

TAPS 1370: New Works/World Traditions:
Contemporary Embodied Ecologies in the Mande Diaspora

Semester I of 2018-19

Primary Instructor:

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Cultural Consultants: (Enculturated Practitioners)

Seydou Coulibaly/ 401-588-2709

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Required Meeting Times: Total 202 hours

Core Class Meeting Times

T @ 6:00-10pm - TH 6-8- Sunday 3-7pm (130 hours)

EXTRA REHEARSALS: (38 hours total)

Saturday, October 13th @3-7pm

Saturday, December 8th @3-7pm

Family Weekend Concert

Dates: 10/19-21 Family Weekend Concert

FWD Tech Dates: 10/16, 17, 18 @ 6-11pm plus performances 10/19, 20, @6-10pm and 10/21@12noon-4pm.

Dragons Egg Retreat (24 hours)

FINAL PERFORMANCE: December 9th 3pm call/ 7pm Performance

Blog research/ design/ writing (10 hours)

This course is mandatory S/NC:

50% Attendance, Participation, Application

30% Three-dance tests/ Final Mande Performance

20% Research Projects, Blog. TBA

CLASS STRUCTURE:

Tuesdays: Discussion and analysis of films, coaching and teaching principles from Seydou's teachings. Meditation, Yoga, and Standing Warm-ups and rehearse dances from SC/MBC with accompanying proverbs, cultural histories, and visual environments. Learn movement analysis to decode Mande dance, film viewings, discussions on readings, and learning new dances with critical response.

Thursdays: Review all dances, rhythms and songs. Warm-ups and dance practice.

Sundays: Meditation, Yoga, Standing Warm-up, Improvisation from Katsugen. 4:30-6pm Community Mande class with Moussa Traore and Seydou Coulibaly. Body Work, Somatics.

Dragons Egg Retreat: October 27th-28th. Leave at 5pm from Leeds Theatre parking lot, return at 6pm on Sunday.

REQUIREMENTS

COMMUNICATION, PARTICIPATION, MINDFULNESS, RESPECT, COMPASSION and SELF-CARE are PRIMARY VALUES.

1. ATTENDANCE!!! No more than three unexcused absences will be allowed. After two, you will automatically receive a warning.

2. THREE MANDE DANCES: You will be learning three dances: Joden, Wasalunka, and Madan with accompanying songs, proverbs and choreographic concepts. These three dances represent different cultural groups with their own movement vocabularies, musical traditions, dialects, folkloric histories and embodied expressions. This semester we are studying the life cycle and celebratory dances from the **Wasalu**, **Malinke** and **Bamana** peoples from the Mande diaspora; Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Eastern Senegal.

Coupe De'calle: A street party dance from West Africa will be taught while at the Dragons Egg. We will rehearse this in our weekly classes to be ready for the Final Performance on December 9th.

Afro-Brazilian Contemporary Dance with Luciane Ramos Silva

November 1-8. The dance we learn from Luciane will also be part of our Contemporary Repertory to be performed at the Final Concert on December 9th.

You will be critiqued on your ability to adhere to the rhythmic structures and ability to play the music with your body and by doing so, engage in a dialogue of call and response with the three parts of the djembe ensemble and the three centers in the body: head, heart, pelvis. Movements will be taught sequencing from foot to pelvis: pelvis to torso, arms and head, and then the total expression out in space.

You will be assessed on your ability to:

1. Properly execute the step order,
2. Dance through breaks, know the transitions between steps, Keep the integrity of the rhythmic pulse, and relationship between djoun djoun rhythm and completed weight shifts as down beats, lifted up beats, and listening to and connecting with the musicians, weight-shifts, motif -structures, doubling and tripling of the beat,
1. Know the form, stance and stylistic aspects of each step and how it responds to the overall dance choreography with clear communication amongst each of the dancers as a whole, and ability to stay together as one unit, supporting each other,
1. 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. Stability and Mobility are the major mantras for each dance.
1. Creation, originality and execution of a family step. Each person/group is required to create an original step, a breakout step invented from movement motifs already explored in the dances’ vocabulary. You must collaborate on choreography and context for each test, generally made up of geometric patterns changed at each break, finishing with the improvised final step.
1. Written critique and video replay of the tests will facilitate our assessment of progress and understanding of the material.

2. BLOG:

You are required, as a team 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 and speakers. The blog should include video clips, photographs, musical selections from each dance, interviews with our guest artists and additional research on the specific cultural groups. Please interview either Luciane, Seydou, Moussa, or Marino with prepared questions. Have a fun and creative time with this.

Class Schedule of Events

WEEK ONE

9/6: Course discussion. Mindfulness approach and methodology: Wasalunka/mbc. Learn song.

9/9: Work with Seydou and Moussa: Joden

WEEK TWO

9/11: Joden/Wasalunka: Films/Discussion

9/13: Joden/Wasalunka

9/16: Work with Seydou and Moussa on Joden

WEEK THREE

9/18: Films, Discussion on Wasalu Region and Music Wasalunka/Joden. MBC give talk on Wasalu.

Read article on Women of the Wasalu. (handout)

9/20: Review/teach each other.

9/23: Seydou/Moussa Joden

WEEK FOUR

9/25: Films: Wasalunka/Joden

9/27: Dance the Wasalunka/Joden

9/30: Seydou/ Moussa/Joden

WEEK FIVE

10/2: Start Choreography for Wasalunka/Joden

10/4: Guest teacher. Matthew Garza

10/7: NO CLASS-HOLIDAY WEEKEND

WEEK SIX: Staging the Grace of Perfect Danger

10/9: Staging

10/11: Staging

10/13: Staging. Extra rehearsal 3-7pm

10/14: Choreography with Seydou and Moussa running the dance with us.

WEEK SEVEN

10/16: Tech rehearsal for Family Weekend. 6-11pm

10/17: Tech rehearsal. 6-11pm

10/18: **Dress Rehearsal:** 6-11pm Photographs

10/19 and 20: FAMILY WEEKEND CONCERT. 6pm call/8pm Go

10/21: Matinee Performance. Noon Call/2pm Go. No Seydou Class.

WEEK EIGHT

10/23: View Video/Crit and cooking together. Malian style DINNER at 63 Cypress Street.

10/25: NO CLASS/Cancelled due to Dragons Egg.

10/27: Leave for Dragons Egg at 5pm. Teach Coupe De'calle.

10/28: Dragons Egg. Leave CT at 5pm. (No Seydou class)

WEEK NINE

10/30: Work Coupe De'calle Choreography/Film it

11/1: Luciane Ramos Silva

11/2: Master Class with Luciane (recommended) 5-7pm

11/4: Luciane Ramos Silva

WEEK TEN

11/6: Luciane Ramos Silva

11/8: Luciane Ramos Silva

Have an interview with Luciane in your blog.

11/11: Seydou/Marino: Madan Dance. 4 steps

WEEK ELEVEN

11/13: MBC Madan/run Coupe De'calle 3 steps

11/15: MBC Madan/run Coupe De'calle 2 steps

11/18: Seydou /Marino: Madan. Interview SC/MF

WEEK TWELVE

11/20-25: NO CLASSES-THANKSGIVING.

WEEK THIRTEEN

T. 11/27: Review and work all dances. Go over Joden, Wasalunka, Madan (add 2 steps). Coupe De'Calce. Show blog examples.

TH. 11/29: MBC: Stage Coupe De'calce, restage Joden/Wasalunka

12/2: 3-4:30. Meditation, Yoga, Katsugen

4:30-6pm Seydou/Moussa: Madan. 4 steps.

WEEK FOURTEEN

T. 12/4: Work all Dances. Groups create choreography for Madan: total 16 steps

A: Ruchi, Steven, Ami

B: Tessa, Jess, Aya

C: Kelly, Charlotte, Maria

D: Mac, Chuyi, Calyia

TH. 12/6: Work all Dances. Choreography

***12/8: Extra rehearsal to set all choreography. 3-7pm. Drummers 5-7pm.

12/9: 3pm call/7pm Performance.

12/13: Critical response/View Final Performance/ Holiday Gathering.

COURSE MISSION AND DESCRIPTION

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.

The mission of this class is to inspire a more expansive world-view through the lens of Mande Dance, Music and Culture. Sundays will be our opportunity to work with master dance-folklorist Seydou Coulibaly and Moussa Traore.

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 Mande social values such as:

1. Cultural cohesion over personal gain,
2. Generosity over attachment,
3. Respect for self, others and elders,
4. Humility and flexibility in body and mind,
5. Responsibility for your part of the whole,
6. 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 students learning the same material at another institution. This semester TAPA students will be learning Joden and Coupe De'calle.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

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

1. Four specific Mande-related dance traditions with their accompanying musical and oral performance traditions plus one dance from the Afro-Brazilian tradition.

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)

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

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.

Dances being taught this semester:

I. Wasalunka

The Wasalu is a geolinguistic region in southern Mali and eastern Guinea that can trace its roots to the settling of Fulani warrior Yoro in the times of Sunjata Keita. It is known for its remote location, where the musical styles are a blending of dialects from Malinke peoples and Peul peoples who settled in the Sikasso cercles (administration regions) of Yanfolila, Kolondieba, and Bougoni. The musical styles are based on hunter rhythms and specific instruments local to hunters associations.

Characteristics of Wasalu music and culture:

Instruments:

1. Hunters harps (donson'goni), metal scrapers (karinyan), 4-stringed bass harp (bolon), one-stringed violin (soku), balaphone (pentatonic scale), guns, brown rimmed cane flute (Fle'), Kamelan'goni (youth harp), Senofo balaphone.

2. Didadi: Women's harvest festivals. Musical instruments vary from village to village, but every didadi ritual includes the big bass drum worn by the acrobatic didadi player. Women's ensembles play the gita, or small calabash with beads either on the inside or woven on the outside. They also accompany their songs with a small konkoni.

3. Sogonikun and Sigidon youth masquerade: antelope and buffalo head masked costumes They are designed from raffia, carved wooden masks and local clothes.

4. Bogolonfini: Hunter's mud cloth.

Originally ritual cloth was worn during excision rites, it is now a symbol of Malian culture and sold all over Europe and America as status symbols. The bogolonfini cloth offers a vital link between ancient hunter's shirts and innovation in artistic production in Mali.

5. The Wasalu sound, as a musical phenomenon came into prominence in the 1970's in Bamako, as it offered a space for the youth groups, to improvise on ideas that mattered to them and their social conditions, versus the hierarchy of endogamous artisan groups of the *jeliw* or hereditary wordsmiths. Singers and musicians offered a new voice of freedom of expression by associating themselves as *kono* or birds. The *kono* is an ancient symbol of information, perspective and freedom of expression.

Popular female stars such as Oumou Sangare and Nahawa Doumbia created songs that spoke out against polygamy, co-wife-ing, and the inequalities between the sexes. This traditional song is a blessing that speaks to the mother of a new bride who is told that her daughter will be a good wife, like a chicken, who raises any other bird's egg. This is a good omen for a polygamous society. The daughter will bring harmony to the family.

Wasalunka song

Dunu koro'ni kasi ka kodi

Eye yeah wololalu

Dunu koro'ni kasi ka kodi

De wololalu yeah tonodun baga yeah.

II. Joden *Children of the Jo.*

The Jo or Koreduga people of Segou and Sikasso travel from village to village to heal those afflicted with disease, mental trauma, or social imbalances. The Jo can stay for months at time, speaking sacred words, singing sacred songs from morning till day break in ceremonies that use traditional medicine: gathering tree leaves, roots, bark and speaking to the natural world to engage with the community to pass down knowledge of the spiritual realms. Their dress is particularly unusual in its non-conformity by having animal parts sewn into the fabrics that have been treated with bark, blood and sacrificial elements. They speak these powerful words, called *kleshee* asking

permission of the trees to help them heal before cutting anything from the tree. These skills are passed down from generation to generation.

Joden Song

Tie dugu yeah owwen tine bolonyeah

Dugu tigi tine duguyeah owwen tine bolonyeah (2xs)

Translation:

The town belongs to the chief of the village, but the streets belong to the people.

Tina dugutoe owwen tina bolon toe

Dugutigi tina dugu toe, owwen tine bolontoe

Translation:

The chief of the village will not give up living in the town, just as we will not give up living in the streets

Ya ya lay ko dumanya yeere chow'na (2xs)

Translation:

We want to do good things but sometimes bad things come to us.

Madan Song

Ya ya lay

Ya ya Mali denu yo eye yeah

Ya ya lay

Ya ya Mali denu yo

Sara tay de ya beyla.

SUNDAY DANCE CLASSES: Dates/Times: SUNDAYS @ 4:30-6pm

September 9th, 16, 23, 30

October 7th (No class-long weekend)

*October 14th: 3-4:30 choreo, Seydou class 4:30-6pm. 6-7pm run the piece with dancers on upcoming performances for Family Weekend.

November 11,18 (w/ Marino)

*December 2: 3pm class, then 4:30-6pm. Run all dances from 6-7pm

December 9th: Performance of all dances learned over the semester. This includes Joden, Wasalunka, Coupe Decalle, Luciane's work, plus third Mande Dance. 7pm

Family Weekend Tech Rehearsals: 6-11pm.

Tuesday 10/16th (Cue to cue and run w/music) 6pm call. 11pm dismissal time
Wednesday 10/17. Run of piece w/o musicians.

Thursday 10/18th (Dress Rehearsal) PHOTOS TAKEN 6pm call/8pm
performance. Run 2x's

Friday and Saturday 6pm call/8pm Performance

Sunday Matinee @ 12noon call/2pm Performance

DRAGONS EGG RETREAT

October 27-28th. Leave @5pm on 27th-Return by 6pm on 28th.

We will be working with ALC on the Malian club and street party dance called Coupe De'callee. We will sleep there, eat there and DANCE DANCE DANCE.

Accommodations:

Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform us early in the term if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with us after class or during office hours. For more information, please contact: [Student and Employee Accessibility Services](#) at 401-863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu.

Students in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact one of the deans in the Dean of the College office

Guest Artist:

Luciane Ramos Silva: Afro-Brazilian Dancer/Choreographer from Sao Paulo will be with us from November 1-9th. She will be coming into all of our scheduled classes during that time to teach her particular form of Contemporary Brazilian Movement. Whatever she teaches us will be performed for our final concert.

Bio: Luciane Ramos Silva is a dancer, choreographer, anthropologist and cultural organizer. She holds a BA in Social Sciences from the University of São Paulo (USP, 2002), an MA in Social Anthropology and African Studies from

University of Campinas (UNICAMP, 2008) and a doctorate in Performing Arts/Dance from UNICAMP researching the notions of coloniality in dance , pedagogical approaches and south-south relations through the biography of the Senegalese choreographer Germaine Acogny, founder of [Ecole des Sables](#). She is the 2003 recipient of the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora Award (2003). With this award, she initiated and developed movement and training focusing on blackness and the body in African and African Diasporic communities. Luciane was a guest at the Conference/Festival “Telling our stories about home” at University of North Carolina in 2016 where she participated as a lecturer, teacher and performer at the Sonja Haynes Stone Center. She also had the opportunity to teach at Duke University hosted by Professor Thomas De Frantz at the dance department. In 2015 she presented her research-solo-in progress at Red Pop Art House, in San Francisco, California, oriented by the artist Amara Tabor-Smith

As a performing artist, she has performed as a soloist in venues throughout Brazil. Her solo “Eyes at my back and a smile at the corner of my lips” (2015/2016) was presented in North Carolina and Sao Francisco. She is the Artistic Director of the São Paulo-based performance group Diaspóros Coletivo das Artes. She leads regular dance trainings based on multi-corporealities and decolonized gesture of the Black diaspora at Sala Crisantempo in São Paulo, and has trained a variety of Brazilian dance and theater companies including Nucléo Luis Ferron, Os Crespos , Coletivo Negro. Morena Nascimento Company, Fragmento Urbano e Cia Sansacroma – all of them with the approach of the idea of coloniality of gesture.

Vimeo films about Mali:

1. Da Kali The Pledge to the Art of the Griot
Growing into Music: Mali Volume 1
<https://vimeo.com/71089330>

2. Mali-Cuba
Daniel Dambele
<https://vimeo.com/42847471>

Malian Independence Day is September 22nd:
Africa's 'greatest explorer'



Abubakari gave up his kingdom to pursue knowledge
By Joan Baxter in Mali

An African emperor who ruled Mali in the 14th century discovered America nearly 200 years before Christopher Columbus, according to a book to be launched this month.

Abubakari II ruled what was arguably the richest and largest empire on earth - covering nearly all of West Africa.

“

**Our aim is to bring out
hidden parts of history**

Khadidjah Dire

According to a Malian scholar, Gaoussou Diawara in his book, 'The Saga of Abubakari II...he left with 2000 boats', the emperor gave up all power and gold to pursue knowledge and discovery.

Abubakari's ambition was to explore whether the Atlantic Ocean - like the great River Niger that swept through Mali - had another 'bank'.

In 1311, he handed the throne over to his brother, Kankou Moussa, and set off on an expedition into the unknown.

His predecessor and uncle, Soundjata Keita, had already founded the Mali Empire and conquered a good stretch of the Sahara Desert and the great forests along the West African coast.

Gold fields

The book also focuses on a research project being carried out in Mali tracing Abubakari's journeys.

"We are not saying that Abubakari II was the first ever to cross the ocean," says Tiemoko Konate, who heads the project

"There is evidence that the Vikings were in America long before him, as well as the Chinese," he said.



Most Griots are beginning to divulge Abubakari's secrets

The researchers claim that Abubakari's fleet of pirogues, loaded with men and women, livestock, food and drinking water, departed from what is the coast of present-day Gambia.

They are gathering evidence that in 1312 Abubakari II landed on the coast of Brazil in the place known today as Recife.

"Its other name is Purnanbuco, which we believe is an aberration of the Mande name for the rich gold fields that accounted for much of the wealth of the Mali Empire, Boure Bambouk."

Another researcher, Khadidjah Djire says they have found written accounts of Abubakari's expedition in Egypt, in a book written by Al Omari in the 14th century.

"Our aim is to bring out hidden parts of history", she says.

Black traders

Mr. Konate says they are also examining reports by Columbus, himself, who said he found black traders already present in the Americas.

They also cite chemical analyses of the gold tips that Columbus found on spears in the Americas, which show that the gold probably came from West Africa.



Mali was a gold kingdom,
but most families live in
poverty

But the scholars say the best sources of information on Abubakari II are Griots - the original historians in Africa.

Mr Diawara says the paradox of Abubakari II, is that the Griots themselves imposed a seal of silence on the story.

"The Griots found his abdication a shameful act, not worthy of praise," Mr Diawara said.

"For that reason they have refused to sing praise or talk of this great African man."

Mr Diawara says the Griots in West Africa such as Sadio Diabate, are slowly starting to divulge the secrets on Abubakari II.

'Hard-nosed historians'

But the research team says an even bigger challenge is to convince hard-nosed historians elsewhere that oral history can be just as accurate as written records.

Mr Diawara believes Abubakari's saga has an important moral lesson for leaders of small nation states in West Africa, which were once part of the vast Mande-speaking empire.

"Look at what's going on in all the remnants of that empire, in Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea.

"Politicians are bathing their countries in blood, setting them on fire just so that they can cling to power," says Mr Diawara.

"They should take an example from Abubakari II. He was a far more powerful man than any of them. And he was willing to give it all up in the name of science and discovery."

"That should be a lesson for everyone in Africa today," concludes Mr Diawara.