**Dancing Cultures (3 credits), 3896**

Temple University Department of Dance

Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-3:30, Fall 2024, PH 224

Instructor: Laura Katz Rizzo, lkatz@temple.edu

Office: 1700 N Broad Street, 309 F

Office Hours: 4-5 M/W and by appointment

**Temple Dance DEI statement**

As a Temple Dance faculty member, I am committed to serving diverse backgrounds and

perspectives in this class and I believe that the diversity each individual brings to our time

together is a resource, strength and benefit to us all. In this class, I will present materials and

activities that are respectful of diversity. As a member of the Temple community, I will not

discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, marital status, national origin or ethnic origin,

race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information

or veteran status. I value your suggestions for improving the inclusivity of this course for you

personally or for other students or student groups.

**Land Acknowledgement**

Temple University Department of Dance is located on Traditional Lands of the Lenni Lenape

People.

**Course Description**

In Dancing Cultures students examine how dance both shapes and is shaped by cultural norms and values. We will look at a diversity of dance practices that cross the concert stage, vernacular settings and screen media, investigating how the dancing body has the power to reflect, shape and negotiate social norms and values. Looking to the field of cultural studies for definitions, we will examine culture as a site of contested power relations through which dominant structures are both maintained and challenged.

Students will engage with the concept of ‘culture’ and gain exposure to a broad range of cultural perspectives that can be employed as a lens through which to examine dance. This process will ask students to learn and to use the critical language of cultural studies and apply that language to dance. This will include concepts like power, agency, identity, subjectivity, ideology, hegemony, resistance, theory, praxis, colonialism, post-colonialism, myth/symbol. Students will read, analyze and discuss theoretical essays, conduct video and other visual analysis, and explore ideas through other movement experiences. Students will also be mentored through a research project which will help them to develop their theoretical, analytical and pragmatic research skills.

Students will learn how to engage with scholarship on a variety of dance cultures, and practice skills in a range of research methods developed within cultural studies, such as screen media analysis, interviewing techniques, and ethnographic fieldwork. From this, you will design your own research project that asks you to examine a dance practice of your choice, and will culminate in a research essay that builds on some of the earlier written assignments.

**Course Objectives**

On completion of the course, students will be able to

* draw on embodied, lived experience to write about dance.
* refine skills of observation, description, and interpretation.
* Understand the concept of ‘culture’ and apply this to a range of dance practices.
* Demonstrate how dancing bodies are shaped by and responsive to social, political,
* historical and economic contexts.
* Develop critical reading skills through engaging with scholarly publications that.
* examine dance as a cultural practice
* Practice several research methods used within cultural studies (such as screen media
* analysis, interviewing techniques, and ethnographic fieldwork) that they can apply to
* dance as well as other areas of social life.
* Conduct field work that respects the rights of human subjects and apply the theoretical premises and practical techniques of field work to the study of dance.
* Engage in productive debate as members of a scholarly research community. This includes participation in peer review by responding critically and constructively to peers’ presentations of research.
* Explore the idea of embodied storytelling as a strategy for crafting meaning from open ended experiential research processes.
* Demonstrate analytical essay writing skills through designing a research project on a selected dance community

**Assignments**

Reading Presentation 10

Students will choose one reading for which to submit a formal response. This response can take the shape of a written summary/power point presentation, questions for discussion or a movement activity inspired by the reading.

Embodied Writing Activity 10

Write a description of the duet by William Forsythe and Dana Casperson, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjfO0Zrj18Y OR “Our Love Comes Back” by Kyle Abraham and Carrie Schneider, 2013, Write about your own lived experience as if you are one of the dancers (select either dancer independent of your own gender identification). Employ first person singular and plural voices (I/we) and keep your verbs in present tense as if it is happening as you write.

Descriptive Writing Paper 10

Attend the Faculty Concert in Conwell Theater on Friday February 3, 7:30 pm. Jot down notes as you are viewing and during intermission/s. Select two works to analyze using detailed description that illustrates similarities and differences of choreographic elements of space, time, energy, staging, and interactions between dancers if relevant. If the performance is one evening length work, please provide a paragraph summary of the work as a whole and select two sections to analyze in detail. Write a first draft *using only close description*: concrete elements of staging, costumes, the dancers, and the choreography (style, movements etc.) – what you saw, heard, felt, and sensed. No opinions please!

Project Proposal 5

Thick Descriptive Field Notes While spending 6 hours at your site, take extensive notes during or directly after each visit. 15

Coded Field Notes: This is the second draft of your notes, reflect upon your thick descriptive field notes and incorporate open-coding, reflection, and memoing into your process. 25

Final Reflective and Interpretive Essay or Choreographic Synthesis: Write a narrative essay that describes your participation at this site, changes in perception and consciousness that your experienced, the key incidents, breaches of etiquette, interactions, as well as dance and choreographic observations about the flow of movement in this space. Your goal is to arrive at an understanding of shared meanings and practices within this space. OR: Make meaning from your research this semester. Paying attention to narrative structure, arc and creative storytelling, create a dance that embodies or evokes the themes and motifs that emerged from their research this semester, situating themselves within the space of inquiry and clarifying their role in that space. 25

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**WEEK 1**

8/26

Welcome and Introductions:

Discussion: Where do I come from? How does this shape what/how I know? What does the word Culture mean to us?

Co-Create Participation Rubric

Syllabus Overview

In class exercise: In small groups create an imaginary community. Define some its traditions, rituals, practices. Create a crest representing your community. Now make a short choreography that expresses the cultural and aesthetic values of this community. Share and discuss

If time: Read and discuss in Class: What is Culture, Raymond Williams. If not, add to homework for next week.

*Homework* read Joann Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks At Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance.”

No Class 8/28

*Homework*: James Berger, Ways of Seeing

Free write: What are some of the ways we use our bodies to express social norms and values? Can you think of some examples? How does this affect the way we dance? What aspects of social norms and values do you think you express in your own performing and choreography? Upload your response to Canvas.

**WEEK 2**

No Class Labor Day

9/4

In class: Watch If Cities Could Dance | Philadelphia’s House Dancers Preserve the Soul of the Scene | Season 4 | Episode 4 | NHPBS

Make a list of 10 words that describe the community and culture of house dancing, as described by this short video.

Mini lecture on. Ethnographic Thick Description as a Practice and Modality of Being/Seeing

*Homework*: read Encoding, Decoding Stuart Hall

Find a video to observe for assignment 1

Write a life-story anecdote: “A time when I was really dancing” (250 words). Bring your story to class.

**WEEK 3**

9/9

Stuart Hall Lecture/activities

Introduce Research Project for Semester

Phenomenology Activity Read in groups, “Sondra Frasliegh, “Seeing dance through phenomoneology” Writedown two things that you learned about phenomenology. Then formulate two questions based on moments in the reading that are confusing: What would you like to ask the author? What would you like to go over in class?

Homework: Read Colleen Wahl (2019), *Laban-Bartenieff Movement Studies: Contemporary Applications:* Table of Contents, Introduction, skim the rest.

Practice with First Person Lived Experience Description

9/11

ETHNOGRAPHY AS RESEACRH PRACTICE AND METHODOLOGY

What is Participant Observation? Lecture and Discussion

How is it particularly useful/not useful for dance, what are methods involved in participant observational field work?

We examine the methods of the ethnographer, such as thorough immersion and “thick description,” alongside the critique of the implicit assumptions (premises) of ethnography. Practical In class practice writing rich, textured texts drawn from observation/participation of both video and live movement.

*Homework*: Hebdige, Dick. “From Culture to Hegemony.” The Cultural Studies Reader. Simon During (ed). New York, London: Routlege, 1993. 357-367.

Finish your research proposal/abstract

**WEEK 4**

9/16

Hegemony and Subcultures

Proposal Due in Class

Lecture/activities on Hegemony and subcultures

Homework: Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” 1979.

Visit your community and take field notes

9/18

Speaking and the Performance of Identity: Perspectives on Imagining a Better World

Gender/Race/Identity and Cultural Norms

Today we explore areas on campus where we can observe the choreography of bodies in space. In small groups you will observe and take notes and then return to class to discuss your findings.

*Homework*: bell hooks, “Theory as Liberatory Practice” Yale Journal of Law & Feminism 4:1, 1991-1992.

Visit your community and take field notes

Identify reading areas for your bibliography

Free write: What makes up your sense of aesthetics? What are the things that make up your idea of what is beautiful in dance? How is beauty culturally constructed?

**WEEK 5**

9/23

Commercialism and Mass-Produced Culture

Discussion of bell hooks and free write. Watch videos and use these ideas as a lens to read the videos. Report back to the class. Be prepared to show examples from your videos

Discussion of bibliography assignment. Be prepared to talk about your reading areas.

IN CLASS MOVEMENT EXPLORATION OF SOMATICS : Is the audience somatic response critical to the analysis of a performance? What is the difference between witnessing a performance in person and through your smart phone? With a partner, exchange descriptions of dining experiences using as many of the senses as possible. Now reframe these experiences through the lens of performance and choreography. Create a short dance together with this source material.

*Homework*: read Richard Dyer Stereotyping

Visit your community and take field notes

Start bibliography

9/25

Identifying Power Structures and How they Work to Perpetuate Themselves

The Choreography of Institutions and the performance of Value Systems

Discussion of the Reading

In class discussion of Research

*Homework*: Read Louis Althusser. 1970. Excerpt from “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”

Finish Bibliography

**WEEK 6**

9/30

Lecture on Ideology

Bibliography Due in Class

Discussion of How to take and process field notes

* Participant Observation
* Thick Description
* Coding
* Integrative Analysis
* Reflection

Hands-on practical experience with thick description in class

*Homework*: Bourdieu, Pierre. Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984, 1-34.

Identify possible narrator for your interview

Type up or photograph notes to submit in class

10/2

The Field of Production as Performance Site

BORDIEU LECTURE on Cultural Capital

IN CLASS CREATIVE EXERCISE: Choose a place such as a coffeehouse, a park, a train station, a church…Create a map of the space that includes a diagram of how people occupy that space (movements, traffic patterns, objects, obstacles, etc) Depict areas of noise as well as other sensory stimulation like smell and touch that you perceive/observe. Add any other elements that distinguish the space. Share your images with each other.

Discussion of interview methods for ethnographic interview with community members

*Homework*: Read Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish. New York: Vintage Books, 1979, 170-194.

Reach out to narrator and write a list of questions for them.

Finish Documenting Round 1 of field notes

**WEEK 7**

10/7

Field Notes Due in Class

FOUCAULT LECTURE and activities

IN CLASS CREATIVE EXERCISE:

1. Take a short walk and observe cell phone users or people talking to each other.
2. Note tone and volume of voice, body language, facial expression, etc.
3. Note place-is the conversation happening in the street, in a restaurant, on a bus?
4. Write a brief script/Compose a brief dance based on the conversations you heard.
5. Perform and discuss

*Homework*: read stuart hall: The work of representation

Continue Coding Notes

Identify and conduct your interview.

10/9

The Performance of Identity and the Self

Interview Proposal Due in Class

Read White Supremacy Culture Together in Class in small groups and create concept maps. Share and make a shared class outline.

In a large group Watch Dance Mom’s video and “read” using the theoretical constructs outlined in the article. Describe then analyze. Share

*Homework*: Read excerpt Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Finish First Coding

**WEEK 8**

10/14

Coded Notes Due in Class

Discuss Judith Butler

Short Butler Lecture activity about repeated stylized actions

Create dance studies based upon Butler’s ideas. The group will take thick descriptive notes of these pieces to work with next session.

*Homework*: start transcribing your interview, read 5 Premises for a Culturally Sensitive Approach to Dance.

10/16

Coding Practice with notes we took last time. Open coding, commenting and memoing in notes. First we will take notes Work on crystallizing themes, focused coding, integrative memoing, and reflecting in a recursive or looping-around process in order to build understanding and new knowledge.

*Homework*: read Images of Women in African Dance: Sexuality and Sensuality as Dual Unity Asante, Kariamu Welsh SAGE; October 1994;

Finish transcribing your interview

**Week 9**

10/21

**Geography and Choreography of Cultural Spaces**

Interview Transcript due in class. Be prepared to share about your interview.

In class time to write an introduction to your interview.

QUESTIONS FOR IN-CLASS INQUIRY: What are the locations of performance in your community? How did they come to be? Select some significant performance spaces in Philadelphia. Identify some symbolic elements of those sites. How are particular signs and symbols important to the audience and dancer/performers? Describe the atmospheric space of a performance location. What are the elements that give the space atmosphere?

*Homework*: Read White Fragility

Round 2 of note Coding

Identify What your Final Project will look like Will you write a paper or make a dance? Start to outline.

10/23

CREATING MEANING THROUGH NARRATIVE

Watch Kurt Vonnegut Video on story arc

Workshop on creative process: Draw your own story arc and manifest /embody. Concept Mapping of Your Final Project weaving together the component parts of the semester into a concept map : Fieldnotes, Storytelling, Synthesis through Embodied Action within the Community.

*Homework*: Start turning your codes into themes, read Oral History as Ethnography

**Week 10**

10/28

IDENTIFYING MAJOR THEMES/SHARED MEANINGS : Although field notes are not yet the ethnographic narrative, we learn how to begin linking excerpts from the field notes to researcher’s commentary/reflections. These reflections emerge from the encoding process. Other organizing structures are rhetorical conventions in ethnographic writing, particularly: the realist tale, the confessional tale, and the impressionist tale. Writing workshop

*Homework*: read Kate Elswit, “So You Think You Can Dance Does Dance Studies”

Identify and reorganize notes around emergent themes

10/30

Kinds of ethnographic tales

So You think You can Dance video viewing and workshop

IN CLASS CREATIVE EXERCISE: Design a simple performance space where we are. Consider ways that you can use the location to greater illuminate the story about your dance practice/form/community that you want to tell. Consider your physical location as well as the atmospheric space. What are ways you can affect the audience’s feeling of this place? Describe it in detail.

Homework: Keep working through your coded notes to find emergent themes. Read Cytnia Novak, Movement as Culture, From Contact Improvisation to Disco.

**Week 11**

11/4

QUESTIONS FOR IN-CLASS INQUIRY : Expand on the relationship between cultural performance and sense of place. How can cultural performance become a platform for political/social change and the revitalization of culture?

*Homework*: Read Cornell West,” The New Cultural Politics of Difference.”

Finish rewriting notes as a narrative centered around 1-3 emergent themes, Read Victor Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow and Ritual.”

11/6

Victor Turner Lecture and activities with ritual phases

Ethnographic narrative due in class

Homework: work on your final project.

**Week 12**

11/11

One on One meetings to discuss final projects

*Homework*: Work on Final Project

11/13

One on One meetings to discuss final projects

Homework: Work on Final Project

**Week 13**

11/18

FINAL PRESENTATIONS of CREATIVE/SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

*Homework*: Work on Final Project

11/20

FINAL PRESENTATIONS of CREATIVE/SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

*Homework*: Work on Final Project

**Week 14**

THANKSGIVING

**Week 15**

12/2

FINAL PRESENTATIONS of CREATIVE/SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

De Brief, Conclusions, Evaluations

**Attendance and Participation**

As participation is an assessed part of this course, the value of class discussion depends upon the

presence, engagement and preparation of the full class. To ensure students get the most out of this course, 2 unexcused absences are allowed. Your highest potential grade will drop by half (A to A-) after two absences, and by a whole letter (A to B) after 4 absences, and your academic advisor will be contacted. 6 absences will result in a failing grade. Excused absences require acceptable documentation of the following circumstances: death in the family, conflict with another university class or event, or a court

summons. Doctor’s appointments are not a valid excuse. If you are feeling sick, please stay home and rest. If you are not in class, you are responsible for finding out from another student, not from the professor, what you missed.

**Tardies**

Students who arrive after attendance has been taken will be marked tardy. Three tardies will

count as one absence. Arrivals past 15 minutes will also count as one absence.

**Late Work**

All writing assignments are due at 11:59 the night of class. The writing assignment potential will lower by one half grade each day that it is late, unless the student speaks with the professor about an extension for an extenuating circumstance.

**Incomplete Grade Policy**

Incomplete grades will be granted only in rare circumstances and require the approval of the instructor. Students who have not completed all the requirements prior to the last day of class will need to talk with the instructor about how this will be rectified.

**Expectations for Class Conduct**

It is also important to foster a respectful and productive

learning environment that includes all students in our diverse community of learners. Our

differences, some of which are outlined in the University's nondiscrimination statement, will add

richness to this learning experience. Therefore, all opinions and experiences, no matter how

different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of

academic discourse. Treat your classmates and instructor with respect in all communication, class activities, and meetings. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea but you are not to attack an individual. Please consider that sarcasm, humor and slang can be misconstrued in online

interactions and generate unintended disruptions. Profanity should be avoided as should the use

of all capital letters when composing responses in discussion threads, which can be construed as

“shouting” online. Remember to be careful with your own and others’ privacy. In general, have

your behavior mirror how you would like to be treated by others.

**Course Material**

\*All class material will be provided on Canvas