Action as Utterance (10:06) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Noland, *Agency and Embodiment*, “Introduction,” pp. 1-17 [PDF](#)
25. Gesture and Agency, Dancing as Gesturing (19:11) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
26. Dancing as Techniques of Body: Marcel Mauss (9:36) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Noland, *Agency and Embodiment*, Marcel Mauss, pp. 18-54 [PDF](#)
27. Dancing the Other: Body as Instrument—André Leroi-Gourhan 1 (18:39) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Noland, *Agency and Embodiment*, André Leroi-Gourhan, pp. 93-129 [PDF](#)
28. Dancing the Other—André Leroi-Gourhan 2 (23:23) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)

- Noland, *Agency and Embodiment*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, pp. 55-93 [PDF](#)
29. "They Jump Up of Themselves" Gesture & Identity in Central Australia 1 (29:01) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Swain, *A Place for Strangers*, "The Shape of Events," pp. 28-36 [PDF](#)
 Swain, *A Place for Strangers*, "The Body," pp. 36-49 [PDF](#)
 Swain, *A Place for Strangers*, "Worlds to Endure," pp. 49-57 [PDF](#)
30. "They Jump Up of Themselves" Gesture & Identity in Central Australia 2 (31:01) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
31. Gesturing and Touching (24:21) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
32. The Neuroscience of Touching and Gesturing (11:42) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
33. Dancing and the Survival of Men (37:39) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
34. Touching & Gesturing: Dance Contributions to Teen Development (4:42) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
35. Touch and SalsAmigos Dancing (29:05) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
36. Conversations with Gabi and Sam on Gesturing (33:15) [VPC](#)

Section 5: Self-Othering

37. Dancing as Self-Othering - 1: Javanese Wayang Kulit (32:10) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Keeler, Javanese Shadow Plays, Javanese Selves, pp. 3-22 [PDF](#)
 Miettinen, "Shadow Play," pp. 75-87 [PDF](#)
38. Dancing as Self-Othering - 2: Javanese Classical Dancing (13:57) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Miettinen, "Indonesia: Java," Court Dance: Bedhaya & Serimpi, pp. 75-91 [PDF](#)
39. Dancing as Self-Othering - 3: Merleau-Ponty's "Flesh Ontology" (23:24) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
40. Dancing as Self-Othering - 4: Understanding Dancing (36:46) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
41. Dancing as Self-Othering - 5: Reflections on Java (13:37) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
42. Conversations with Gabi and Sam on Self-Othering (20:07) [VPC](#)

Section 6: Playing

43. Play - 1: Nataraja Hindu Lord of Dancing (12:09) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Katrak, "The Gestures of Bharata Natyam: Migrating into Diasporic Contemporary Indian Dance," pp. 217-40 [PDF](#)
 Coomaraswami, "Dance of Shiva," pp. 66-78 [PDF](#)
44. Play - 2: Friedrich Schiller (19:17) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Schiller, *On The Aesthetic Education of Man*, Letters 11 through 16 [PDF](#)
45. Play - 3: Hans-Georg Gadamer (12:04) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
46. Play - 4: Jacques Derrida (20:45) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
47. Play - 5: Lila, Nataraja, and Dancing as Play (22:04) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
 Handleman, *Play & Culture* (1992), "Passages to Play: Paradox and Process," pp. 1-13 [PDF](#)
48. Go Up Into the Gaps: Play and Native American Religions – 1 (11:21) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
49. Go Up Into the Gaps: Play and Native American Religions – 2 (24:18) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
50. Go Up Into the Gaps: Play and Native American Religions – 3 (24:46) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
51. Conversations with Gabi and Sam on Playing (20:07) [VPC](#)

Lectures & Readings to be completed by June 29

Project Assignment #3 due June 23

Third Journal (at least 4 entries) due June 29

Section 7: Seducing

52. Dancing as Seduction - 1: Bolero (28:55) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
Aparisio, *Listening to Salsa*, pp. 69-82 [PDF](#)
53. Dancing as Seduction - 2: Baudrillard (32:23) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
Baudrillard, *Seduction*, pp. 1-49 [PDF](#)
54. Dancing as Seduction - 3: Aura (26:03) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
Benjamin, "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" [PDF](#)
55. Dancing as Seduction - 4: Feminine (26:55) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
56. Conversations with Gabi and Sam on Seducing (29:32) [VPC](#)

Section 8: Making

57. Dancing as Making - 1: Proprioception (32:46) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, pp. 46-62 [PDF](#)
58. Dancing as Making - 2: Seduction (9:22) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
59. Dancing as Making - 3: Pure Depth (37:34) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
60. Dancing as Making – 4 (23:14) [VPC](#) [PDF](#)
61. Conversations with Gabi and Sam on Making (41:16) [VPC](#)

Project Assignment #4 due July 1