



Humanities Seminars Program Fall 2024 Celebrating Tap!-An American Art Form

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Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00pm (October 15, 22, 29, November 5, 12, 19)

Since it first appeared in the dance world, tap dancing immediately enchanted the public in North America, becoming a vital part of Jazz music culture and broader mainstream musical culture. Tap dancing is an American art form. It was born in the 1800s, from the meeting and meshing of the percussive dance styles brought to the United States (predominantly African, English, Irish and Scottish). It's staccato and style are homegrown. Come explore the history and significance of the American art form of tap dance. Tap has evolved through the years thanks to many significant tap dancers and choreographers. Each week we will discuss different tap dancers and their contributions to the dance world. Examples and video footage of these dancers will be shown and discussed. Additionally, we will focus on what makes each tap dancer unique regarding their style. Assigned readings will enhance the learning as we explore the evolution of this American art form. This course will celebrate the following tappers to include: Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, Eleanor Powell, Ann Miller, Gregory Hines, Savion Glover and many, many others. We will watch and learn as people "shuffle along" in this 2-hour lecture that will span 6 weeks.

Week 1- October 15

Introduction: The roots and history of tap dance.

Early beginnings: Master Juba, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Shirley Temple, Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates, Bill Bailey

View video clips in-class and discuss

Discussion: TAP!—Chapter 4, 19

Week 2-October 22

John W. Bubbles, Charles “Honi” Coles, Buster Brown, The Original Hoofers, The Copasetics, Jeni LeGon

View video clips in-class and discuss

Discussion: TAP!—Chapter 12

What The Eye Hears: Opening Act (p. 3-16)

& Chapter 1: Stealing Steps (p. 19-26)

Week 3-October 29

Sandman Simms, Bunny Briggs, Ruby Keeler, The Nicholas Brothers, Sammy Davis Jr.

View video clips in-class and discuss

Discussion: TAP!—Chapter 2, 6, 11

Week 4-November 5

Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Ann Miller, Eleanor Powell, Gene Kelly, Fred Kelly

View video clips in-class and discuss

Discussion: TAP!—Chapter 18, 26

What The Eye Hears: p. 238-253

Week 5-November 12

Gregory Hines, Savion Glover, Jimmy Slyde, Dianne Walker (Lady Di), Jason Samuels Smith, Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards

View video clips in-class and discuss

Discussion: TAP!—Chapter 28

What The Eye Hears: p. 409-420 and p. 448-449

Week 6-November 19

Ayodele Casel, Chloe Arnold, Derick Grant, Sam Weber, Michelle Dorrance, Jared Grimes and wrap-up of course

View video clips in-class and discuss

Discussion: What The Eye Hears p. 480-482 and p. 530-536

General note:

Please complete the reading *prior* to the class when we will have the discussion. Let me know if there are any questions about the syllabus or assigned readings. Enjoy!

Required Text:

- *Seibert, Brian*-What the Eye Hears; A History of Tap Dancing
ISBN: 978-0-374-53651-0
- *Frank, Rusty*-TAP! The Greatest Tap Dance Stars and their Stories
ISBN: 978-0306806353