Humanities Seminars, 2015
University of Arizona

*Dance and the Human Image*
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Lecture-discussion: Mondays, 10:00 am to noon, Jan. 26 - Apr. 6

**Syllabus:**

I. Jan. 26 ~ How this course came to be.
Statement of the question: How is the art of the dance affected by the body image and the self image and how does it reflect the human image?
Definitions/descriptions of body image, self image, and human image.
Some statements about dance from Homer to Bausch.
Discussion: Dance and cultural values.
Viewing stills: a quick survey of “iconic” dancing figures, from rock art to Michael Jackson.
Viewing video clips: Nijinski’s *Afternoon of a Faun*; Balanchine’s *Agon*.

Readings (in course packet):
Wilson’s introduction to the course.
Sorell, Walter. Ch. 1; *The Dancer’s Image: points & counterpoints*.

II. Feb. 2 ~ The Human Image in Cultural Context.
The seven forms: view illustration (in packet).
What are their functions in society?
What are their characteristics?
How do they evolve?
What is cultural congruence? What is the $\alpha$ (alpha) factor?
Viewing video clips:
Trance and ecstasy ~ N’Tum of the !Kung Bushmen;
Transition to classical form~ Sarpam Thullal of the Pullavas, India;
Classical forms ~ Bedoyo of Java; Bugaku of Japan;
Classical form re-constructed ~ Hula

Reading for class III: Wilson, “How Dance Became an Art Form.”
III. Feb. 9 ~ Classical dance forms in Western Culture.
Early to classical Greece: From the Maenads to the choric dancers.
  Viewing stills ~ Pan to Dionysus; masks and robes, archetypes
Vernacular forms:
  Kordax and its successors ~ entertainers and pick-pockets; Commedia dell’Arte,
  stereotypes

Why no Western classical form?
  Rome, the Church, the Dance of Death, ergotism, and the plague
  Viewing stills ~ Medieval depictions of Dance of Death at Lübeck; Jewish illustrated
  manuscripts
Folk forms:
  Viewing stills ~ Dürer; Bruegel
Folk to Social forms:
  Viewing video clip ~ Dancetime!: 500 years of social dancing, reconstructions of late
  Medieval, Renaissance, and baroque dancing.

Readings for class IV: Lester, Toby, Da Vinci’s Ghost, excerpts.

IV. Feb. 16 ~ The Human Image from God to Man.
Vitruvian Man ~
  Viewing stills ~
  Architecture and ideal proportions.
  Medieval maps of God and Christ; from Lambeth Palace; Hildegard’s vision.
  Leonardo and the Renaissance; the 1517 pen sketch that everybody knows.
Enlightenment, Louis XIV, science and baroque art.
  Viewing stills ~
    Global Man; Carlos Dyer’s manual for ballet technique.
  Viewing video clips ~
    Le Académie Royale de Danse reconstructions; Le Roi Soleil
    Bournonville’s enchaînements, Danish Royal Ballet

Reading for class V: Wilson, “The Articulate Species.”
V. Feb. 23 ~ Art and the Articulate Species.
Discussion: the “embodied” meaning of the article, “The Articulate Species.”

This is a “catch-up” class. We review and discuss the topics of the first classes and preview the remaining classes: techniques, dance aesthetics, and the human image.
Viewing video clip ~ Jiri Kylian’s The Stamping Ground, opening and first movement.

Readings for class VI: Marie Scott Brown, “Normal Development of Body Image”

VI. Mar. 2 ~ Dance Technique: What it does and what it means.
Ballet technique ~
Viewing video clips ~
Ballet basics; Vaganova class at the Maryinsky Theatre.
Modern dance techniques ~
Viewing video clips ~ Dancer’s World, Graham technique; Cunningham intermediate class; Humphrey-Límón company class.
Discussion ~ What are the contrasting uses of the body’s “center?” Visual and kinesthetic perception - their contrasts and fusion.

Reading for class VII: Sally Banes, Terpsichore in Sneakers; Deborah Jowitt, Time and the Dancing Image,” excerpts.

VII. Mar. 9 ~ Improvisation: The Ultimate Technique.
Demonstration ~ University of Arizona dance students improvise.
Discussion with the dancers and choreographer/professor Doug Nielsen.
Viewing video clips ~ two surprises!

Reading for class VIII: Weiss and Haber, eds., Perspectives on Embodiment; Gelsey Kirkland, Dancing on my Grave, excerpts.

I. Mar. 23 ~ The Self Image.
Somatic techniques: discussion with David Taylor, M.D., Feldenkrais clinician.
Discussion: the range of movement techniques and how they relate to the body and self images.
Viewing video clips: Seven Post-Modern Choreographers; The Black Swan; Everybody Dance Now, MTV.
Discussion


**IX. Apr. 6 ~ Dance Aesthetics.**
How to view dance - the fundamentals: technical alacrity, compositional integrity, evocative quality.
Viewing video clips: “White Christmas” with Danny Kaye and Vera-Ellen; Merce Cunningham’s *Summerspace*; Jerome Robbins’s *Dances at a Gathering*; Nikinski’s *Rite of Spring*.

Discussion.

**X. Mar. 30 ~ Dance and The Human Image.**
Viewing video clips: Kurt Jooss’s *The Green Table*; Paul Taylor’s *Brandenburgs*; Pina Bausch by Wim Wenders, *Pina*.
Closing discussion.

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Note: Some of the choreographic works included in the viewings might not be available on the dates indicated; but appropriate substitutes will be shown.

Some additional references:
- Bermúdez, José Luis and Anthony Marcel and Naomi Eilan (eds.); *The Body and the Self*
- Burkitt, Ian; *Bodies of Thought: embodiment, identity and modernity*
- Eufusia, Lindsay and Elena Beina and Paola Ugolini (eds.); *About Face: depicting the self in the written and visual arts*
- Jaynes, Julian; *The Origin of Consciousness in the Break-down of the Bicameral Mind*
- Morris, Brian; *Anthropology of the Self: the individual in cultural perspective*
- Novak, Barbara; *Voyages of the Self: pairs, parallels, and patterns in American art*
- Penfield, Wilder; illustration of the “sensori-motor homunculus”
- Robinson, George; “A New Theory of Empathy and its Relation to Identification”

John M. Wilson, 2014-15