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

Instructor: Professor Emily Wilcox (eewilcox@umich.edu)
Course Time and Location: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30-6:50pm, 1155 North Quad
Office Hours: Thursdays 2-4pm and by appointment, 202 South Thayer St., 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, four unit exams, and a final project. Grades will be broken down as follows:

- **Attendance and Participation:** Class will begin promptly at 5:30pm. 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. 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 10. 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 30. 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.

**Extra Credit:** Performance events related to this course will be posted periodically as extra credit. After attending an event, students should submit a one-page (double-space) reflection. Each event will add .5 percentage points on the final course grade. If you know of an upcoming event, please let me know.

**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

Thursday, Jan 9
Introductions, review class policies and schedule
Sign up for student presentations

UNIT I: India

Week 2 – Rukmini Devi and Bharatanatyam

- Tuesday, Jan 14
  VIEW: “Classical Indian Dance. Vol. 1 Two Bharatanatyam Dances” (Media Gallery)
    ➢ Presentation: Rukmini Devi Arundale (1904-1986)

- Thursday, Jan 16
  VIEW: “Kalakshetra Centre Productions” (Media Gallery)

Week 3 – Uday Shankar and Indian Modern Dance

- Tuesday, Jan 21
  VIEW: Clips from 1948 Indian modern dance film Kalpana
  READ: Prarthana Purkayastha, “Uday Shankar and the Performance of Alterity in Indian Dance” in Indian Modern Dance, Feminism and Transnationalism, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 50-78
    ➢ Presentation: Uday Shankar (1900-1977)

- Thursday, Jan 23
  **MEET 4:00-5:20 in Weiser Hall**
  “Classical as Contemporary: Choreography and New Media in China Today” Lecture-Demonstration by visiting artist Tian Tian from the Beijing Dance Academy

Week 4 – Chandralekha and Indian Contemporary Dance

- Tuesday, Jan 28
    ➢ Presentation: Chandralekha (1928-2006)

- Thursday, Jan 30
UNIT I Exam IN CLASS

UNIT II: Japan and Korea

Week 5 – Fujikage Shizue, Ishii Baku, and Modern Japanese Dance

- Tuesday, Feb 4
    ➢ Presentation: Fujikage Shizue (1880-1966)

- Thursday, Feb 6
    ➢ Presentation: Ishii Baku (1886-1962)

Week 6 – Choe Seung-hui and Shinmuyong

- Tuesday, Feb 11
  VIEW: “The Dancer Choi Seunghee” (Media Gallery)
    ➢ Presentation: Choe Seung-hui (1911-1969)

- Thursday, Feb 13
  READ: Suzy Kim, “Choe Seung-hui Between Ballet and Folk: Aesthetics of National Form and Socialist Content in North Korea” in *Corporeal Politics: Dancing East Asia*, edited by Katherine Mezur and Emily Wilcox

Week 7 – Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh

- Tuesday, Feb 18
  VIEW: “Butoh Body on the Edge of Crisis”
    ➢ Presentation: Hijikata Tatsumi (1928–1986)

- Thursday, Feb 20
  Unit II Exam IN CLASS

UNIT III: Central Asia, China, and Taiwan

Week 8 – Tamara Khanum and Modern Central Asian Dance
• Tuesday, Feb 25
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)

• Thursday, Feb 27
VIEW: After the Curtain (2016 documentary by Emelie Mahdavian)

Week 9 – SPRING BREAK

• Tuesday, Mar 3 NO CLASS
• Thursday, Mar 5 NO CLASS

Week 10 – Wu Xiaobang, Dai Ailian, and Modern Chinese Dance

• Tuesday, March 10
➢ Presentation: Wu Xiaobang (1906-1995)

• Thursday, March 12
VIEW: Colored Butterflies Fluttering About (Cai die fen fei) 1963 Chinese Dance Film (Media Gallery)
READ: Emily Wilcox, “Introduction” and “Chapter 1—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, pp. 1-47
➢ Presentation: Dai Ailian (1916-2006)

Week 11 – Lin Hwai-min, Sun Ying and Dance Contemporary Taiwan and China

• Tuesday, March 17
VIEW: “Moon Water” by Cloud Gate Dance Company (Media Gallery)
➢ Presentation: Lin Hwai-min (b. 1947)

• Thursday, March 19
VIEW: Han-Tang Chinese Classical Dance Video Clips
➢ Presentation: Sun Ying (b. 1929)
Week 12 – Tao Ye and Contemporary Dance in China

- Tuesday, March 24
  VIEW: Tao Dance Theatre Video Clips
  Hentyle Yapp, “Intimating Race: Tao Ye’s 4 and Methods for World Dance,” in Susan Manning, Janice Ross, and Rebecca Schneider, eds. The Futures of Dance Studies, University of Wisconsin Press, 2020, pp. 489-504
  ➢ Presentation: Tao Ye (b. 1986)

- Thursday, March 26
  Unit III Exam IN CLASS

UNIT IV: Indonesia and Thailand

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

- Tuesday, March 31
  Embodied Learning #1: Butoh Workshop

- Thursday, April 2
  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)

Week 14 – Pichet Klunchun and Thai Contemporary Dance

- Tuesday, April 7
  ➢ Presentation: Retno Maruti (b. 1947)

- Thursday, April 9
  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 Boorsa Mahin Siamese Theatre Troupe (1900),” International Federation for Theatre Research, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 140-155
  ➢ Presentation: Pichet Klunchun (b. 1971)

❖ Final deadline for Final Project Proposals is Friday, April 10 at 11:59pm.

UNIT V: Workshops and Final Projects
Week 15 – Dance Workshop and Final Projects

Tuesday, April 14
Unit IV Exam IN CLASS

Thursday, April 16
Embodied Learning #2: Dance Workshop TBD
No assignments—work on Final Projects

Week 15 – Final Projects and Course Wrap Up
Informal presentations on Final Projects, course evaluations, and reflections

❖ Final Projects Due on Canvas on Thursday, April 30th, at 5:30PM.