

DAN 377

Spring 2015

Women in Dance: Sexuality, Sexism and Subversion

Dr. Veta Goler

E-mail: vgoler@spelman.edu

Phone: 404/270-5473

Office: 409 Cosby

Hours: Tues. and Thurs. 1-2, or by appointment

Class meets Tues. and Thur. 2:25 to 3:40 pm in Fine Arts room 206

Foundational Premise

To a great extent, theatre dance in western societies is considered female domain. Women far outnumber men as ballet and modern dance artists. Yet men often have held the positions of power in the art form, and women can suffer the same sexist oppression as in the larger society.



Catalogue Description

This course examines women's history in dance by investigating gender dynamics in the art form — including the relationships between gender and power, and issues of the body, race, class, and sexuality — within the context of the exploration of concert dance history. Prerequisite: Upper level standing.

Note: As an upper level course, Women in Dance does not fulfill the Women's Studies core requirement. The course is an Honors elective and fulfills the Area A requirement for Drama and Dance. Prerequisite: upper level standing.

Course Goals

Through the study of course texts and other assigned readings, and through lectures, discussions, videotapes, live performances, written assignments, and classroom participation, you will:

- acquire familiarity with major women figures in dance history.
- develop a general understanding of concert dance history.
- become knowledgeable about the relationship between gender and power in dance.
- become knowledgeable about attitudes toward women's bodies throughout history.
- acquire a general understanding of feminist performance.
- increase your appreciation of dance as an art form.
- improve your critical and analytical thinking, your research and writing skills, your presentation capabilities, and your digital authorship skills.

Behavioral Objectives

Through class participation and the completion of course requirements, you will exhibit your ability to:

- discuss major women figures in dance.
- relate the particularities of women dancers' work to sexism, racism and classism and to women's efforts to counteract oppression.
- relate attitudes toward women to developments in dance.
- think critically and analytically.
- conduct dance research and cogently present your findings in oral, written performative, and digital forms.
- enhance your learning through reflection.

Fourth Hour Justification

This course offers four credit hours for three contact hours. To meet the fourth contact hour, students will attend two dance performances and the Spelman Museum of Fine Art, and will do a group project requiring additional outside work.

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. (Yeats)

Course Requirements

I include this quote because research shows that interactive experiences increase learning. So, in this class you and I both have responsibilities. My role is to prepare assignments and facilitate class activities that I believe will be effective in the learning process, to evaluate your work in a timely manner, and to create a safe space in which everyone can be who she (or he) is and freely contribute to the class. Your role in the learning process is to prepare for class activities, complete all reading, writing and other assignments on time, attend all class sessions and out-of-class events, and participate — substantively — in discussions and activities. You are responsible for the timely completion of the following assignments:



Engagement

- Preparation Assessments
- In-Class Activities
- Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) Assignment

Writing

- Comparison Paper
- Performance Critique
- Research Paper

Reflective Understandings

- Reflection Posts
- Examinations
- Group Project

- **Preparation Assessments** — You are required to prepare for each class session. Preparation is essential for your participation in classroom activities. In addition, assessments help illuminate areas where you may be unclear about information covered in class readings. I will assess your preparation in a variety of ways. You may be asked to submit responses to questions about readings or videos on a Moodle prep assignment link before class, to take a quiz at the start of class, or to bring a completed assignment to class, for example.

- **In-Class Activities** — We will engage in various activities during our class sessions to deepen your understanding of course concepts and materials. These activities will include discussions, small and large group exercises, student presentations, and other creative exercises.

- **Reflection Posts** — You will be asked to contemplate course readings, discussions, videos, performances and other related experiences and to post your thoughts on Moodle as Reflection prompt responses. You must post a substantive entry of at least 300 words by each week's due date, usually 11 pm Sunday.

- **Recorded Dance Description** — You must view a recorded choreographic work and then write a descriptive response, in which you focus on describing what took place and how that related to the theme or subject of the dance. You will submit your response as an extended (500 word) Reflections post.

- **Arts Event Responses** — You must attend Spelman Distinguished Visiting Professor Aku Kadogo's Signature Conversations in the Arts talk and the Spelman Museum of Art exhibit, *Maren Hassinger...Dreaming*, and write reflections about what you saw, heard or experienced, and how it relates to this class. You will submit your responses as an extended (500 word) Reflections post.

- **A Live Dance Performance Paper** — in which you write a critique of the Spelman Dance Theatre Spring Concert, April 16-19. A critique is a 750 to 1000 word paper about the performance and its relation to topics covered in class. See the Critique Guidelines in the Assignments section of Moodle for specific details and submit your critique via the appropriate Turnitin links.

- **UBW and Feminism/Womanism IBL Assignment** — in which you engage in the Inquiry Based Learning process — ask * investigate * create * discuss * reflect — to explore an aspect of choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar or her company, Urban Bush Women, relative to feminist or womanist thought.

- **A Comparison Paper** — of 750 to 1000 words, in which you will compare two choreographic works we have viewed as a class in terms of the physicality presented and your thinking about women's dancing bodies. You will submit your paper via the appropriate Turnitin link.

A Research Paper — of 2000 to 2500 words, in which you will explore a topic related to the overarching question for this class: How have women dance artists exercised agency through their work? You will complete the research paper in the following steps:

- a paragraph stating your general idea, which you'll submit on Moodle by 2 pm Thurs. 3/19. (I will give you feedback and suggestions by 3/24.)
- a draft and preliminary bibliography of at least 7 sources, which you'll submit via Turnitin by 11 pm Fri. 4/3
- a 20-minute conference to discuss your draft, the week of April 5
- the completed paper with its final bibliography, with at least 10 sources, which you'll submit via Turnitin by 11 pm Thurs. 4/23.

- **Two Examinations** — an in-class mid-term exam (*What I Know So Far*) and a two-part final exam that includes a group project presentation and an individual reflection paper (*The Meaning I Have Made*), which you'll submit via Turnitin.

Required Texts

- Au, Susan. "Ballet & Modern Dance." NY: Thames and Hudson, (3rd edition) 2012.
- Albright, Ann Cooper. "Engaging Bodies: The Poetics and Politics of Corporeality." Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013
- George-Graves, Nadine. "Urban Bush Women: Twenty-Five Years of African American Dance Theater, Community Engagement, and Working It Out." Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010.

<u>Evaluation</u>		<u>Grading Scale</u>	
<u>Engagement</u>		A	94 and above
Preparation for class	15%	A-	90-93
Attendance and in-class activities	15	B+	87-89
Group Project	10	B	83-86
<u>Writing</u>		B-	80-82
Comparison paper	5	C+	77-79
IBL Assignment	5	C	73-76
Performance critique	10	C-	70-72
Research paper	15	D +	67-69
<u>Reflective Understanding</u>		D	63-66
Reflection posts	5	F	62 and below
<i>What I Know So Far</i>	10		
<i>The Meaning I Have Made</i>	10		
	100%		

"Educate" is from the Latin, *educare*, "to lead out"



COURSE POLICIES

Format for Papers

For all papers, provide *the title of your paper* at the top of page one and begin the paper on the next line. All papers should be double-spaced and typed in a 12-point font, and should use standard margins. Submit each paper by uploading a file via the specified Turnitin link on Moodle.

Attendance and Preparation

Classroom participation is an essential element of this course. Absence and lack of preparation both prevent participation. Therefore, just as poor performance on preparation assessments will lower your grade, excessive class absences will lower your grade. In addition, habitual tardiness will not be tolerated. Two tardies equal an absence. Arriving in class more than 15 minutes late will constitute an absence.

Cell Phones and Computers in Class

We live in a world in which some people honor "multi-tasking" as a highly rated skill. Others recognize that individuals who spread their attention widely are unable to focus deeply on one thing — and therefore, perform poorly on everything. I am one of those people. Consequently, your full attention and presence are important and expected during this class. Our class lasts 75 minutes. I am confident that you can be "off line" for that time and encourage you to tell your parents, siblings, friends and others that you will be unavailable for any communication between 2:25 and 3:40 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays this semester. I would prefer that you turn your cell phone off — not to "vibrate," which is still audible — and place it out of sight before you come to class.

Similarly, I would prefer that you not bring your laptop to class — largely because I don't want to police students who are checking email or surfing the Internet. That said, I appreciate that some students have electronic versions of their books and some prefer to take notes on their computer. You may use your laptop or cell phone in class for class activities. However, anyone *suspected of* using her laptop or cell phone for unauthorized purposes will lose this privilege.

Contemplative Component

I believe everyone has an inner wisdom which, when coupled with their intellectual agency, expands their learning capacity and ability to contribute to others' learning. To help you access this inner knowing, I will include contemplative practices in the class: centering silence at the beginning of class and a few moments of reflection during class. The reflective response assignments are also contemplative. I encourage you to take advantage of these ways of knowing, which may be new to you, and see how they contribute to your more familiar modes of learning.

A Note about Lateness

If you arrive for class during the centering silence, please wait quietly outside the door until it is opened. I encourage you to use this time to bring yourself fully present for this class.

Although I will accept late papers and other assignments, an assignment's grade will be lowered one letter for each day it is late. For example, an A quality paper due 4/12 will earn a grade of B if turned in on 4/13. Assignments received 72 hours after they are due will receive a grade of F.

Spelman Course Policies

Statement on Academic Honesty

At the heart of Spelman College's mission is academic excellence, along with the development of intellectual, ethical and leadership qualities. These goals can only flourish in an institutional environment where every member of the College affirms honesty, trust, and mutual respect. All members of the academic community of Spelman College are expected to understand and follow the basic standards of honesty and integrity, upholding a commitment to high ethical standards. Students are expected to read and abide by the Spelman College Code of Conduct (see the current Spelman College Student Handbook) and are expected to behave as mature and responsible members of the Spelman College academic community. Students are expected to follow ethical standards in their personal conduct and in their behavior towards other members of the community. They are expected to observe basic honesty in their work, words, ideas, and actions. Failure to do so is a violation of the Spelman College Academic Integrity Policy. Violators will be subject to the sanctions outlined in the Spelman College Bulletin.

For Students with Disabilities

Spelman College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, you should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with ODS. The ODS works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission. ODS serves as a clearinghouse on disability issues and works in partnership with faculty and all other student service offices. For further information about services for students with disabilities, please contact the ODS at 404-270-5289 (voice), located in MacVicar Hall, Room 106.

Copyright and Fair Use Statement

Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of authors. Copyrighted materials may be used in this class, including articles, music, art work, etc. These materials are provided for private study, scholarship, or research and adhere to the copyright law of the U.S. (Title 17, U.S. Code). You may copy or download from the course website one copy of the materials on any single computer for non-commercial, personal, or educational purposes only, provided that you do not modify it and use it only for the duration of this course. Beyond this use, no material from the course or website may be copied, reproduced, re-published, uploaded, posted, transmitted, or distributed in any way without the permission of the original copyright holder. The instructor nor the College assumes any responsibility for individuals who improperly use copyrighted material.

Incomplete Policy

An Incomplete (IP) is assigned to a student when extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, death of an immediate family member, or family emergency) prevent a student who is passing a course from completing the final examination or final assignment(s) by the end of the semester. In consultation with a Dean, the faculty member determines if an Incomplete is appropriate and completes the necessary paperwork. The faculty member determines the date for completion of all work. An Incompletion must be changed by the deadline specified on the College academic calendar. A student who cannot complete the Incomplete by the specified deadline must request an extension from the professor, who will notify the Office of the Dean of the extension. If the required work is not completed by the established deadline or the student is not given an extension, the IP will automatically be changed to an F.

Other Resources

(Moodle and handout readings are taken from some of these; others may be helpful for your research.)

- Adair, Christy. Women and Dance: Sylphs and Sirens. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1992.
- Albright, Ann Cooper. Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997.
- Albright, Ann Cooper. Traces of Light: Absence and Presence in the Work of Loïe Fuller. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2007.
- Aschenbrenner, Joyce. Katherine Dunham: Dancing a Life. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002.
- Atwood, Margaret. "The Female Body." in The Female Body: Figures, Styles, Speculations, ed. Laurence Goldstein, 1-4. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.
- Banes, Sally. Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage. NY: Routledge, 1998.
- Banes, Sally. Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994.
- Barber, Beverly. "Pearl Primus: Rebuilding America's Cultural Infrastructure." in African American Genius in Modern Dance, ed. Gerald E. Myers, 9-11. Durham, NC: American Dance Festival, 1993.
- Bordo, Susan. Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Clark, VÉVÉ A. and Sara E. Johnson, eds. Kaiso! Writings by and about Katherine Dunham. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006
- Clark, VÉVÉ A. "Katherine Dunham: Method Dancing or Memory of Difference." in African American Genius in Modern Dance, ed. Gerald E. Myers, 5-8. Durham, NC: American Dance Festival, 1993.
- Copeland, Roger. "Dance, Feminism and the Critique of the Visual." in Dance, Gender and Culture, ed. Helen Thomas, 139-150. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993.
- Daly, Ann. "Are Women Reclaiming or Reinforcing Sexist Imagery?" High Performance 12 no. 2 (Summer 1989): 18-19.
- Daly, Ann. "Dance History and Feminist Theory: Reconsidering Isadora Duncan and the Male Gaze." in Gender in Performance: The Presentation of Difference in the Performing Arts, ed. Laurence Senelick. Boston: Tufts University Press, 1992.
- Daly, Ann. "Isadora Duncan's Dance Theory." Dance Research Journal 26/2 (Fall 1994): 24-30.
- Daly, Ann. "The Balanchine Woman: Of Hummingbirds and Channel Swimmers." The Drama Review 31 no. 1 (Spring 1987): 8-21.
- Dils, Ann and Ann Cooper Albright, eds. Moving History/Dancing Culture: A Dance Studies Reader. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001.

- Eliot, Karen. Dancing Lives: Five Female Dancers from the Ballet d'Action to Merce Cunningham. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007.
- Emery, Lynne Fauley. Black Dance from 1619 to Today. 2nd rev. ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Book Company, 1988.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. "Gender, Race, and Nation: The Comparative Anatomy of 'Hottentot' Women in Europe, 1815-1817." in Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture, ed. Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla, 19-48. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Foster, Patricia, ed. Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul. NY: Doubleday, 1994.
- Foster, Susan Leigh. Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986.
- Garafola, Lynn. "Bronislava Nijinska: A Legacy Uncovered." Women & Performance 3 no. 2, #6, (1987-88): 78-89.
- Garafola, Lynn. "The Travesty Dancer in Nineteenth Century Ballet." Dance Research Journal 17 no. 2 (Fall 1985) 18 no. 1 (Spring 1986): 35-40.
- Goldberg, Marianne, ed. "The Body as Discourse." Women & Performance, 3 no. 2, #6 (1987-88).
- Goldstein, Laurence, ed. The Female Body: Figures, Styles, Speculations. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.
- Goler, Veta. "A Beacon for the People: the Sixties in Dianne McIntyre." in Impossible to Hold: Women and Culture in the 1960s, eds. Avital H. Bloch and Lauri Umansky, 292-304. NY: New York University Press, 2005.
- Goler, Veta. "Living With the Doors Open: An Interview with Blondell Cummings." High Performance #69/70 (Spring/Summer 1995): 16-21.
- Goler, Veta. "Burning Bush: Jawole Zollar Dances With the Spirit." EightRock no. 3 (1993): 38-43.
- Gottschild, Brenda Dixon. The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Gottschild, Brenda Dixon. Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996.
- Gottschild, Brenda Dixon. Joan Myers Brown & the Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina: A Biohistory of American Performance. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Grover-Haskin, Kim, ed. Choreography and Dance, vol. 5 part I: Dance and Gender (Fall 1998).
- Hanna, Judith Lynne. Dance, Sex and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance, and Desire. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Henry, Valarie. "Moves on Top of Blues: The Passion of Dianne McIntyre." EightRock no. 3 (1993): 31-36.

- hooks, bell. "Dreaming Ourselves Dark and Beautiful." chap. in Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery. Boston: South End Press, 1993.
- Jowitt, Deborah. Time and the Dancing Image. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.
- Kassing, Gayle. History of Dance: An Interactive Arts Approach. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2007.
- Kendall, Elizabeth. Where She Danced: The Birth of American Art-Dance. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979.
- Osumare, Halifu. "The New Moderns: The Paradox of Eclecticism and Singularity." in African American Genius in Modern Dance, ed. Gerald E. Myers, 26-29. Durham, NC: American Dance Festival, 1993.
- Peters, Sally. "From Eroticism to Transcendence: Ballroom Dance and the Female Body." in The Female Body: Figures, Styles, Speculations, ed. Laurence Goldstein, 145-158. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.
- Porter, Connie. "Beauty and the Beast." in Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul, ed. Patricia Foster, 175-185. NY: Doubleday, 1994.
- Senelick, Laurence, ed. Gender in Performance: The Presentation of Difference in the Performing Arts. Hanover, NH: Tufts University Press, 1992.
- Updike, John. "Venus and Others." in The Female Body: Figures, Styles, Speculations, ed. Laurence Goldstein, 5-8. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.
- Wallace-Sanders, Kimberly, ed. Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in American Culture. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.
- Walters, Suzanna Danuta. "Visual Pressures: On Gender and Looking," chap. in Material Girls: Making Sense of Feminist Cultural Theory. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.



Course Content

The course outline of readings, assignments and due dates is include below and is on the class Moodle site, which you should check frequently. Course content may vary from this syllabus to meet the needs of the class. I will notify you in class when adjustments to this syllabus are required.