DANC 4340-001 / POLS 4366 / RS 3350

SPECIAL TOPICS IN DANCE

JEWISH AND ISRAELI IDENTITIES IN DANCE AND PERFORMANCE

FALL 2020

Yasmeen Godder (choreographer), *Common Emotions* (2019)

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Melpignano
E-mail: mmelpignano@utep.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 3-4 PM. Just "walk in" through the Zoom link. Send an email if you need to schedule an appointment at another time (always indicate your preferred days/times and UID)

Topic: **Dr. Melissa Melpignano Virtual Office Hours**

Join Zoom Meeting
https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/83656936945?pwd=bUorMm5CMjNaT3RkUlVpL2NKdklTQT09

Meeting ID: 836 5693 6945
Passcode: 830052

Course format: Hybrid online
Tuesday and Thursday synchronous live on Zoom 1:30-2:50 PM (see link invitation in the box below)

Topic: **Jewish and Israeli Identities in Dance and Performance Zoom meetings**

Join Zoom Meeting
https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/88546912518?pwd=L1NKS0JoWWljZ0tVRWRuZHpHakQ2Zz09

Meeting ID: 885 4691 2518
Passcode: 604091

This seminar considers dance and performance outputs as primary sources to interrogate the histories and politics of Jewish and Israeli identitites in their intertwining, overlapping, yet different constructions and articulations throughout the 20th and 21st century.

Through an interdisciplinary theoretical approach—primarily drawing from dance and performance studies, Jewish and Israel studies, political science, history, cultural studies, gender and women studies, critical theory, and religious studies,—the course examines the role that ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, nationalism, diaspora, militarism, religion, assimilation, historical events, globalization, aesthetic legacies, and ideas of body play in the artistic works of Jewish and Israeli choreographers, dramaturges, and performers. Particular attention will be drawn on how dance and performance inform our understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the resurgences of Antisemitism, and the memorializations of the Shoah.

Through readings, discussions, written assignments, movement workshops, and guest speakers (scholars and dance artists), students will learn how to analyze dance and performance as practices able to unveil crucial political aspects of Jewish and Israeli life. Movement workshops will be announced; no dance experience required; everyone engages according to their possibilities.

Students don't need to buy any textbook: all materials are uploaded by the instructor on Blackboard. You are required to have access to a computer (with video camera and microphone) and to Blackboard, and to check your UTEP email account *frequently*.

This course not only encourages an open, interactive, and energetic environment but wants to foster it and necessitates it. In this environment all participants, while working with commitment and rigor, can feel free to respectfully express curiosities, doubts, and questions. Participation and assignments will be performed according to the participants' possibilities, capabilities, and will. Always feel free to contact your instructors for any inquiry, thought, or information.

*Suggested but **certainly not mandatory** texts!*

- Neil Caplan, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*
- Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body*
- Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*
- Meira Weiss, *The Chosen Body: The Politics of the Body in Israeli Society*

You'll read excerpts from these books during the course.

We start this course in the midst of a global pandemic. Health and safety are our priorities. Please, take care of yourselves and protect others. Get in touch if you need assistance and follow the UTEP Temporary Health and Safety Policy.

Learning Goals

- Ability to engage with dance and performance as historical and theoretical primary sources
- Ability to demonstrate an understanding of major historical and cultural developments in Jewish and Israeli life and identity through dance and performance
- Ability to "read" a performance through the methodology of choreographic analysis
- Ability to respectfully engage in politically charged conversations while acknowledging various perspectives

After reading all the course's policies on the syllabus, look carefully at the **coursemap** updated on Week 2 and mark down all the **deadlines**.

Grading

Participation (25 points)
The participation grade rewards presence, work ethics, punctuality, engagement in class *and* on the Discussion Board (*), the necessary politeness and thoughtfulness in feedback and responses to classmates, and the capacity to create a conversation with your peers and nurture it throughout the course.

Discussion Board (DB) assignments (35 points)
There is a total of 7 practical assignments (max 5 points per assignment) to be posted in the class DB. Each assignment is indicated and explained in the Coursemap and will be further explained during lectures. DB assignments are due by 11 am on specific Thursdays.
(*) Comments on other students' posts are highly valued: in order to be considered for the participation grade, comments have to be posted by Sunday at 2 PM (e.g. DB post due on Thursday, September 3 by 11 am; comments due on Sunday, September 5 by 2 pm).

Mid-Term project (10 points) Submit on Blackboard by Tuesday, October 20 at 11 am
The mid-term assignment wants to help you crafting your final paper. It is an outline of your final research project. The outline is a 1-2 page, single spaced, Times New Roman, font size 12 document that

includes structure and tentative content and argument of your final paper, with explicit references to scholarly works. It can be organized in bullet points. Further indications will be extensively given during lecture and auxiliary materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Final Research Paper (30 points) <u>Submit on Blackboard by Tuesday, December 8 at 11.59 pm</u>
An 8-10 page, double spaced, font Times New Roman, size 12 paper in which you offer an original analysis of one or two dance and/or performance-based work(s), showing how they inform a specific understanding of Jewish and/or Israeli identity. You need to apply choreographic analysis and engage with theories and readings explored throughout the course.
An evaluation rubric will be posted on Blackboard.

GRADING SCALE
A = 90 +
B = 80 – 89
C = 70 – 79
D = 65 – 69
F = < 65

If you need an accommodation for an assignment, contact the instructor ASAP.

Events for extra credit

In order to receive extra credit, you can write a 2-page (double-spaced, font Times New Roman, size 12) reflection paper on the following dance events:

• TDIF Texas Dance Improvisation Festival, hosted by the UTEP Department of Theatre and Dance on Saturday, October 10 (online)
• UTEP Dance Capstones performances (dance seniors' choreographic projects), on Friday, November 6 and Saturday November 7 (online)

Send your reflections <u>maximum one week after the event</u> at the email address mmelpignano@utep.edu indicating in the email that you attach your reflection paper for extra credit for this course.

Further information on the events will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in lecture.

I might also consider other dance events and events related to this class you might want to attend (celebrations of Jewish holidays, book presentations, online performances and concerts). Email me in advanced to see if I consider such events pertinent.

How to succeed in this course

• Follow the instructions and respect the deadlines. Something is not clear? A documented emergency happened? E-mail the instructor (the sooner, the better)!

• Assignment Submissions: You are responsible for making sure your assignments go through and upload properly to Blackboard by the due date and time. ALWAYS go back and double check that your submission went through—it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. If you are experiencing technical difficulties contact UTEP's helpdesk or Blackboard Help.

• Announcements and e-mails: Blackboard announcements are the main form of communication that I have with you as a class. Check them often and read them thoroughly. If there are any specifications, changes or alterations to assignments, dates or anything else regarding the class, they will be posted. You are responsible for the information shared there. Check your e-mail account (the one through which you're enrolled at UTEP which needs to be your miners.utep.edu account) at least once a day.

• **If you have questions: ASK!** The best way to get a hold of me is via email (please don't use Blackboard to send me a message, do it directly from your to my email address). Unless I announce otherwise, I should be able to get back to you within 48 hours. I work on my emails in the afternoon, especially Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you haven't heard from me after 48 hours from sending me a message, email me again, and contact our TA. If you have a question, please make sure you follow these guidelines:

1) First, make sure that you have read thoroughly your syllabus and the instructions for the assignment or assessment you have a question about. Minimize the probability of asking something that is clearly stated somewhere.

2) If you don't find your answer by reading, formulate the question with as much detail as you can: What assignment do you have a question about (including what kind and from what module), what is unclear to you in the instructions, and how I can help you.

Netiquette

• Always consider your audience. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading all postings on the DB.

• Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to instructor at all times.
No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.

• When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face to face situation.

• Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. *Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).*
Read this UTEP Netiquette document:
https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/cid/_Files/docs/faculty-resources/student-orientation/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf

All the materials—written, audio and visual—shared within this course remain within this course. You can share on your social media your own materials if the only person that appears or the only author is you. If you want to share content that includes or is co-authored with other classmates, you need to write them *and* the instructor to discuss the authorization.

Attendance Policy

In a course that meets twice a week, a student is allowed a maximum of **6** absences in an entire semester, **4** of which require no justification and result in no penalty. A student may use these absences based on personal necessity. The 5th and 6th absences will result in a drop of ½ letter each in the student's overall grade. At the 7th absence, regardless of the student's current course standing or grade, the student automatically fails the course.

Technology Requirements

Course content is delivered via the Internet through Zoom and the Blackboard learning management system (LMS). Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web. You may use any of the primary Web browsers—Explorer, Google Chrome, Firefox, Safari, etc. When having technical difficulties, try switching to another browser.

You will need to have or have access to a computer/laptop, printer, scanner, a webcam, and a microphone, or device (like a phone) that allows you to enter Blakcboard, check the emails, record and watch audio-visual materials. Sometimes, if a video doesn't work or a page doesn't open, it's because you need to download or update Microsoft Office, Adobe, Flashplayer, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java or so. Also check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. If you encounter technical difficulties of any kind, contact the Help Desk at **https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/** and helpdesk@utep.edu.

If you cannot have access to technological means for whatever reasons, contact me ASAP and I will negotiate an accommodation.

Technical Support. If you do not know how to use Blackboard – contact Tech Support immediately. Do not wait until you do not understand until you are having problems. You can go in person to Room 300 at the UTEP Library, or contact the Help Desk via email at helpdesk@utep.edu, or by phone 747-5257. Hours are M-F 7a-8p, Sat 9a-10p and Sun 12-4p.

Any form of academic dishonesty: cheating, plagiarizing, or taking a test for another student is considered a very serious matter at UTEP. Our library webpage provides good information on what UTEP considers Academic Dishonesty and what steps the university takes in such cases. Please review this information at: http://libraryweb.utep.edu/research/plagiarism.php. Refer also to the Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Affairs.

Some of the materials in this course are copyrighted. Copying of textbooks is not "fair use" under the Copyright Act. Your cooperation is expected. The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

Students with Disabilities Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric special needs. If you have a disability and/or you need any accommodation, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

On-Campus Sources of Student support

- Center for Accommodations and Support Services https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/
- Student Success Helpdesk https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-helpdesk.html
- Miner Learning Center https://www.utep.edu/mlc/
- University Writing Center https://www.utep.edu/uwc/
- Counseling and Psychological Services https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/
Students are encouraged to speak with professionals from UTEP's Counseling and Psychological Services on a walk-in basis from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in Union Building West, Room 202. In addition, the Miners Talk Crisis Line at 915-747-5302 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- UTEP Title IX (Anti-Sexual Harassment and Anti-Sexual Violence) Office: https://www.utep.edu/titleix/sb-212.html