

DANCES OF MEXICO AND SPAIN

Course: CHIC 3346 and DANC 3350

Spring 2020

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Melpignano

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Class meets: Tuesday, 1:30-2:50 pm in Liberal Arts Building, 211
Thursday, 1:30-2:50 pm in Magoffin Auditorium

Office Hours: Tuesday 10.30-11.30 AM in Fox Fine Arts Center – Music M211
or by appointment

Always sign-up for a time slot at <https://drmelissamelpignano.youcanbook.me>

Course Description

This course explores dances associated to the heritage and present of Mexico and Spain, two countries connected by historical, cultural, and political ties that also reverberate in the border area of El Paso-Ciudad Juárez. What can we learn about these both generative and controversial ties through dance practice and dance discourses? How can dance help us interrogate our identity as people coming from and/or living in a Hispanic/Latinx context? How can dance help us make sense of the different ways Mexico and Spain impacted each other?

The course is divided in two weekly sessions. Tuesdays are dedicated to lectures and in-class discussions on assigned readings, videos, and other materials. On Thursdays, students will participate in dance workshops taught by guest instructors Nina Gomez, artistic director of Danzas Españolas, and Arturo Guerrero, director of Ballet Folklórico of El Paso. No previous dance experience or knowledge are required. Classes are conceived for all kinds of abilities. Students will not be graded on the basis of dance mastery but on commitment and engagement.

Course Objectives

- To contextualize and discuss about the historical and cultural connections between the embodied cultures of Mexico and Spain.
- To recognize salient elements in a dance through choreographic analysis and references to practices we explore in class.
- To grasp the cultural, historical, political, social relevance of dance in the context of Mexico and Spain
- To recognize and perform basic dance steps and patterns associated with various dance practices in Mexico and Spain

Required Materials

- All readings, videos and other materials for this course will be posted on the course Blackboard site.
- Students will need hard-soled shoes with a small heel in order to create the sounds that are part of the footwork in these dance styles. Nothing fancy required. Just get something that makes some noise.

Mandatory Performances (2 total)

- *American College Dance Association (ACDA) conference event, An evening with guest artists:* Guest artists Lux Boreal, a dynamic Tijuana-based contemporary dance company known for complex and stunning dances, and solo artist Gesel Mason, creator of BOUNDARIES: Dancing the Visions of Contemporary Black Choreographers.

Sunday, March 15, 5 PM

Fox Fine Arts Center, Wise Family Theatre

\$20

- *Into the Beautiful North*

April 24 through May 3 (check the

Fox Fine Arts Center, Wise Family Theatre

\$12 UTEP Students

→ Get tickets in person at the UTEP Department of Theatre and Dance Box Office, 2nd floor, Fox Fine Arts.

Grading

- In-class discussions, participation, commitment, and work ethic **20**

You are expected to come to class on time and prepared with the assigned materials already explored. Being tardy will count against your attendance and participation grade (see the policy below).

- Choreographic analysis of one of the mandatory performances (due max. the week after the performance) **10**

A 2-page, double spaced, font Times New Roman, size 12 paper in which you offer an analysis of a performance that includes movement and choreographic descriptions, intertwined with a critical reflection based on the theoretical issues analyzed in class and in the assigned materials.

Option 1:

- Mid-term reflection on Flamenco practice* (due in hardcopy in class on Tuesday, March 10) **35**

- End-of-the-semester reflection on Folklorico practice* (due in hardcopy in class on Thursday, May 7) **35**

*4-page, double-spaced, font Times New Roman, size 12 paper in which you offer a critical reflection on your practical experience of dancing in the Thursday classes, informed by the readings, and by the discourses explored in the Tuesday lectures.

or Option 2:

- Mid-term outline of Final research paper (due in hardcopy in class on Tuesday, March 10) **20**
The outline is a 1-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.

- Final research paper on a topic of choice related to the class (and discussed with the instructor) (due in hardcopy in class on Thursday, May 7) **50**

A 7-page, double spaced, font Times New Roman, size 12 paper in which you offer an original analysis of a dance topic of choice through dance studies methods and through a deep and provoking engagement with pertinent theories explored during the course. The paper will be evaluated according to: your evident understanding of and ability to use choreographic analysis; your ability to conduct research, using the theories, approaches, and ideas engaged in class; your ability to propose an original argument strongly supported by dance analysis and theories.

→ For all papers, citations need to follow the Chicago Manual of Style 17th ed. (see <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>).

A = evidence of original thought; a clear and compelling argument that is well articulated; critical use of appropriate source materials; use of a range of source materials; vivid movement description; impeccable writing style and mechanics; good flow and organization; proper citation protocols.

B= evidence of independent thought; presence of a clear argument; use of a range of good source materials; good movement description; good writing style and mechanics; adequate organization and flow; proper citation protocols.

C = largely descriptive; use of adequate sources; acceptable writing style, mechanics, and citation protocols.

D = convoluted writing and mechanics; some misunderstanding of information; adequate writing style and citation protocols.

F = extremely convoluted writing characterized by errors, incorrect descriptions, and/or plagiarism.

GRADING SCALE

A = 90 +

B = 80 – 89

C = 70 – 79

D = 65 – 69

F = < 65

University and Departmental Policies

Subject Matter. The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable seeing on stage. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects that may trigger specific emotions, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. As I will respect your individual's rights to choose what shows you want to see, I expect all our discussions—including any that may occur outside of class—to be conducted in a respectful and professional matter.

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

Academic Dishonesty. 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](#).

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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 disabilities. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, 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.

ABSENCE/LATENESS/PARTICIPATION POLICY. In a course that meets twice a week, a student is allowed a maximum of 4 absences in an entire semester, 2 of which require no justification and result in no penalty. A student may use these absences based on personal necessity. The 3rd and 4th absences will result in a drop of ½ letter each in the student’s overall grade. At the 5th absence, regardless of the student’s current course standing or grade, the student automatically fails the course. Three tardies (over 10 minutes late) count as one absence.

Exceptions:

- In the event of international bridge closures, exceptions may be made and make-up course work assigned.
- In case of an injury or extended illness, it is the student's responsibility to meet with his or her instructor to discuss possible solutions for course continuation or to consider dropping the class.
- In the event of highly unusual or extenuating circumstances, a student may petition the course instructor and department chair for permission to continue in a course.

See also the UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies at

<http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academic-regulations/curriculum-and-classroom-policies/>.

Audio-visual recordings. The use of mobile phones and other electronic devices is strongly discouraged in class, unless required by the instructor for pedagogical purposes. Audio and visual recordings (videos or pictures) must be authorized by the instructor and by the subjects involved in the audio-visuals. To store, post, or share by any means and/or for personal use or public consumption audio and visual products without explicit authorization by the subjects involved is illegal. Make sure to ask for permission in case.

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.

- Equal Opportunity Office, Anti-Sexual Harassment and Anti-Sexual Violence Sources <https://www.utep.edu/eoaa/resolving-complaints/sexual-harassment-guide.html>

DANCES OF MEXICO AND SPAIN

COURSE CALENDAR

SPRING 2020
Dr. Melissa Melpignano

WEEK 1

INTRODUCTION

TUE, JAN 21

CLASS TOPIC(S)

Introductions. Intro to the course and syllabus. Introduction to dance analysis.

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

YouTube excerpts from various social dances practiced in Mexico, Spain, and other centers of Latinidad, and their theatricalizations.

CITED AUTHORS/TEXTS

Susan Foster

THUR, JAN 23

First class with flamenco instructor Nina Gomez in Magoffin Auditorium.

WEEK 2

INTRO TO DANCE IN RELATION TO POLITICS

TUE, JAN 28

READING DUE

Randy Martin, "Introduction" (excerpts), from *Critical Moves: Dance Studies in Theory and Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- how to approach historical, political, social discourses through dance and choreography
- important terminology for our class: Hispanic / Latin@ / Latinx / Chican@ / Mexican-American

CITED AUTHORS/TEXTS

Randy Martin, Susan Foster, Marta Savigliano

THUR, JAN 29

Flamenco class with instructor Nina Gomez in Magoffin Auditorium

WEEK 3

FLAMENCO: WHOSE STRUGGLE?

TUE, FEB 4

READING DUE

- Explore the website <http://www.nifnm.org/mission>
- Watch this clip from the documentary *Sevillanas* (1992) by Spanish director Carlos Saura <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OgXSQbtBNc> (Which performance aspects are cultivated in this video?)

ASSIGNMENT DUE

Indicate the ideas of flamenco transmitted through the visual and textual materials of the National Institute of Flamenco (Albuquerque, NM)

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- Flamenco as a globally migrating dance form
- The cultivation of flamenco among Latinx and Hispanic communities in the U.S.

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

Excerpts from the documentary *Sevillanas* by Carlos Saura

THUR, FEB 6

Flamenco class with instructor Nina Gomez in Magoffin Auditorium

WEEK 4

FLAMENCO: WHOSE DANCE?

TUE, FEB 11

ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR THURSDAY

Post on the Discussion Board on Blackboard, Week 4 your thoughts on the documentary *Gurumbé: Canciones de tu memoria negra* by Miguel Ángel Rosales, seen in class on Tuesday. Has this documentary changed your perspective on flamenco? Do you think the information in the film can inform your flamenco practice?

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- The African roots of flamenco and flamenco as an African diasporic dance form
- Positioning flamenco in relation to colonialism and slavery

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

Documentary *Gurumbé: Canciones de tu memoria negra* by Miguel Ángel Rosales

CITED AUTHORS/TEXTS

Frantz Fanon, Anita González

THUR, FEB 13

Flamenco class with instructor Nina Gomez in Magoffin Auditorium

WEEK 5

AFRO-MEXICO AND DANCE TRAJECTORIES

TUE, FEB 18

READING DUE

Anita González, "Framing African Performance in Mexico," from *Afro-Mexico: Dancing Between Myth and Reality* (University of Texas Press: 2010).

ASSIGNMENT DUE

One clear question about the reading and one conversation topic that connects this week's reading to last week's documentary.

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- overlooked histories that inform the development of dance across the transnational networks that connect Mexico and Spain
- the influence of the African diaspora on performance in Mexico

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

Historical photographs of African performance in Mexico

CITED AUTHORS/TEXTS

Anita González, Marta Savigliano, Melissa Blanco Borelli, Sabrina Strings

THUR, FEB 20

Flamenco class with instructor Nina Gomez in Magoffin Auditorium

WEEK 6

DANCE AND INDIGENEITY IN MEXICO

TUE, FEB 25

READING DUE

Elisa Diana Huerta, “Embodied Recuperations: Performance, Indigeneity, and *Danza Azteca*.” From *Dancing Across Borders: Danzas y Bailes Mexicanos*, edited by Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Norma E. Cantù, and Brenda M. Romero (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- continuing the exploration of indigenous influences in the shaping of dance in Mexico
- Reminder about Midterm and Q&A

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

Danza Azteca during las Fiestas Patronales de San Lorenzo in Cd. Juárez, 2018:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tX4g9Oymb8>

Teatricalization of the Danza Azteca by El Sol Dance Company: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhTZ50L3Y0I>

CITED AUTHORS/TEXTS

Diana Taylor, Gertrude Kurath, Samuel Martí, Ellie Guerrero

Peter J. García, “*Bailando para San Lorenzo: Nuevo Mexicano* Popular Traditional Musics, Ritual Contexts, and Dancing during Bernalillo Fiesta Time,” from *Dancing Across Borders: Danzas y Bailes Mexicanos*, edited by Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Norma E. Cantù, and Brenda M. Romero (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

THUR, FEB 27

Flamenco class with instructor Nina Gomez in Magoffin Auditorium

WEEK 7

SHAPING A MEXICAN NATIONAL BODY

TUE, MARCH 3

READING DUE

Ellie Guerrero, "1920s: The Nation Body," from *Dance and the Arts in Mexico, 1920s-1950s: The Cosmic Generation* (Palgrave Macmillan)

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- Shaping the Mexican nation-state through dance
- Dance, orientalism, and exoticism
- The issue of dance genres and their role, political value, and historical legacy in state-making process
- Check-in on Midterm projects

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

- Rare film of Mexico in the 1920's with Mexican dancers performing the Jarabe Tapatio:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0pZN9umeiU>
- Analysis of photographic materials and footages from Anna Pavlova's *Fantasia Mexicana*

CITED AUTHORS/TEXTS

Anita González, Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, bell hooks

THUR, MARCH 5

Last flamenco class with Nina Gomez

DR. MELPIGNANO'S LECTURE "WILLIAM FORSYTHE AND SOCIAL CHOREOGRAPHY"

FIRDAY, MARCH 6, FOX FINE ARTS A452 12-1 PM

Attend for extra credit!

WEEK 8

CHOREOGRAPHING MODERN MEXICO THROUGH WESTERNIZATION AND WHITENESS

TUE, MARCH 10

READING DUE

Jose Reynoso, "Choreographing Modern Mexico: Anna Pavlova in Mexico City (1919)," from *Modernist Cultures* 9.1 (2014): 80–98.

ASSIGNMENT DUE

MID-TERM REFLECTION PAPER ON FLAMENCO (if you have chosen the 2 reflections option) OR **OUTLINE OF FINAL PAPER** (if you have chosen the final research paper option)

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- Framing the historical figure of Anna Pavlova from a global perspective
- Mexico's *mestizo* modernity and European political and aesthetic values

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

- original footages of Pavlova from the 1920s performing solos: <https://youtu.be/8bRwb5DGekg>
- videos of *jarabe tapatio* danced on ballet point shoes

THUR, MARCH 12 **NO CLASS** – AMERICAN COLLEGE DANCE CONFERENCE BEGINS
(ORGANIZED BY THE UTEP DEPT. OF THEATRE AND DANCE)

SPRING BREAK!

MARCH 15-22

WEEK 9

FOLKLÓRICO AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

TUE, MARCH 24

READING DUE

Olga Nájera-Ramírez, "Staging Authenticity: Theorizing the Development of Mexican *Folklórico* Dance," from *Dance and the Arts in Mexico, 1920s-1950s: The Cosmic Generation* (Palgrave Macmillan)

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- Experiencing folklórico—oral histories, ethnographies, and self-ethnographies
- Discussion on midterm projects

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

Ballet Folklórico of El Paso de Arturo Guerrero

THUR, MARCH 26

First folklórico class with instructor Arturo Guerrero in Magoffin Auditorium.

LATINX FESTIVAL! UTEP DEPT. OF THEATRE AND DANCE, FOX FINE ARTS

MARCH 27-29

Attend for extra credit!

WEEK 10

FOLKLÓRICO AS A NATIONAL SYMBOL

TUE, MARCH 31

READING DUE

Sidney Hutchinson, "The Ballet Folklórico de México and the Construction of the Mexican Nation through Dance," from *Dance and the Arts in Mexico, 1920s-1950s: The Cosmic Generation* (Palgrave Macmillan)

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- folklórico as national symbol vs social practice
- what does folklórico practice educate in?

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

Ballet Folklórico de México

THUR, APRIL 2

Folklórico class with instructor Arturo Guerrero in Magoffin Auditorium

DANCE DRAMATURG IN RESIDENCY AT DEPT. OF THEATRE AND DANCE

WORKSHOPS, LECTURES, PERFORMANCES APRIL 1-4 (FLYER WILL CIRCULATE)

Attend for extra credit!

WEEK 11

EXPORTING MEXICANIDAD

TUE, APRIL 7

READING DUE

Russel Rodríguez, “Folklorico in the United States: Cultural Preservation and Disillusion,” from *Dance and the Arts in Mexico, 1920s-1950s: The Cosmic Generation* (Palgrave Macmillan)

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- The effects of the transnational circulation of a national dance form
- Folklorico and the shaping of Latinx and Mexican American communities in the U.S.

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

Video excerpts from U.S.-based folklorico groups

THUR, APRIL 9

Folklorico class with instructor Arturo Guerrero in Magoffin Auditorium

WEEK 12

DANCING (AT) THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

TUE, APRIL 14

READING DUE

Brenda M. Romero, "The *Matachines Danza* as Intercultural Discourse," from *Dance and the Arts in Mexico, 1920s-1950s: The Cosmic Generation* (Palgrave Macmillan)

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- theoretical perspectives on interculturalism
- the status of dance scholarship on the U.S.-Mexico border
- performing at the U.S.-Mexico border: dance and performance artists

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

- Matachines performance in El Paso
- Laura Rodríguez, El Pasoan dance artist's work <https://lrod.space/>

CITED AUTHORS/TEXTS

Rustom Bharucha, Guillermo Gómez-Peña

THUR, APRIL 16

Folklórico class with instructor Arturo Guerrero in Magoffin Auditorium

WEEK 13

DANCE AND QUINCEAÑERAS

TUE, APRIL 21

ASSIGNMENT DUE

- Find movies or TV shows that represent
- Bring memorabilia of experiences in quinceañeras

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- sharing oral histories/ethnographies of personal experiences in quinceañeras and the role assigned to dance
- reflecting on personal experiences through a historical and cultural lens
- personal reflection vs pop culture reflection: which values does the quinceañera embody?

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

- amateur videos of quinceañeras
- filmic representations of quinceañeras

CITED AUTHORS/TEXTS

Karen Mary Davalos, “‘La Quinceañera’: Making Gender and Ethnic Identities,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2/3, Gender, Nations, and Nationalisms (1996), pp. 101-127.

THUR, APRIL 23

Folklorico class with instructor Arturo Guerrero in Magoffin Auditorium

WEEK 14

EMBODYING AND PERFORMING MEXICAN COLLECTIVE MEMORY THROUGH POP CULTURE

TUE, APRIL 28

READING DUE

- from Deborah Perédez, *Selenidad: Selena, Latinos, and the Performance of Memory* (Duke University Press, 2009)
- from Sarah Misemer, *Secular Saints: Performing Frida Kahlo, Carlos Gardel, Eva Perón, and Selena*

ASSIGNMENT DUE

Find your favorite Selena clip in which movement is prominent

CLASS TOPIC(S)

- Activity: Find pictures or videos of popular figures that in your opinion symbolize Latinidad, Mexicanidad, American-Mexicanidad
- The role of body and movement in Latinx, Hispanic, and Mexican iconicity

IN-CLASS AUDIO-VISUALS

based on the students' selections

THUR, APRIL 30

Folklórico class with instructor Arturo Guerrero in Magoffin Auditorium

WEEK 15

TUE, MAY 5

Rehearsal with instructors Nina Gomez and Arturo Guerrero

THUR, MAY 7

FINAL DUE

Option 1: reflection on folklórico practice or Option 2: final research paper

Final performance/showing/*fiesta* of flamenco and folklórico practices with Nina Gomez and Arturo Guerrero