

Semester II of 2019-20

TAPS 0330: Mande Dance, Music and Culture

Identity and the Lived Philosophy of Yeredon: Know Thyself

Jiridon so don yeredon de nyogon te. N'i filil' I yerema I laban ko b'i kono'nogan *While it is excellent to know how to ride a horse, wonderful to know how to swim, nothing is better than to know thyself.*

Required Meeting Times:

Core Class: M-W-F 1-2:50pm

Movement Labs:

#1. TU @ 12-12:50 pm

#2. W @ 12-12:50 pm

#3. F @ 12-12:50 pm

#4. TH @ 4-4:50 pm

Primary Instructor:

[Michelle Bach-Coulibaly@brown.edu](mailto:Michelle.Bach-Coulibaly@brown.edu) (Transcultured Interpreter)

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Cultural Consultants: (Enculturated Practitioners)

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Teaching Assistants:

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[Tessa Palischo@brown.edu](mailto:Tessa.Palisco@brown.edu)

Guest Speakers. Great Conversations.

1/24: **Garza**: Contextualizing the Legacy of Mande/Yeredon

1/27: **Garza**: Establishing Community Norms/ Theatre of the Oppressed

1/29: **Jason**: History, Legacy, and Contexts

2/19: **Jason**: Positionality and Personal Exploration.

2/26: **Jason**: Decolonization, Expansion, and the Next Steps

3/4: **Jason**: Privilege, Marginalization, Intersectionality, and Appropriation.

This course is mandatory S/NC:

70% Attendance, Participation, Application

20% Three-dance tests/ Final Mande Performance

10% Research Projects, Blog

CLASS STRUCTURE:

Mondays: Meditation and Yoga with MBC/guest artists
Anatomy, Embodiments, Dances, Songs and Rhythms taught with
Cultural Consultants Seydou and Moussa

Wednesdays: Great Conversations, Lectures, Discussions.

Community announcements, group work, quizzes on readings, films,
and family work

Fridays: Meditation and Yoga. Work Dances and Music with Malian
folklorists Seydou Coulibaly and Moussa Traore. Tests are on Fridays.

REQUIREMENTS

PARTICIPATION, RESPECT, COMPASSION and COMMUNICATION
are PRIMARY VALUES.

ATTENDANCE!!! NO more than three unexcused absences will be
allowed. After two, you will automatically receive a warning.
COMMUNICATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL MISSED CLASSES.
DO NOT BE LATE. If you are late three times, it equals a full absence.

THREE DANCE TESTS/ Final exam:

2/14: **Numudon.** Dance steps, rhythm, song. 5 formation changes

3/20: **Sukurubani (Yankadi)** Dance with song, rhythm, proverbs, 8
formations

5/1: **Sogonikun.** Dance, Rhythm, Song. Formations for each step.

5/9: Dress Rehearsal. 5-8pm. Ruth Simmons Quad

5/10: FINAL EXAM PERFORMANCE. 5-8pm Ashamu Dance Studio/Ruth
Simmons Quad. 3:30 call for 5pm performance.

OVERALL CONTENT: ASSESSMENT.

You will be learning three dances with accompanying songs, proverbs and
choreographic concepts. These dances represent different cultural groups
and geographic regions with their own movement identities, vocabularies,
musical traditions, dialects, folkloric histories and embodied expressions.

We will be working in various Somatic Studies to open channels of expression through focused breath work and attention to the energetic body. These dances are about openness, feeling and high energetic expression. By utilizing the seven Chakras we will explore seven basic human rights and how they manifest in the body, and outwardly into our everyday life.

This semester we are studying three life-cycle and celebratory dances from the Bougouni- Wasalu region and Maninka/Bamana people from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea.

You will be assessed on your ability to be present for all aspects of the coursework including the embodiments, the rhythmic structures, group work, and performative aspects of the material. Your ability to play the music with your body and to engage in a dialogue of call and response with the djembe ensemble will enhance your total expression out in space and time.

After we complete learning the series of steps, you will be tested on the complete dances, rhythm and songs with your *families* during class times. You will be assessed on your ability to:

1. Properly execute the steps and step order,
2. Dance through breaks, know the transitions between steps, Keep the integrity of the rhythmic pulse, “the song” and relationship between djoun djoun rhythm and completed weight shifts as down beats, lifted up beats, and listening to and connecting with the musicians, motif -structures, doubling and tripling the beat,
3. Know the form, style and stance of each step and how it responds to the overall dance with clear communication amongst the family as a whole and ability to stay together as one unit, supporting each other,
4. Express “Coolness” and balance at all times, “cool on the outside, hot on the inside” as a cultural value, with youthful vitality, energy, and endurance.
5. Originality and execution of family step. Improvisation is a valued aspect of each dance towards the creation of original steps or a “breakout step” invented from movement motifs already explored in the dances vocabulary. You must collaborate on choreography and context for each dance test, staging diverse geometric patterns that change with each break in the music. Each family will invent a final family step.

6. These tests will require that you meet outside of class times to organize concepts and spatial patterns for the dance. This helps you remember the order of steps, builds spatial awareness, kinesphere, and the power of being in a movement choir.
7. Assessment with written feedback and video replay of the tests will facilitate our understanding of the material.

BLOG/Family research

You are required, as a family, to keep an ongoing record of your work together throughout the semester in the form of a blog. Each student will post reflective and detailed accounts of the work we are doing in class with our guest artists, community partners and speakers. The blog should include personal and collective insights, with questions brought up in class. Include video clips, photographs, musical selections, historical and social engagement elements from each dance and cultural group, and responses to the readings, discussions and interviews with our master teachers. Have a fun and creative time with this. Your blog should be the cornerstone of your family presentation.

BLOG/podcasts DUE DATES:

March 4th: Keita/ Kouyate each present to class phase one of research projects:

Include Family Histories, Musical Artists, and Contemporary Artists: Photography, Cinema, Masquerade, Theatre, etc.

March 11th: Traore/Coulibaly present phase one of family research projects. Seydou and Moussa must be interviewed and filmed. They are here as primary sources.

April 8th: Keita/Kouyate family presentations in conjunction with Community partners from TAPA.

April 15th: Coulibaly/Traore family presentations with community partners from TAPA.

COURSE MISSION AND DESCRIPTION

The mission of this class is to inspire a more expansive world-view through the lens of Mande Dance, Music and Culture. As an Engaged Scholarship course, we will engage with masterful Malian artists and folklorist Seydou Coulibaly and Moussa Traore plus other artists at the RoC Festival.

Through this exchange we will deepen our understanding of the social values being ‘played out’ by our traditional teachers through cross examination, research, and by embodying the strict codes and important social values such as:

1. cultural cohesion over personal gain,
2. generosity over attachment,
3. respect for self and elders,
4. humility and flexibility in body and mind,
5. responsibility for your part of the whole,
6. and the outward manifestations of being a good citizen

By building a mindful, respectful relationship with a culture not our own, we seek to create an egalitarian exchange of art and ideas between the members of our on-campus class, local community members, and with alums who return to share their experiences during and after leaving Brown.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

By the end of the semester you should be able to clearly identify, understand, or perform:

1. Three specific Mande dance traditions with their accompanying musical and oral performance traditions.

These dances and rhythms will be taught as highly codified languages, with specific phrasing structures, spatial focus, qualitative affinities and alternating centers. Each movement and rhythm can be studied in respect to its slight variations of intonation, syncopation, and qualitative choice.

By learning selected songs, folktales and proverbs alongside Mande physical traditions, we hope to engage each student in an “embodied” approach to history, to assist you in understanding the high functionality of Mande Performance, and how these traditions resonate in our own cultural expressions.

2. Mande culture aesthetics as they apply to your overall awareness, kinesthetic intelligence, and respect for Mande pedagogy.

Notions of improvisation, spontaneity, “ephebisim”, and “getting down” will be taught in light of their relevance to preserving and maintaining cultural values. Form, Style and Stance are studied as symbols for social interaction and spiritual growth, as are the conventions of call-and-response, repetition, competition, improvisation, syncopation, multiple meter, "coolness", and balance. Dances will be studied as they correlate to concepts such as:

1. The transmission and maintenance of sentiments and traditions,
2. Theory of dance as a social safety valve,
3. The cathartic element or dances of derision,
4. Group exaltation and search for "the sacred",
5. Cultural and moral education,
6. Agents of healing,
7. Elements of competition: theories of boundary display, negotiation,
8. Dance as ritual drama and builder of "communitas",
9. Motivator in the work place,
10. The creative "other" (transplanted idea from the West)

Concepts of movement that will be explored to assist you in decoding the complexities of Mande movement:

3.

Biomechanical functions or bone actions: flexion, extension, rotation, circumduction, inversion, eversion, pronation, and supination.

Spatial equations: the planes, transverse, points in space, spatial directions, spiraling, the dimensions (one. two. three), carving/shaping, weight shifts: under-curving/chase, over-curving/glissade, near, medium and far reaching kinesphere.

Movement considerations: Adduction, abduction, sequential, simultaneous, swing, fall and recovery, arched, spoke-like, peripheral, gestural, postural, gathering and scattering, central initiation, multi-unit or single -unit torso, bi-lateral, uni-lateral, symbolism dance, work motifs, Contemporary Dance terms. REBOUND, DOUBLE and TRIPLE BEATS in the body, Up-beat dancing/the lift, leaps: preparation, thrust and recovery. The idea of **heating up** the step will be taught as we go to the drum. Notions of marking the beat, maintaining one’s balance, displaying one’s coolness: “hot on the inside and cool on the outside”, are taught as linkages to cultural tenets. We will consider how the energetic flow, weight centers, spatial focus, temporal considerations, and the relationship between form and function.

Class Schedule of Events

WEEK ONE: 1/22-24

Introductions.

Film: PP, *Mande Is*. Bloodline project in Dialakoroba

Syllabus discussion. Application/survey questions.

Dance: Numudon

1/24: Guest artist: Matthew Garza facilitates Mande/Yeredon Legacy

Discussion. Chakra #1 introduced.

WEEK TWO: 1/27-1/31

Embodiments: Chakra #1: Physical Identity: The Right to be Here, to move boldly in space, to exist and belong to a supportive group, to have my needs met.

1/27: (Garza) Community Norms discussion.

Footage: Bougoni Numu ceremonies, blacksmith's at work

Dance Numudon.

1/29: Jason: History, Legacy, and Contexts.

1/31: Drummers arrive at 2pm.

Film: FOLI, clips of Numudon

WEEK THREE: 2/3-7

Movement Labs Begin: TWF 12noon-12: 50, TH 4-4:50

Embodiments: Chakra #2: Emotional Identity; The Right to Feel, the Right to Want.

2/3: Readings Due: *Mande Blacksmiths*: Preface and Chapter One.

2/5: Discuss the readings, Mande maps.

2/7: Numudon song with Seydou. Song lyrics on-line.

WEEK FOUR: 2/10-14

Embodiments: Chakra #2

2/10: Numudon song, proverb, rhythm, final steps

2/12: Test Preparation.

2/14: Numudon Test.

WEEK FIVE: Fall Break : 2/19-21

2/19: Jason: Great Conversations. Sukurubani film/steps.

Chakra #3: Right to Act. Right to be Free.

2/21: Sukurubani rhythm, dance.

WEEK SIX: 2/24-28

Chakra #3: Act and Freedom

2/24: Sukurubani song. Seydou teach.

2/26: Jason Great Conversations.

Readings Due: Farris Thompson, *An Aesthetic of the Cool, African Art in Motion*.

2/28: Sukurubani film, song, all steps with drummers.

WEEK SEVEN: 3/2-6

3/2: Chakra #4: Right to Love and Be Loved.

3/4: Jason Great Conversations. Keita/Kouyate: Phase One of family Presentations.

3/6: Sukurubani song, dance, and proverb.

WEEK EIGHT: 3/9-13

3/9: Sukurubani

3/11: Coulibaly/Traore Phase One of presentations.

3/13: Sukurubani song, dance and rhythm

WEEK NINE: 3/16-20

3/16: Final Steps of Sukurubani

3/18: TEST PREP

3/20: Sukurubani TEST

*****BREAK*****

WEEK TEN: 3/30-4/3: RoC 4/4

3/30: Sogonikun introduced

4/1: Readings DUE:

Imperto. *Sogonikun*. Show slides of photography and headpiece of Sogonikun dancer. Quiz on Sogonikun article

4/3: Sogonikun song, film and dance.

4/4: 3-7pm Rhythm of Change workshops.

WEEK ELEVEN: 4/6-10

4/6: Sogonikun dance, song and rhythm

4/8: TAPA in class with Kouyate/Keita: mask

4/10: Sogonikun dance, song, rhythm

WEEK TWELVE: 4/13-17

4/13: Sogonikun Dance, song, proverb

4/15: Coulibaly/Traore with TAPA: mask

4/17: Sogonikun Dance, song, rhythm

WEEK THIRTEEN: 4/20-23

4/20: Sogonikun

4/22: work on family step and presentations: masks, costumes, text etc.

4/24: Sogonikun

WEEK FOURTEEN: 4/27-May 1st

4/27: final steps

4/29: Test-Prep

5/1: Sogonikun TEST

WEEK FOURTEEN-FIFTEEN: 5/2-10th

SECTIONS ARE NOT MANDATORY but if you want to work during those times, the space is available.

5/2: Dance #1: 10-1pm and Dance #2: 1-4pm

5/3: Master Class with Jamal Jackson/Community Circle 10-1pm.

Dance #3: 7-10pm

5/4: 1pm-2: 50 pm RUN ALL DANCES with drummers

Dance#1 @ 6-9pm

5/5: Dance #2 @ 6-9pm

5/6: 1-2:50: Work on Family projects for final

5/7: Dance #3 @ 6-9pm

5/8: 1-2:50pm. Run all dances and Family Presentations in order of Program. (no drummers)

FINAL PREPARATION:

5/9 @ 5-8pm Dress Rehearsal: fully costumed run in order

5/10 @ 4pm call for 5pm Performance

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Yeredon Center in Mali.

<http://www.theafricareport.com/Society-and-Culture/mali-dancers-continue-to-take-brave-steps-after-islamists-depart.html>

