ASIAN 480
Dance in Modern Asia: History, Identity, Politics

Instructor: Dr./Professor Emily Wilcox (eewilcox@umich.edu)
Course Time and Location: Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:40-7:00pm, B122 MLB
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30pm and by appointment, 202 South Thayer, Room 5159

Course Overview: This course explores the history of concert dance in Asia since the early twentieth century. Focusing on the contributions of influential individual Asian dancers and choreographers, it provides students a broad introduction to dance in the Asian region, asking how artists in different places dealt with similar social issues and global historical and political changes. Considering Asian artists as an integral component of modern dance history, this class shifts understandings of dance innovation and change away from Eurocentric narratives and assumptions. The following regions will be covered: South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and Asian diasporas.

Prerequisites: None.

Course Objectives:
- Learn about leading Asian dancers and choreographers and the dance styles they created;
- Analyze and interpret the works, ideas, and lives of Asian dancers and choreographers in their historical, cultural, and political contexts;
- Reflect critically on the global history of dance in the twentieth century, especially as it relates to issues of (post)colonialism, social reforms/revolutions, and nation-building;
- Conduct original research on a topic of choice related to dance in modern Asia.
Readings and other course materials: This course takes advantage of materials available for free to students through the UM Library. All required readings and viewings are available to students at no cost. Most will be available on the Canvas course website under “Files” and “Media Gallery.” Some are online.

Course Requirements: Students will be graded on a combination of attendance, participation, reading/viewing quizzes, a presentation, two take-home exams, and a final project. Grades will be broken down as follows:

- Attendance and Participation: 15%
- Reading/Viewing Quizzes: 20%
- Presentation: 10%
- Unit Exams: 40%
- Final Project: 15%

- Attendance and Participation: Class will begin promptly at 5:40pm. Students are expected to arrive on-time and attend class in its entirety. As a seminar course, this class employs interactive teaching methods in place of a lecture format. Students are expected to complete required readings and assignments before class and to arrive prepared to participate actively in class discussion. Apart from discussion, small group tasks and short writing assignments will also be completed in class and will contribute to this portion of the course grade. All students will be allowed one free excused absence. After that, excused absences will be allowed only with written proof such as a medical note or verification of required participation in a university activity. Students must receive email confirmation for all excused absences. There will be one required performing outing on March 30th, which will also count toward the attendance and participation grade. Grades will be posted regularly on Canvas for student review and verification.

- Reading/Viewing Quizzes: Periodically, pop quizzes will take place at the beginning of class to assess students’ preparation of the assigned readings and viewings for that day. Unlike assignments, there will be no prior warning. Quizzes are designed to provide incentives for keeping up with the course readings, as well as a system to identify and reward students who consistently complete the reading and viewings on time. Quizzes are designed to assess basic completion, not comprehension. They will take a multiple choice format and will focus on assessing whether students have completed the assigned readings and viewings. At the end of the semester, the lowest quiz score will be dropped. Quizzes missed due to excused absences can be made up for full credit. Quizzes missed due to unexcused absences can be made up for 1/2 credit.

- Presentation: Students will be required to give one research presentation on a key dancer covered in this course. The specific individuals and dates of presentations are listed in the Schedule below, and students will sign up for their presentation dates on the first day of class. The goal of the presentations is to allow you to conduct independent research to gain a deeper understanding of this artist, then to combine oral presentation and multi-media to share what you learn with the class. Presentations should meet the following requirements:
  1. A brief biography of the individual, including dates, locations, and images;
  2. At least two major works associated with the individual;
  3. Video clips, 2-5 minutes in total, not from required viewings;
  4. Discuss the relevance of this individual to the course themes, reading, and/or viewings;
  5. An interactive element that engages your classmates in active participation in some way;
  6. Presentations should last between 12 and 15 minutes;
  7. A final slide should include a bibliography of sources;
  8. Presentations slides are due on Canvas at 5:40 the day of your presentation.

Good places to start when researching your dancer are *The International Encyclopedia of Dance* (full text available in the UM Library) and *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism* (email me for full text). Students are strongly encouraged to meet with me at least once in office hours when you are conducting research for your presentation.
• **Exams:** Students will take an in-class exam to demonstrate and synthesize knowledge at the end of each unit. Exams will consist of a combination of short answers, IDs of key terms and images, and one essay question. Students will be provided with key terms each week, and the exam questions will come from these terms. The content of the exams will cover assigned readings and viewings, student presentations, and in-class discussions. Exams will be open note.

• **Final Project:** Students will complete a final project for this class on a topic of their choice. The format of the final project is open and may consist of a research paper, a visual essay or short film, a choreographic exploration, a website, a grant proposal, a personal reflection, or something else of the student’s choosing. Students should discuss their ideas with the professor as the course progresses. All ideas must be submitted for approval by Friday, April 6th. Earlier submission is recommended. Proposals can be changed and resubmitted until the final deadline. Final Projects are due on the last day of finals: Thursday, April 26th. No late assignments will be accepted.

**Assignments:** All assigned readings and viewings should be completed before class on the day noted in the course Schedule. Students should bring the required readings in either printed or electronic form for reference during weekly discussions. Please email me immediately if you have trouble finding or accessing the assigned materials.

**Office Hours:** Office hours are held on a drop-in basis, and all students are strongly encouraged to attend. Times and locations can be found at the top of this syllabus. If you cannot make the regular times, you can also email me to set up an appointment.

**Email:** Students are responsible for regularly checking and reading all course-related emails and Canvas announcements. You may also email me anytime with questions or concerns. Please keep questions posed in email limited to those that can be answered within 2-3 sentences. Complex content-related questions or requests for feedback on individual assignments should be addressed during office hours or in class. I will make every effort to respond to student emails within 24 hours.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** Plagiarism will result in an automatic failing of this course and possible disciplinary action by the University. Please consult the following university guidelines: http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/understanding-plagiarism-and-academic-integrity

**Disabilities and Special Accommodations:** This course is intended to be accessible to all students. Students needing special accommodations for documented disabilities or other reasons should present requests via email within the first two full weeks of classes in order to ensure plans can be made to comply with these needs.

**Electronics Policy:** Laptops or other electronic readers may be used in class to refer to assigned readings and viewings, take notes, or complete in-class writing assignments. Students should refrain from using these devices for other purposes and should close them when not being used for class work.

**Classroom environment:** All students are of equal importance and value in this classroom. If you ever feel that your ability to participate and learn in this class is limited by the behavior of the professor or of other students, please let me know immediately so that change can be made. I welcome student input at all times and on all aspects of the class. Humanistic inquiry acknowledges and values diversity in ideas and personal experiences. Let us work together to make this classroom safe and respectful space for the expression of all views and all backgrounds.
SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Course Introduction

Wednesday, Jan 3
Introductions, review class policies and schedule
Sign up for student presentations

UNIT I: India

Week 2 – Rukmini Devi and Bharatanatyam

- Monday, Jan 8
  VIEW: “Classical Indian Dance. Vol. 1 Two Bharatanatyam Dances” (Media Gallery)
  ➢ Presentation: Rukmini Devi Arundale (1904-1986)

- Wednesday, Jan 10
  VIEW: “Kalakshetra Centre Productions” (Media Gallery)

Week 3 – Madame Menaka and Kathak

- Monday, Jan 15 NO CLASS (Martin Luther King Holiday)

- Wednesday, Jan 17
  VIEW: “Damayanti, Menaka's Daughter” (Media Gallery)
  ➢ Presentation: Madame Menaka (1899-1947)

Week 4 – Uday Shankar and Indian Modern Dance

- Monday, Jan 22
  READ: Prarthana Purkayastha, “Uday Shankar and the Performance of Alterity in Indian Dance,” Indian Modern Dance, Feminism and Transnationalism, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 50-78
  ➢ Presentation: Uday Shankar (1900-1977)

- Wednesday, Jan 24 NO CLASS

Week 5 – Chandralekha and Indian Contemporary Dance

- Monday, Jan 29
  ➢ Presentation: Chandralekha (1928-2006)
  • Wednesday, Jan 31
Unit I Exam IN CLASS

UNIT II: Japan and Korea

Week 6 – Fujikage Shizue, Ishii Baku, and Modern Japanese Dance
  • Monday, Feb 5
VIEW: “Japanese Dance Succession of a Kyomai master” (Media Gallery)
  ➢ Presentation: Fujikage Shizue (1880-1966)
  • Wednesday, Feb 7
  ➢ Presentation: Ishii Baku (1886-1962)

Week 7 – Choe Seung-hui and Shinmuyong
  • Monday, Feb 12
VIEW: “The Dancer Choi Seunghee” (Media Gallery)
  ➢ Presentation: Choe Seung-hui (1911-1969)
  • Wednesday, Feb 14
READ: Suzy Kim, “Choe Seung-hui Between Ballet and Folk: Aesthetics of National Form and Socialist Content in North Korea” in Corporeal Nationalisms: Dancing East Asia, edited by Katherine Mezur and Emily Wilcox
READ: Emily Wilcox, “Locating Performance: Choi Seunghee, East Asian Modernisms, and the Case for Area Knowledge in Dance Studies” in The Futures of Dance Studies, edited by Susan Manning, Janice Ross, and Rebecca Schneider, University of Wisconsin Press, 2018

Week 8 – Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh
  • Monday, Feb 19
VIEW: “Butoh Body on the Edge of Crisis”
  ➢ Presentation: Hijikata Tatsumi (1928–1986)

- Wednesday, Feb 21
  Unit II Exam IN CLASS

Week 9 – SPRING BREAK

- Monday, Feb 25 NO CLASS
- Wednesday, Feb 28 NO CLASS

**UNIT III: Central Asia, China, and Taiwan**

**Week 10 – Tamara Khanum and Modern Central Asian Dance**

- Monday, March 5
  READ: Mary Masayo Doi, “Taboo Breakers: The Early Soviet Years, 1924-1942,” in *Gesture, Gender, Nation: Dance and Social Change In Uzbekistan*, Bergin & Garvey, 2002, pp. 41-68
    ➢ Presentation: Tamara Khanum (1906-1991)

- Wednesday, March 7
  VIEW: *After the Curtain* (2016 documentary by Emelie Mahdavian)

**Week 11 – Wu Xiaobang, Dai Ailian, and Modern Chinese Dance**

- Monday, March 12
    ➢ Presentation: Wu Xiaobang (1906-1995)

- Wednesday, March 14
  VIEW: *Colored Butterflies Fluttering About (Cai die fen fei)*: 1963 Chinese Dance Film (Media Gallery)
  READ: Emily Wilcox, “From Trinidad to Beijing: Dai Ailian and the Beginnings of Chinese Dance,” in *Revolutionary Bodies: Chinese Dance and the Socialist Legacy*, University of California Press, 2019
    ➢ Presentation: Dai Ailian (1916-2006)

**Week 12 – Lin Hwai-min and Contemporary Dance in Taiwan**

- Monday, March 19
  VIEW: “Moon Water” by Cloud Gate Dance Company (Media Gallery)
    ➢ Presentation: Lin Hwai-min (b. 1947)
• Wednesday, March 21
Unit III Exam IN CLASS

UNIT IV: Indonesia and Thailand

Week 13 – I Ketut (Nyoman) Mario, Retno Maruti, and Modern Indonesian Dance

• Monday, March 26
VIEW: “The JVC Video Anthology of World Music and Dance: Indonesia” (Media Gallery)
READ: Felicia Hughes-Freeland, “Constructing a Classical Tradition: Javanese Court Dance in Indonesia,” in Dancing From Past to Present: Nation, Culture, Identities, edited by Theresa Buckland, University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, pp. 52-71
READ: Matthew Isaac Cohen, “Bali, Cultural Tourism, Modernized Arts,” in Inventing the Performing Arts: Modernity and Tradition In Colonial Indonesia, University of Hawai’i Press, 2016, 125-138
➢ Presentation: I Ketut (Nyoman) Mario (1897-1968)

• Wednesday, March 28
➢ Presentation: Retno Maruti (b. 1947)
❖ Required Performance Outing: Hou Ying Dance Theater, March 30th 7:00pm Mendelssohn Theatre (Admission Free)

Week 14 – Pichet Klunchun and Thai Contemporary Dance

• Monday, April 2
VIEW: “The JVC video anthology of world music and dance: Thailand/Burma” (Media Gallery)
READ: Nic Leonhardt, “’From the Land of the White Elephant through the Gay Cities of Europe and America’: Re-Routing the World Tour of the Boosra Mahin Siamese Theatre Troupe (1900),” International Federation for Theatre Research, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 140-155
➢ Presentation: Pichet Klunchun (b. 1971)

• Wednesday, April 4
Unit IV Exam IN CLASS
❖ Final deadline for Final Project Proposals is Friday, April 6 at 11:59pm.

UNIT V: Workshops and Final Projects

Week 15 – Practice as Research Workshops

Monday, April 9
IN CLASS Workshop in Odissi
Instructor: Sreyashi Dey, Founder, President and Artistic Director of Srishti Dance of India
http://www.srishtidances.com/main/sreyashi.jsp

Wednesday, April 11
IN CLASS Workshop TBD

**Week 16 – Final Projects and Course Wrap Up**

Monday, April 16
Informal presentations on Final Projects, course evaluations, and reflections

❖ **Final Projects Due on Canvas on Thursday, April 26\(^{th}\), at 3:30PM.**