

Course Design Outline

The Dialogics of Latinx Dance



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May 2022

Course Design Outline

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COURSE TITLE

The Dialogics of Latinx Dance

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Designed for Higher Education, *The Dialogics of Latinx Dance* will specifically use the lens of Latinx dance forms to investigate topics of 1) identity – culture, history, and people groups, 2) dialogue - the relationship of music, rhythm, and dance, 3) place - the Latinx presence in American modern dance, and 4) voice- improvisation. Providing historical and cultural context for the students alongside the introduction of the technique, improvisational, and musical structures, this course serves to provide an authentic approach to the exploration of Latinx dance forms, a platform to dialogue about Latinx and Spanish cultures, and a space for students to explore their voice and find their identity within this form, whether native or non-native to the cultures.

COURSE FRAMEWORK

The Dialogics of Latinx Dance (OR The Dialogics of Latinx within Dance) course will be structured as a praxis, allotting time for both theory and practice in every class period. The two-hour course will meet once a week. The first 30 minutes of the class will be dedicated to theory, including conversation and reflection, leading into a 1.5-hour studio class. Co-teaching portions of the class, specifically in music and improvisational structure, will be a professional flamenco and Classical Spanish guitarist. With both a dance and music practitioner leading the course, students will experience the authentic integration of music and dance found in these dance forms. The twelve-week course will be divided into five units, covering the four main topics, and organized as follows:

UNIT 1 – Weeks 1-3

TOPIC: IDENTITY – *Culture, History, & People Groups: Colonization and Assimilation throughout the Americas*

- What do we know? V. What do we know *now*?
- What does the word Spanish mean? Where did the term Latin America come from? Why do we use the word Hispanic, Spanish, Latino, Latinx interchangeably?
- Dance Identity, Cultural Identity, Student Identity – What is my identity? Where is my place within the course?
- Cultural contributions in Spanish Dance forms: Moors & Arabs from Northern Africa, Sephardic Jews from the Middle East, Romani Gypsies from Northern India, Indigenous Populations in Andalucía, Spain
- Agency and identity in Danza Azteca & Aesthetics and identity in Zapotec

- Ballet Folklórico in Mexico and the development in the United States

UNIT 2 – Weeks 4-6

TOPIC: DIALOGUE – *The Relationship of Music, Rhythm, and Dance: Danza Estilizada, Escuela Bolera of the Zarzuelas, Folklore & Flamenco*

- Cante, Toque, Baile
- Improvisational Structures that Speak
- Palmas & Castanets
- Zapateados de Ida y Vuelta
- Spanish New Mexico: Traditional Folk Dances
- Dialogue between dance forms

UNIT 3 – Weeks 7-9

TOPIC: PLACE - *The Latinx Presence in American Modern Dance: Identifying the Voice of Latinidades in the History of modern dance in America*

- What do we know about modern dance? Is there Latinx presence in modern dance?
- Modern Dance Pioneers: Denishawn, Humphrey, Graham, Horton, Dunham
- Mexican-born, American Modern Dance Pioneer – José Limón
- Limón's *Danzas Mexicanas*: the place of the Indio, Conquistador, Peon, Caballero, and Revolucionario
- Comparing & contrasting movement principles of the pioneers with Latinx dance forms
- Latinx in contemporary dance: Ballet Hispánico

UNIT 4 – Weeks 10-11

TOPIC: VOICE - *Improvisation*

- Western v. Non-Western Improvisational Approaches
- Improvisational Frameworks in modern dance, folk dances of Latin America and Spain, and flamenco
- Juerga setting

UNIT 5 – Week 12

CULMINATION: IDENTITY, DIALOGUE, PLACE & VOICE

- Performance of Choreographed Movement Sequence
- Improvisational Performance Session

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a result of participating in this course, students will:

1. Understand the cultural and regional origins of dances from Spain and Latin America, identifying the various groups that were pivotal in forming the art in Spain and throughout the Americas.
2. Name and identify the elements of Latinx dance forms.
3. Develop necessary skills to properly execute fundamental warm up exercises and movement phrases particular to Latinx dance forms.
4. Recognize introductory rhythms and songs in Latinx dance forms.
5. Develop and further investigate their creative voice by engaging in improvisation within the structure of Latinx dance forms, relating the practice to prior improvisational experiences in other dance styles.
6. Create connections to the course content and their knowledge base in other subject areas.

LEARNING GOALS

As a result of class participation and successful completion of the course assignments, students will be able to understand the origins of dances from Spain and Latin America, and the cultures & regions that influenced its creation. They will have a deeper understanding of the various groups that were pivotal in forming the art, and be able to name and identify the elements of Latinx dance forms. Students will be able to demonstrate fundamental dance phrases, with expressiveness and musical phrasing, while producing creative and unique vocabulary to their own individual movement styles. Students will also be able to communicate their experiences of watching dance performances using movement vocabulary inherited throughout the progression of the course, and connect this to their learning in other subject areas.

COURSE RATIONALE

An Authentic Approach: Making the Case for the Dialogics of Latinx Dance Forms in Higher Education

Improvisation provides a space for creativity and inquiry. Karen Schupp in *Merging Movements: Diverse Dance Practices in Postsecondary Education*, notes that “designing dance curricula that centralize creativity and inquiry and offer a selection of diverse dance practices is one way to address the call to action from within dance education and to navigate evolving societal needs” (Schupp, 105). As

Improvisation is central to many Latinx dance forms, it plays a critical role in providing an authentic experience for the student.

Bridging the gap between students' prior knowledge, and the dance forms they will be introduced to, can play a pivotal role in their level of comfort, interest, and agency within the course. As an example, in describing flamenco and postmodern forms, Michelle Heffner Hayes in her article, *The Writing on the Wall: Reading Improvisation in Flamenco and Postmodern Dance*, states that "a tentative definition of improvisation becomes necessary in order to consider flamenco and postmodern events in the same space. It is a cautious consideration: how do I write it so that the differences are not lost, but some similarities are emphasized? Improvisation is in my view a citational process. In both flamenco and postmodern traditions, the performer refers to a 'map' of possible choices determined by the structure of the form. The 'map' must be recognized by a community of participants in order for the improvisation to 'make sense', but the 'map' does not definitively mark the entire terrain" (Heffner Hayes, 106). Capitalizing on students' experiences can prove helpful in building connections and finding entry points into the course work.

It is equally important to recognize the differences in students' experiences and how that compares to the forms they will learn in the new course. Where is the through line and what are the connections, and at the same time, what are differences and where might there be a gap in translation? As Heffner Hayes points out, many non-Western dance forms and "postmodern improvisation forms do not share the same cultural history. They employ different uses of movement, syntax, space, and time. The ideal body that results from the training in each area has a specific configuration of gender attributes, racial identity, and class consciousness; however, improvisation figures prominently in both movement traditions, and the ways in which movement, meaning, and virtuosity are expressed can be compared as similar negotiations of improvisational structures" (109).

Acknowledging the prior knowledge students bring to the class and having open conversations between the differences in their experience and what they *will* experience provides students with context. Through this dialogic foundation, students are given a fuller picture of the scope of work, and may see in a clearer light their place, and possibility, within that framework.

Looking at teaching the improvisational aspect of non-Western dance forms, Heffner Hayes points out key components for the structure of the improvisation, where "...movements are practiced in measured sequences, in partnership with musical accompaniment. Students simultaneously develop the technical mastery for producing these movements as they practice different possible combinations of them. The entire process is mediated through several frames of reference: I watch my teacher, her reflection, the other students, myself, and our reflections as I listen to the guitarists and the sound of hands clapping. The teacher's movements serve as a guide, an original sequence that is endlessly permuted throughout the classroom on different dancers' bodies. She watches, altering her decisions to serve as an example for ours" (110).

Embedded within the structure of the class lies a basic introduction to the elements and framework to perform the elements of the dance form. The class goes beyond learning steps and lays a foundation of steps within a structure. This becomes a stepping stone into the world of improvisation. This skill set, learned simultaneously with the steps, offers a rich and authentic experience to the student. Heffner Hayes points out an example of improvisation within a non-Western class where the teacher "chooses one of the advanced students to take her place at the head of the class and to improvise as we follow" (110). Improvisation is used, in this case, to provide student agency and decentralize the teacher as the leader of the class. It is also something that is happening organically.

Folding in improvisational introductions with the basic technique of a form gives students an opportunity to immediately experience and apply the dance in its original intention. "The class as a whole has a narrative structure that emulates the development of the improvised solo: a few movement possibilities are introduced, repeated, combined, accelerated, and varied until the speed surpasses the realm of the possible. The limits of the structure are explored and then exhausted" (111). This structure of blending improvisation and technique together provides depth and creates a multifaceted experience for learners to engage in a meaningful way with the dance.

Broadening the curriculum in post-secondary education provides a place for marginalized dance forms that have the potential to become the vehicle for social change on a global level. Jorge Pérez in *Flamenco Fusion: Cross-Cultural Coalitions and the Art of Raising Consciousness*, discusses how this takes place within a dance form, such as flamenco, where "by participating in a network of transcultural exchanges, fusion practices bring international visibility to flamenco and, consequently, enhance its

cultural relevance. It also allows flamenco to serve as a vehicle for cultural interventions on issues of global concern, such as migration” (Pérez, 258).

Decentralizing curriculum towards non-privileged dance forms creates a place for the development of versatile dancers trained in those styles. This practice not only informs students physically in their dance practices, including improvisational skills, but promotes the larger conversation of acceptance and understanding of different cultures as well as a space for students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. An inclusive and diverse approach gives students a wider range of options to become competitive within the field and key contributors and change makers. It brings a perspective that creates more avenues in dance, helping to preserve all types of dance forms and keep them alive and relevant. As Pérez reminds us, sharing non-Western dance forms “across the world helps the art form to survive” (253).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS/ASSESSMENTS

1. **SELF-REFLECTION & GROUP-REFLECTION** – In every class, students will be asked to participate in both self and group reflections, which will take place in written and dialogic format.
 - a. *What I Know*: Provide students time to write down their current knowledge of Latinx Dance Forms and terminology. Next, ask them to write down why they are taking the course, and what they would like to get out of the course. Collect the reflection entries at the end of class, and provide written feedback on their notes, returning to them the following class. This will serve as feedback for the teacher in developing the course content dynamically, as well as provide students a place to reflect on their learning.
 - b. *What I Know NOW*: This is a second step to the “what I know” exercise, providing a space for students to express new knowledge gained in the course, and will be done periodically throughout the units.
 - c. *Parking Lot*: Provide post-its for students, asking them to write down any questions or thoughts they have about Latinx dance forms. Once they fill out a post-it they can place it on the community post-it board, or “Parking Lot”. This will be a place for reference throughout the course, where students can write down questions or thoughts as they arise, and share on an ongoing basis. This can be an outlet for students to anonymously share what’s on their mind, and a place for teachers to check-in with students on a regular basis, assessing the needs of the class.

- d. *Identity Map*: Have students create their own identity map, connecting it to their place within the course. Guide the categories to connect their identity, to the work they are experiencing in the course. Ask students to share their map with a peer, highlighting areas that stood out to them, or new realizations about their identity. Below are some identity map resources to draw upon for the assignment (also see sample in support materials):
- i. <https://www.visualthesaurus.com/cm/lessons/mapping-your-identity-a-back-to-school-ice-breaker/>
 - ii. <https://www.lucidchart.com/publicSegments/view/ee5d90a6-abd2-403e-9eba-fdd4039f1b72>
 - iii. <file:///C:/Users/Kirsten/Documents/Assessment%20in%20Higher%20Education/Social%20Identity%20Mapping.pdf>
 - iv. https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/1jvKzGgufbotQic9GRENHe3zBoGxN4hE3dz52r1wcuTk/template/preview?usp=drive_web
2. **OBSERVATIONS** – In every class, students will either watch a live performance, given by the instructors, or a video performance, pre-selected and noted in the list below. Prior to and/or following the viewings, students will be given prompts, based on the topic of the week. Students will then choose one of the videos/live performances to write a critique on (see supporting materials for assignment guidelines). Students will review the critique rubric as a class and make any edits they feel necessary before beginning the assignment. Teacher will use the newly edited rubric for grading of the assignment.
- a. Video viewings in class:
 - i. Sara Baras' *Asturias* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htMf9sl4jes>
 - ii. Olga Pericet's *Pisadas* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ac7xLhfGLR8>
 - iii. José Limón's *La Malinche*
 - iv. Michelle Manzanales's *Con Brazos Abiertos* <https://vimeo.com/226205959#at=0>
(password = bhdance)
 - b. Video viewings at home:
 - i. Ballet Nacional de España's *Danza Española*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqK5zCw9XGs>
 - ii. Farruquito's *Bulerías* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJTsZCgkMKE>

- iii. Grupo Corpo
 - iv. Latinidades: <https://vimeo.com/264103946>
- c. Live performances:
- i. Fandangos – flamenco palo
 - ii. “Andalucía” by Ernesto Lecuona – Classical Spanish with castanets
3. **PERFORMANCE** – The last unit will provide students the opportunity to perform the learned material in a performance setting. The students will perform a Classical Spanish Dance phrase, choreographed by the teacher, with audience (classmates) observing the performance. The students will then perform their own flamenco material, in an improvised community setting (juerga), with all audience (classmates) participating. Students will be assessed on each of their performances (see rubric under supporting materials), and assign which categories merit which point levels. The student will fill out one rubric for themselves, and the teacher will fill out one rubric for the student as well, taking the average grade.

RECOMMENDED CLASS ATTIRE

Students should wear a heeled, hard-soled shoe for the class (i.e. character or flamenco shoe is best). Women should wear a skirt, preferably ankle length. Hair should be neatly secured away from the face. Castanets will be provided by the instructor.

RESOURCES

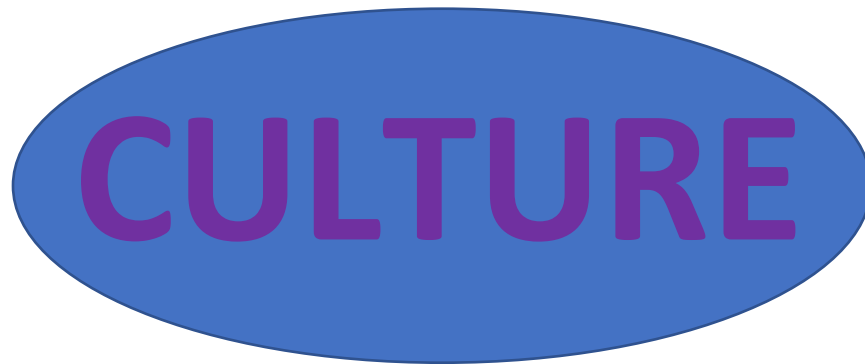
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Creating Autonomy – Supportive Learning Environments. Jon Stolk. TEDxSMU. 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxIFzrfdqa4>

What is Culture?

Work in a small group and create a web with "CULTURE" in the center. Web as many aspects of culture as you can think of.



What is my Cultural Identity?

Web as many *cultural strands* that make up who you are.

**My Cultural
Identity**

Creating your Own Cultural Map

Part 1: Draw a **cultural map** on paper including all of the cultural strands/groups you belong to or have belonged to. Include cultural influences which have contributed to your unique cultural identity.

Feel free to use:

- icons or symbols to represent different cultural strands
- words or phrases which signify an aspect of your cultural identity

Note: Your cultural map can follow a timeline, or highlight key components of who you are in a random arrangement or design.

Have fun and be creative with your map!

Part 2: REFLECT: What did you observe and learn about your partner as you watched and listened to their cultural map sharing? What did you learn about yourself?

Ejercicios de Palillos

CODE:

Pi = Right

Ta = Left

Pom = Both Left & Right Together

Choque = Clashing together of both left & right

Ria = Caretilla, right hand roll finishing with left

Cambio = Change

1 = Pinky Finger (female)

2 = Ring Finger (female)

3 = Middle Finger (female)

4 = Pointer Finger (female)

5 = Middle Finger (male)

*CREDIT - Mercedes Leon, daughter of La Quica, Bailaora

Video/Live Performance Critique Guidelines

Students are required to select one of the videos or live performances assigned in the course material, and write a critique.

Length of Paper & Due Date:

Two (2) to Three (3) pages typed (double-spaced). Submit through Canvas.

Criteria for Critique:

A critique should include not only a summary or description of the plot or storyline of the work, but also your personal thoughts, opinions, and reactions to the performance. Think critically about what you have seen and include themes or ideas that stood out to you. Your paper should be free of grammatical errors, and include correct spelling and punctuation.

Critique Written Outline:

Introduction

- Include the name of the company and choreographer.
- Give a brief history or summary of the work.

Body

- Provide a detailed review and commentary on the work.
- Provide a movement analysis, commenting on the movement principles we have focused on in our class.
- How did the music and/or rhythms influence the works?
- Mention any cultural contributions you recognize in the works and reference specific sections.
- Discuss your overall impressions of the works, citing specific examples.

Final Thoughts

- What conclusions can you make about Latinx dance forms as an art form based on what you observed, and how does that relate to your experiences as a dance student?

RUBRIC: Video/Live Performance Critique

	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Partial Credit
Quality of work	<p>36 - 40 points Work demonstrates creative and critical thinking. Original ideas are expressed, and they are expanded and supported by connections to course content.</p>	<p>32 - 35 points Work demonstrates some creative and critical thinking. Original ideas are expressed, but very little connection to course content is evident. Work could be more developed.</p>	<p>28 - 31 points Work shows some creative and critical thinking, but ideas are undeveloped. There is little evidence of course content knowledge.</p>	<p>24 - 27 points Work demonstrates little original thought or knowledge of course content.</p>	<p>0 – 23 points There is no evidence of course content knowledge.</p>
Criteria Fulfilled	<p>14 - 15 points All criteria for the assignment are met.</p>	<p>12 - 13 points Most criteria for the assignment are met.</p>	<p>10 - 11 points Almost all of the criteria for the assignment are met.</p>	<p>9 points Assignment is incomplete.</p>	<p>0 - 8 points Several criteria for the assignment are only partially met, and some are missing.</p>
Grammar, Punctuation & MLA	<p>4 – 5 points There are few spelling errors, grammatical issues, and the presentation of ideas and writing style allows the reader to read it with ease.</p>		<p>2 – 3 points Some grammar and spelling errors are present, however they do not detract from the overall presentation of ideas.</p>		<p>0 – 1 points Many grammar and spelling errors make the writing difficult to read.</p>

RUBRIC: Final Performance

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION					
Accuracy/ Precision of Movement	Student executes all steps in the movement sequence in the correct order	Demonstrates understanding of the concept throughout the movement sequence	Demonstrates understanding of the concept in most of the sequence	Demonstrates understanding of the concept in some of the sequence	Demonstrates understanding once or twice in the movement sequence	Does not demonstrate understanding of this concept in the movement sequence
Movement Quality/ Aire	Student performs the quick & sharp and the smooth & sustained qualities of movement in the sequence with an “Aire” appropriate for the form	Demonstrates understanding of the concept throughout the movement sequence	Demonstrates understanding of the concept in most of the sequence	Demonstrates understanding of the concept in some of the sequence	Demonstrates understanding once or twice in the movement sequence	Does not demonstrate understanding of this concept in the movement sequence
Musicality & Rhythm	Student demonstrates a clear understanding of the musical phrasing and rhythm	Demonstrates understanding of the concept throughout the movement sequence	Demonstrates understanding of the concept in most of the sequence	Demonstrates understanding of the concept in some of the sequence	Demonstrates understanding once or twice in the movement sequence	Does not demonstrate understanding of this concept in the movement sequence
Risk Taking & Improvisational Choices	Student takes risks within the performance and utilizes the improvisation structure	Demonstrates understanding of the concept throughout the movement sequence	Demonstrates understanding of the concept in most of the sequence	Demonstrates understanding of the concept in some of the sequence	Demonstrates understanding once or twice in the movement sequence	Does not demonstrate understanding of this concept in the movement sequence

**Students to assign point values to categories*