

# Ballet: A history

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION & REQUIREMENTS

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**THEA 166, *Ballet: A history*** presents a critical and historical overview of ballet as a form of ethnic dance. By ethnic dance, we mean to convey the idea that all forms of dance reflect the cultural traditions within which they developed. The course overview is both chronological and critical-artistic, fleshing out the technical, sociological, and aesthetic evolution of the form from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to present day.

This course will chart a *ballet diaspora* as Russian émigrés moved through Europe to the Americas and Asia throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. These influential choreographers, dancers, impresarios, and teachers brought with them the Imperial Russian ballet technique, classical dance repertoire, and a training system devised by the Russian dancer and pedagogue Agrippina Vagonova (1879—1951). Contrary to popular belief, however, ballet in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the peoples who dance ballet did not develop into a monolithic whole. While the embodiment of ballet technique is instantly recognizable, ethnicity and race intersected with other socially and historically constructed categories—such as gender, class, and sexual orientation—to shape unique varieties of *ballet habitus* and identity formation in individuals and institutions in countries as geographically and ideologically diverse as China, Cuba, and the United States.

This course aims to cultivate a culturally and historically informed understanding of the art form of ballet. Much like popular dances today, such as hip-hop or ballroom dance, ballet has evolved as an ethnic dance with global reach. Special attention will be paid to the implications for how we view race/ethnicity in contemporary dance as it is practiced today. By the end of the course, students should be able to

1. identify the origins and development of ballet, from courtly social dances of the European Renaissance to 20<sup>th</sup> Century concert dance;
2. recognize and analyze ballet works within the general culture and historical period that produced them, from Europe to Americas and Asia;
3. formulate personal research questions that expand their knowledge of ballet as ethnic dance worldwide, conducting independent research into one contemporary ballet choreographer;
4. appreciate a wide variety of approaches, cultures, and styles in the development of ballet in performing arts histories and contemporary practices.

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**Outline.** The course reviews and critically examines major developments in the history of ballet:

- 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> C: Origins
- 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> C: Romantic to Classical Ballet
- 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> C: Modern & Contemporary Ballet

**Structure.** Lectures and studio work, discussion of readings, dance viewings, in-class quizzes and exams.

**Meeting times.** The class meets two times weekly 1-4:30 PM in J102 and A104 at the Theater Arts Center.

**Readings.** Jennifer Homans' *Apollo's Angels: A history of ballet* is the required text. Two additional readings on ballet in Cuba and China are available online at eCommons website.

**Assignments.** Satisfactory completion of a response paper, take home midterm exam, research journal, studio performance, oral presentation & final wiki project.

**Quizzes.** Five (5) times during the session, you will be given an unannounced quiz on the readings.

**Grading.** Credit will depend upon completion of

- Attendance and participation (10%)
- Scores on quizzes (15%)
- Journal entries (15%)
- Response Paper (5%)
- Midterm Exam (20%)
- Studio Performance (15%)
- Oral presentation & final wiki project (20%)

## **PARTICIPATION**

THEA 166 is primarily about *engaged, active participation*.

Mindful reading, wakeful attention. Complete the readings before class and come prepared to share your opinions, observations, and questions. In class, we will cover material that enhances but does not duplicate the course reading. Attendance and note taking are essential. Class will include lecture and discussion. Prepare to question, opine and defend your ideas!

Attendance. Class attendance is required except in the case of an excused absence communicated to the instructor by email, whenever possible in advance of the class meeting. Policy permits one (1) absences. For each unexcused absence after two, you will be docked two (2) points from your final grade. After two (2) unexcused absences, I reserve the right to assign a failing grade.

*Attending but not participating*. I expect everyone to participate in the ballet technique section. If you are well enough to attend but cannot participate (due to injury or non-infectious illness), please notify me before class. You may receive attendance credit by watching the full class and submitting a descriptive report of the proceedings. This “observation” paper should address what you discovered by watching class and how you will apply these discoveries to your work.

*Dress*. Leotard and tights are preferred; at minimum, you must dress in a way that does not hinder your movement or my ability to see clearly your body alignment. You are expected to dance with ballet slippers. You may need to adjust your hair so that you can lie comfortably on your back. Remove all wrist and neck jewelry. You may bring water to class, but it must be in a plastic bottle with cap. You may not chew gum or eat in class. Mute your cell phone:)

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Each student must complete all of the following assignments in order to pass the course.

Did You Read This Yet? There will be five (5) unannounced DYRTY quizzes. These quizzes will focus on the readings on the day for which the readings are assigned. They are intended to help you stay current on the reading and insure the quality of discussion. Quizzes can only be made up in the event of an excused absence. *Only required reading will be the subject of quizzes*.

Journal entries. There are three (3) required journal entries. Throughout the term, you will assemble and analyze materials to develop a portrait of a contemporary ballet choreographer. By focusing on the topics and concepts covered in class, you will seek to reveal something important about this creative artist’s work and socio-cultural and historical influences. The writing should total six to eight (6-8) pages. The journal will form the basis for the final Wiki project.

Response Paper. You are required to complete one short response to a film (500 words printed, 2 double-spaced pages).

*Posting journal entries and essays*. I receive, edit, and comment on your journal entries and essay as digital files, using Microsoft Word’s Track Changes®. You must upload your exams as a “.doc” or “.docx” file to your THEA 166 eCommons Dropbox by the due dates. I return and show my comments also via the Dropbox. NOTE: If you use another e.g. open source, word processing package, use the “File-Save As…” option to save the file as Macintosh Word .doc or .docx file. Please label your written work as follows:

- a. Journal entries: TA166.YOURLASTNAME.journal1(or 2, 3).doc (OR .docx OR .pdf)
- b. Essay: TA166.YOURLASTNAME.essay.doc (OR .docx OR, .pdf)

Midterm Exam. Questions will be distributed for this take home midterm examination. Essays will be graded and assessed based on the criteria described under “Assessment” below.

Studio Component. A studio component will provide an embodied basis for understanding the principles and historical evolution of ballet. You will be required to learn and perform a short combination or excerpt from a historically significant ballet.

Oral Presentation. The culmination of your independent research will be an in-class presentation.

Final Wiki project. Each student will develop a visual presentation in the form of a wiki, based upon the material collected for the research journal. Collective projects are an option but must be approved by instructor. This project comprises the final examination.

## **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

Students are assessed continuously on their engagement with the material and participation in class. All students are expected to participate verbally in class. You will be assessed throughout the quarter based on the scale below. These scores will be tabulated to determine the course participation grade based on the percentage grading scale described above:

- 2 alert and contributing significantly and constructively to class discussion
- 1 present with minimal or no oral contributions
- 0 absent

The student who meets all course requirements should expect to receive a grade appropriate to her/his level of mastery of content (conceptual and physical) and language arts skill. *Late assignments may be accepted up to one day after the due date.*

Standard grading scale: 90-100%=A; 80-89%=B; 70-79%=C; 60-69%=D; below 60%=F.

For written work, the “A” student:

1. Demonstrates maturity and originality of thought reflected by the ability to describe, analyze/synthesize, interpret and evaluate the issue under question;
2. Begins with a clearly stated thesis (“topic sentences” of the first paragraph) and sustains the development of a point or idea over the length of the assignment;
3. Includes examples drawn from lectures, readings (and other relevant sources) to support arguments;
4. Insures work is clearly written, proofread and spell-checked;
5. Makes conventional use of the grammar, syntax and spelling of Standard English, with attention to capitalization and punctuation.

The “B” student’s written work shows proficiency in four of the above criteria.

The “C” student’s written work shows proficiency in three of the above criteria.

The “D” student’s written work shows proficiency in two of the above criteria.

The “F” student’s written work fails to fulfill the requirements of the course regardless of skill.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate Catalog that pertain to academic integrity. Please see the following website for a complete discussion of your responsibilities and rights:

<http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic-integrity/>

## INJURIES AND HEALTH ISSUES: NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

Students are advised not to participate in class with an illness or injury. You must inform me of any recent injury or health issues that may affect the studio component of your class work. If you will miss two or more ballet technique classes due to an injury or illness, you must provide a written statement that details your personal plan for treatment (including a physician's report), and a timeline for your return to full class participation. Your grade may be affected depending on the nature and extent of illness or injury.

## ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS AND RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please get an Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and submit it to me in person outside of class (e.g., after class or during my office hours) within the first week of the Summer Session. Contact the DRC at 831-459-2089 (voice), 831-459-4806 (TTY), or <http://drc.ucsc.edu/> for more information. Religious beliefs will be accommodated according to University policy as long as student notifies instructor prior to the holiday date.

## SCHEDULE

Meeting	Topic	Assignments to be completed
<i>Week 1</i>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Origins</b>	
June 24	<i>Ballet de cour</i>	Practice: n/a Read: Homan, <i>Apollo's Angels (AA)</i> Chapter 1 View: <i>Una Stravaganza dei Medici, Intermedi</i> (1589) and <i>Ballerina</i> (2006) Assignment: <b>Response paper distributed</b>
June 26	Body basics <i>Ballet d'action</i>	Practice: body training, floor barre Read: <i>AA</i> Chapters 2-3 View: Lully, <i>Atys</i> ; Paré, <i>Entrée d'Apollon</i> ; Blow, <i>Venus &amp; Adonis</i> ; Bayle, <i>Folies d'Espagne</i> ; Don Juan; <i>La Fille mal gardée</i> Assignment: <b>Response paper due</b>
		<b>*Research Journal Entry 1 due on Sunday, June 29</b>
<i>Week 2</i>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> Century: Golden Age</b>	
July 1	Ballet barre <i>Romantic ballet</i>	Practice: ballet vocabulary, standing at barre Read: <i>AA</i> Chapters 4-5 (6) View: Royal Danish Ballet; <i>La Sylphide</i> ; <i>Giselle</i> Assignment: n/a
July 3	Ballet adagio <i>Classical ballet</i>	Practice: barre, standing slow movement in center Read: <i>AA</i> Chapter 7 View: Petipa, <i>Swan Lake</i> ; <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> Assignment:
		<b>*Research Journal Entry 2 due on Sunday, July 6</b>

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments to be completed</b>
<b>Week 3</b>		
<b>20<sup>th</sup> Century: Migration West</b>		
July 8	Ballet petite allegro <i>Ballet Russes</i>	Practice: small fast movement in center Read: <i>AA</i> Chapters 8-9 (10) View: Fokine, <i>Dying Swan</i> , <i>Les Sylphides</i> Assignment: <b>Take home midterm distributed</b>
July 10	Ballet allegro <i>Ballet in America</i>	Practice: large movement in center Read: <i>AA</i> Chapter 11 View: Balanchine, <i>Apollo</i> , <i>Serenade</i> ; Dance Theater of Harlem, <i>Creole Giselle</i> Assignment:  <b>*Research Journal Entry 3 due on Sunday, July 13</b>
<b>Week 4</b>		
<b>20<sup>th</sup> Century: Migrations South and East</b>		
July 15	Ballet virtuosity <i>Ballet in Cuba</i>	Practice: longer ballet sequences Read: <i>AA</i> Chapter 12; Tome, “Giselle in a Cuban accent” View: <i>The Rising Star of Cuban Ballet</i> Assignment: <b>Take home midterm due</b>
July 17	Ballet variation <i>Ballet in China</i>	Practice: full ballet combination Read: Zheng Yangwen, “From Swan Lake to Red Girl’s Regiment: ballet’s sinicisation”; View: <i>Red Girl’s Regiment</i> Assignment: n/a
<b>Week 5</b>		
<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century: Contemporary Ballet Today</b>		
July 22	Ballet performance	Practice: n/a Read: <i>AA</i> Epilogue View: <i>First Position</i> (2011) Assignment: <b>Final studio performance in class</b>
July 24	<i>Ballet Internationalism</i>	Practice: n/a Read: n/a View: n/a Assignment: <b>Oral Presentation due in class</b>  <b>*Final Wiki Research Project due on Friday, July 25</b>

## REQUIRED TEXT

Homans, J. (2013). *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet*. New York: Granta Books.

## REQUIRED READING

Tome, L. (2007). Giselle in a Cuban accent. In M. Kant (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet* (pp. 263-271). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Yangwen, Z. (2007). From Swan Lake to Red Girl's Regiment: ballet's sinicisation. In M. Kant (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet* (pp. 256-262). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

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Foster, S. L. (1986). *Reading dancing: Bodies and subjects in contemporary American dance*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Foster, S. L. (Ed.). (1996). *Corporealities: Dancing knowledge, culture and power*. New York: Routledge.

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- American Ballet Theatre in San Francisco [videorecording] / presented by the National Video Corporation; producer, Robin Scott. Framingham, MA: Home Vision, 1985.
- An Evening with the Royal Ballet [videorecording] / produced by Anthony Havelock-Allan. W. Long Branch, NJ : Kultur, c1963.
- Antony Tudor [videorecording] / a film by Viola Aberlé, Gerd Anderson ; producer, Måns Reuterswård. Pennington, NJ : Dance Horizons Video, 1992, c1985.
- Balanchine [videorecording] : the father of American ballet / produced by Judy Kinberg ; directed by Merrill Brockway ; written by Holly Brubach ; a production of Thirteen/WNET New York in association with Société Radio-Canada & British Broadcasting Corporation. West Long Branch, NJ : Kultur, [2004], c1984.
- [The] Balanchine celebration. Part one [videorecording] / a production of Thirteen/WNET in association with New York City Ballet, NVC Arts, and NOS television ; written by Holly Brubach; directed by Matthew Diamond ; produced by Judy Kinberg. New York, NY : Nonsuch Records, c1996.
- [The] Ballerinas [videorecording] / directed by Beppe Menegatti and Tazio Tami ; produced by Joseph Wishy ; a Polivideo-TVE Production. W. Long Branch, N.J. : Kultur, c1987.
- Ballets Russes [videorecording] / a Geller/Goldfine production ; produced and directed by Dayna Goldfine & Dan Geller ; produced by Robert Hawk, Douglas Blair Turnbaugh ; written by Dan Geller. New York : Zeitgeist Films/Zeitgeist Video, c2006.
- Beyond 40 [videorecording] : The Australian Ballet 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala / The Australian Broadcasting Corporation and The Australian Ballet present ; direction, David McAllister, Adrian Burnett. Cambridgeshire, Eng. : Quantum Leap, c2002.
- Celestial dance [electronic resource] / by Kari Soveri. New York, NY : Filmmakers Library, 2006.

Cinderella [videorecording] : a ballet in three acts / based on the novel by Charles Perrault ; choreography, Rudolf Noureev ; music, Serguei Prokofiev ; Telmondis presents, Opéra national de Paris. Waldron, Heathfield, East Sussex, U.K : Opus Arte, c2008.

Creole Giselle [videorecording] / produced by Yanna Kroyt Brandt, Thomas Grimm ; directed by Thomas Grimm ; a co-production of A.M.E., Inc. W. Long Branch, NJ : Kultur, c1988.

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La Sylphide [videorecording] / Le Service de la Musique. Sea Bright, N.J. : Kultur Inc., 1982, c1971.

Le roi danse = the king dances / presented by Remstar Distribution directed by Gérard Corbiau ; Willowdale, Canada : Universal Studios Canada [distributor], c2000.

Les Sylphides (Chopiniana) [videorecording] : ballet in one act to the music of Frederic Chopin / Bolshoi Ballet. New York, N.Y. : V.I.E.W. Video, c1987.

Pavlova [videorecording] : a woman for all time / Frixos Constantine presents an Anglo-Soviet co-production by Poseidon Productions Ltd., England, Sovietfilm and Mosfilm, U.S.S.R ; written and directed by Emil Lotianou ; Western version supervised by Michael Powell. West Long Branch, N.J. : Kultur, [2000?]

Picasso and dance [videorecording] / Paris Opera Ballet. West Long Beach, NJ : Kultur International Films, [2005]

Reflections of a dancer [videorecording] : Alexandra Danilova, prima ballerina assoluta. New York, N.Y. : Seahorse Films, 1981.

Romeo and Juliet [videorecording] : ballet in three acts / [presented by] Joseph E. Levine ; a Paul Czinner production for Poetic Films Limited in association with Royal Opera House Covent Garden Limited ; produced and directed by Paul Czinner ; an Embassy Pictures release. W. Long Branch, N.J. : Kultur, [1988?], c1966.

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Spectre of the rose [videorecording] / co-producer-director, Lee Garmes ; produced by Ben Hecht. Los Angeles : Republic Pictures Home Video, 1989.

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