Dance 550/Anthro 549  
Dance Ethnography  
Fall 2015

Meeting Times: TTH 10:30-11:50  
Office: Meany 260  
Location: Sieg 227  
Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 and by appointment  
Instructor: Dr. Juliet McMains  
email: mcmains@u.washington.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course offers students theoretical and practical experience in dance ethnography, ethnology, and oral history. While the primary focus will be on dance, methods and theories discussed will also be applicable to other physical practices such as music, theatre, sports, and performance art. Students will be introduced to theories and methods of ethnographic fieldwork, ethnographic writing, and ethnologic analysis. We will contextualize our work within the history of dance anthropology and dance cultural studies, engaging with current debates and problems in both fields. All students will be expected to conduct original ethnographic fieldwork. In addition to writing fieldnotes for each fieldsite visit, students will experiment with performance as a means of presenting their fieldwork. Students will also complete a final paper or performance based on their ethnographic research.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students successfully engaging with course material should:

- Gain familiarity with historical and contemporary theories, methods, and literature in dance ethnography
- Develop skills in critical reading of ethnographic writing
- Gain practical experience in ethnographic research, writing, and performance
- Understand and question their own position in the history of ethnographic scholarship
- Learn how to critically examine the ways in which specific communities make social, cultural, political meaning
- Develop awareness of and respect for cross-cultural differences

In addition to these course objectives, many of the following learning goals outlined by the Dance Program will be addressed in this course. These goals were devised by the Dance Program Faculty in consultation with the Office of Instructional Assessment.

1) Understand dance as a cultural practice that reflects and impacts local communities and global cultures.
2) Develop and practice analytic, evaluative, and contextual skills requisite to critical thinking, kinesthetic understanding, and personal growth.
3) Develop and practice skills in rhythmic, movement and compositional analysis.
4) Develop effective communication and research skills to promote and articulate a deeper understanding of dance practice and theory.
5) Engage in personal assessment and reflective practices that encourage self-directed learning.
6) Understand how basic principals of dance science and teaching methodologies can be applied to technical and aesthetic development.
7) Recognize and expand creative, artistic, and intellectual potentials.

Required Texts:

Course Reader available for purchase at RAMS Copy Center, 4144 University Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105 (206) 632-6630.

REQUIREMENTS

Since this is a graduate level course meeting in conjunction with an undergraduate course, I will allow each of the graduate students to design his/her own course requirements. I ask that all of you do the required readings, attend class, participate in discussions, and do some fieldwork. Beyond that, you are free to design your own requirements. I recommend that you look at the undergraduate course requirements (which you can view on canvas) and decide which of the activities you’d like to participate in. In addition to those activities, you can choose your own, depending on what you think would best serve you and your education. Additional requirements you might choose could include:

- Read two full-length ethnographic monographs and write reviews of them
- Do more extensive fieldwork and write a longer final paper
- Continue developing an ethnographic project you’ve started in another class
- Write more formal responses to the readings listed on the syllabus
- Find and read additional materials on a particular topic related to the course
- Write an essay discussing how each of the authors we read in class addresses the list of questions we devise early in the quarter
- Study ethnographic performances
- Anything else you can dream up

Please turn in your own list of course requirements and the percent of your final grade each should determine by **Tuesday, October 6**. These requirements can be adjusted mid-way through the quarter if your interests take a radical detour. Just submit a new proposal to me by **November 10** if you’d like to redesign your own course.

I would like to schedule a few additional meetings with only the graduate students taking the course (perhaps 3-4 meetings during the quarter) if we can find a time when we are all free. This would be a great opportunity to have more focused in-depth discussions about the issues that interest you. Please send me your schedule as soon as you know it so that I can try to schedule these meetings.
Academic Honesty
Students at the University of Washington are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct. Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are considered serious offenses and could result in a variety of disciplinary actions, including suspension or permanent dismissal from the University. For more information on Academic Honesty (Cheating and Plagiarism) see: http://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf
For information on Student Standards of Conduct see: http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-120-020

The Odegaard Writing and Research Center (OWRC) offers students, staff, and faculty at UW free, one-to-one, 45-minute tutoring sessions for any writing or research project, as well as for personal projects such as applications or cover letters and resumes. Our tutors and librarians are trained to collaborate at any stage of the writing and research process, from brainstorming and identifying sources to making final revisions and tying up loose ends. For more information, or to schedule an appointment (more than 500 available per week!), please see our website (http://depts.washington.edu/owrc) or come visit us in person on the first floor of Odegaard Undergraduate Library!

The Anthropology Writing Center (AWC) provides assistance and support with composition, rhetoric, and other writing skills to Anthropology undergraduates and graduate students. We can help you improve writing assignments you may have, enhance your writing skills in general, and increase your comfort with the writing process. We provide assistance at all levels of the writing process, from brainstorming ideas to outlining to specific writing skills (e.g. writing effective introductions, evaluating arguments, proper citation and referencing, etc.). We also have a number of useful reference materials related to the writing process. Further details about making appointments, WRC hours, appointment length, and center policies can be found at the URL below. If you have any questions, feel free to email the WRC at anthwrc@uw.edu. Center Website: https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/anthwrc/33110/

Academic Accommodations
To request disability accommodation, contact the Disability Services Office at: 206.543.6450 (voice), 206.543.6452 (TTY), 206.685.7264 (fax), or email at dso@u.washington.edu. The University of Washington makes every effort to honor disability accommodation requests. Requests can be responded to most effectively if received as far in advance of the event as possible, preferably at least 10 days.

It is imperative that you meet with the instructor for your course within the first full week of school, (in this case, by the end of the day on Friday, October 3), to make arrangements to discuss accommodations. To assist in defining how many absences may be reasonable, and to discuss the unique environment of studio based dance courses, we will both need to complete a Disability Related Absence Agreement:

This form gets filed with DRS. It is important that you understand that there is no way to make up for missed technique classes. You are evaluated on your time in class and on your own improvement in the class. This absences agreement will reflect this information.
Course Schedule  
(Subject to Revision)

UNIT I: Historical and Theoretical Background in Dance Ethnography

**Thursday, October 1**


**Tuesday, October 6**


**Thursday, October 8**


UNIT II: Practical Tools for the Field

**Tuesday, October 13**  **Meet in Meany 265, 266, 267 10:30-11:50 to practice jottings**


**Thursday, October 18: Fieldwork**


DAN 350/ANTH 349, p. 5
Tuesday, October 20: Fieldnotes


Thursday, October 22: Interviewing
Fieldnotes 1 Due


Bring recording devices for in-class practice on interviewing

Tuesday, October 27 – Interviews in Ethnographic Writing


Thursday, October 29 – Situating the Ethnographer
Agar, Michael. “Who Are You To Do This?” Chap. 4 in The Professional Stranger. (91–111)

UNIT 3: Ethnographic Analysis & Writing

Tuesday, November 3


Fieldnotes 2 Due

Thursday, November 5


Tuesday, November 10


Thursday, November 12


UNIT 4: From the Field to Stage

Tuesday, November 17
Fieldnotes 3 Due

Thursday, November 19
View either: *Fires in the Mirror* or *Twilight Los Angeles* (links on canvas)

**Tuesday, November 24**


**Thursday November 26—no Class due to Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Tuesday, December 1: Performance Workshop**

**Thursday, December 3: Ethnographic Performances**

**Tuesday, December 8: Ethnographic Performances**

Rough Draft of Final Paper or Script of Ethnographic Performance Due

**Thursday, December 10: Ethnographic Performances**

**Exam Week**

Monday, December 14 10:30 am – 12:30 am
Final Performances or Final Paper Due