



DANC 499: Special Topics: Iconic Dance Films of the 20th Century
Section: 22558
Units: 2
Term: Spring 2021
Day: Wednesday
Time: 5:00-6:50PM
Location: Online

Instructor: Dawn Stoppiello
Office: KDC 222
Office Hours: By appointment
Contact Info: stoppiel@usc.edu, (503) 989-4170 (text if urgent)
Professor will reply to emails/calls within 48 hours

Catalogue Description

An investigation of Iconic Dance Films of the 20th Century, analyzing different directors and choreographer's cinematic and choreographic strategies.

Course Description

Dancers and dance-makers have been the subject of motion pictures since the inception of moving making. Dance films became increasingly popular in the 20th century with the advent of movie musicals, fictional narrative films about dance careers, and documentaries about the lives of actual dancers. Each week the class will watch an iconic dance film, then discuss choreographic strategy, cinematic strategy, and how dance stories evolve, and stay the same, through the course of the 20th century.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

- Identify cinematic styles distinct to the shooting of dance, the impact of camera, editing methods and technology and these techniques' impact on how choreography is observed
- Contextualize the development of dance on film within history's greater cultural, socio-political, and economic narrative
- Analyze works of dance made for the screen

Assigned Reading (Subject to Change)

Some readings and viewings may contain nudity, profanity and challenging content.

Deren, Maya. "Amateur vs Professional" Essential Deren: Collected Writings on Film. Kingston, N.Y., Documentext, 2005: 17-18, and "Choreography for the Camera": 220-224.

Assigned Viewings (Subject to Change)

Unless otherwise noted, all viewings are found on Blackboard → Tools → Course Reserves

Musicals and Dance Narratives

Von Trier, Lars. "Dancer in the Dark" 2000
Ardolino, Emile. "Dirty Dancing" 1997
Suo, Masayuki. "Shall We Dance?" 1996

Lerman, Baz. "Strictly Ballroom" 1993
Attenborough, Richard. "A Chorus Line" 1985
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6K3iMbfZoK8&list=PL-Rb0Bod25cYLL2ClnPLaY-2Q5jUgT5s>

Lathan, Stan. "Beat Street" 1984
Lyne, Adrian. "Flashdance" 1983
Parker, Alan. "Fame" 1980
Forman, Milos. "Hair" 1979
Fosse, Bob. "All That Jazz" 1979 [unavailable - TBA]
Lumet, Sidney. "The Wiz" 1978
Robbins, Jerome and Wise, Robert. "West Side Story" 1961
Donen, Stanley and Gene Kelly. "Singin' in the Rain" 1952
Powell, Michael and Pressburger, Emerich. "The Red Shoes" 1948
Stone, Andrew L. "Stormy Weather" 1943
Disney, Walt. "Fantasia" 1940 [unavailable - TBA]
Stevens, George. "Swing Time" 1936
Bacon, Lloyd and Berkeley, Busby. "42nd Street" 1933

Dance Documentaries

Schlesinger, Adam and Saffire, Linda. "Restless Creature: Wendy Whelan" 2016
Gould, Ester and Zwaan, Reijer. "Strike a Pose" 2016
Gund, Catherine. "Born to Fly – Elizabeth Streb vs. Gravity" 2014
Wenders, Wim. "PINA." 2013
Lee, Benson. "Planet B-Boy" 2007
LaChapelle, David. "RIZE" 2005
Agrelo, Madeline. "Mad Hot Ballroom" 2005
Diamond, Matthew. "Dancemaker" 1998
Glushanok, Peter. "A Dancer's World" 1957

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Viewings: As the primary focus of this course is the viewing of dance films, students are expected to have viewed the film in the week prior to the next class. How to access these films will be posted to Blackboard.

Journals: Attendance will not be taken for this class. There will be work for which you will be given credit through the completion of weekly journals. Using Google Docs to create a running "Journal" on topics from class, primarily the viewing of the specified film, students will make short, informal entries on the week's assigned content (bullet points okay). This journal is a study guide for your analysis papers and a platform for in class discussion topics. **Due before the start of the next class.**

Journal topics: Students will write at least one sentence for each of the following topics.

1. Cinematic Strategies (editing, camera angles, camera movement)
2. Choreographic Strategies (style/movement quality of the dancing)
3. Production elements/Mise-en-Scene (music, costumes, lighting, set design, props)

Be ready to discuss in class: Does this piece elicit any reaction from you? What is your personal response? What are your questions?

Analysis Paper: Movie Musical or Dance Narrative. Due via Turnitin on May 5, 2021, 11:59PM PST. Students will select a movie musical or dance narrative from a list provided by the instructor. Drawing from in-class activities, as well as additional primary and scholarly sources, students will write an analysis paper that offers critical comments on the content and form of the film. Covering historical context, choreographic strategies employed, cinematic strategies employed, personal response to the film and thoughts about this film's place in the greater canon. **Students' 3-5-page typed, double-spaced and proof-read paper must follow MLA formatting guidelines, including citations and separate bibliography. All citation information for papers is in the reading list of the syllabus. Submit with enough time to contact IT if you have technical difficulties.**

Final Presentation: Dance Documentary, May 5, 2021, 4:30-6:30PM PST. Students are required to be present for the final exam, which will consist of an in-class presentation of the student-made Google Slide deck. In small assigned groups students will create a Google Slides presentation on a dance documentary selected from a list provided by the instructor. Covering historical data about the subject, and how the film illuminates that dancer or choreographic body of work and approach to dancing or dance making, including student's personal response to the film and its subject.

Use the following information to create at least one slide to represent each research topic:

- 1) Synopsis of the film, highlights on the artist.
- 2) Factual information on the director, choreographer and performer(s).
- 3) What does the movement look like? Describe the dancing/choreography.
- 4) What is the socio-political content of this artist's work?
- 5) Place this artist in history.

Please check your USC email at least once every 24-hours.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Journals 15x3 points each	45	45
Paper: Analysis of a Movie Musical or Dance Narrative	25	25
Final Google slides Dance Documentary Presentation (shared grade)	30	30
TOTAL	100	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100	C	73-76
A-	90-94	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 and below

Assignment Submission

All online posts and written assignments must be submitted no later than 11:59pm the evening of the due date.

Assignment Rubrics

All assignment rubrics are posted on Blackboard under Assignments.

Grading Timeline

Assignment grades will be posted to Grade Center two weeks after submission.

Technology in the classroom

Students will be required to view media outside of class. Smartphone or other recording device, along with free, downloadable editing apps may also be used.

Grading Dispute Note

I want to make sure that your grades reflect your performance. If you feel there is an error in the grading, please let me know. To dispute a grade, you must request a review by email no sooner than one week and no later than two weeks from the date the grade was published on Blackboard. In the email you must identify yourself and the assignment you are questioning. You must provide a specific argument for the grade change, identifying the row(s) in the rubric where you feel you were mis-scored.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Date	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 Jan 20	Course Introduction How to look at, and talk about, dance films: Deren Analysis Breakout Groups	Read in class: Deren, Maya. "Amateur vs Professional" and "Choreography for the Camera" Watch <i>42nd Street (1933)</i> [1h 29m]	Journal 1: Maya Deren
Week 2 Jan 27	Sexism, racism and visual spectacle - Busby Berkeley discussion	Watch <i>Swing Time (1936)</i> [1h 44m]	Journal 2: 42 nd Street
Week 3 Feb 3	Partner dancing genre - Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers discussion	Watch <i>Fantasia (1940)</i> [2h 6m]	Journal 3: Swing Time
Week 4 Feb 10	Animation innovation - Disney discussion	Watch <i>Stormy Weather (1943)</i> [1h 18 m]	Journal 4: Fantasia
Week 5 Feb 17	All black cast of the best talent of the time and very little narrative necessary discussion	Watch <i>The Red Shoes (1948)</i> [2h 16m]	Journal 5: Stormy Weather

	Guest: E. Moncell Durden (TBA)		
Week 6 Feb 24	Dream Ballet discussion	Watch <i>Singin' in the Rain (1952)</i> [1h 43m]	Journal 6: The Red Shoes
Week 7 Mar 3	Bringing dance to the street - Gene Kelly discussion	Watch <i>West Side Story (1961)</i> [2h 33m]	Journal 7: Singin' in the Rain
Week 8 Mar 10	Remakes and new styles, American dance discussion	Watch <i>The Wiz (1978)</i> [2h 16m]	Journal 8: West Side Story
Week 9 Mar 17	The most iconic Wizard of Oz revisited, also America's racism in film, and Disco!	Watch <i>Hair (1979)</i> [2h 1m]	Journal 9: The Wiz
Week 10 Mar 24	Socio-political content, contemporary dance	Watch <i>Flashdance (1983)</i> [1h 37m] and <i>Beat Street (1984)</i> [1h 46m]	Journal 10: Hair
Week 11 Mar 31	Hip Hop revolution, MTV, the "dance dream" narrative Guest: Tiffany Bong (TBA)	Watch <i>A Chorus Line (1985)</i> [1h 58m] and <i>All That Jazz (1979)</i> [2h 3m]	Journal 11: Flashdance and Beat Street
Week 12 Apr 7	The passion and pain of a dancer's life, and "navel gazing" dance business looking at itself (all the way back to the 1930s) discussion	Watch <i>Strictly Ballroom (1993)</i> [1h 34m] and <i>Dirty Dancing (1997)</i> [1h 40m]	Journal 12: A Chorus Line and All That Jazz
Week 13 Apr 14	The Ballroom phenom! Dance can save your life, dance and love discussion Guest: J Fuentes (TBA)	Watch <i>Dancer in the Dark (2000)</i> [2h 21m]	Journal 13: Strictly Ballroom and Dirty Dancing
Week 14 Apr 21	The musical remade but darker...discussion Assign Final Google Slides groups	Watch your chosen documentary from the list provided and make a plan with your group.	Journal 14: Dancer in the Dark
Week 15 Apr 28	Documentary discussion. Meet with your documentary groups.		Journal 15: Documentary of your group

FINAL May 5, 4:30- 6:30PM	In Class Google Slides presentations		Analysis Paper: Movie Musical or Dance Narrative paper due on Final date.
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KSOD Policies

Names and Pronouns

If you want to be called by a different name or wish to be referred to by a different gender pronoun than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please let me know. Students are expected to respectfully refer to each other by their preferred names and pronouns in class.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

This class takes place at a university committed to equity for all students, where diversity and inclusion are considered critical to the academic environment. In this classroom, free speech is respected, and civil discourse is expected, with a safe learning environment the priority. We will endeavor to use language that is respectful—sometimes being inquisitive and creative, because language changes all the time—particularly when it comes to differences in age, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, race or socioeconomic status.

“Call-In” Agreement

As we collectively work through our relationship to, and awareness of, racial justice, I expect an attitude of calling people IN to the conversation, as opposed to calling people out. I expect engagement to be toward inclusion and education and shared with grace, honesty and respect.

Statement on Physical Contact

As an embodied art form, dancing is a physical and an emotional act. In the process of studying dance, students often experience physical contact with their instructors and peers. Faculty members may use touch to provide proprioceptive and kinesthetic feedback to students; they may use touch to correct alignment, improve technique, and promote healthier movement practices. In some classes, particularly those involving partnering, students’ will experience physical contact with their peers. As developing artists experimenting with modes of expression, students may also experience a variety of emotions in the classroom. As such, it is imperative that the studio-classroom be a safe, inclusive, and respectful space for all students and faculty. Open and honest communication and respectful and considerate interactions are always expected and are a fundamental requirement of studying in the USC Kaufman School of Dance. Unless otherwise articulated to a faculty member or peer, consent to discipline-specific and appropriate touching is assumed. Students always have the right to revoke that consent and should express any discomfort they feel in the classroom to the faculty instructor or Vice Dean immediately. USC Kaufman seeks to nurture compassionate artists who respect the dignity, humanity, and personal embodied experience of all individuals.

Emergency Plan

In the event of a university-wide emergency, guidance and directions will be shared by Campus Emergency Operations in all available outlets, including the website and TrojanAlerts. Students are encouraged to maintain close contact with all available communications avenues for updates to university operations. USC Kaufman will abide by all university protocols and recommendations. If the

Kaufman Dance Center is not available when classes resume, students can receive updates from the school's Departmental Operations Center (DOC) on Ramo Lawn (between the Thornton School of Music and Norris Cinema, close to the Bing Theatre).

USC Policies

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Students will need an electronic device with access to Zoom and Blackboard for this course. They are asked to familiarize themselves with these two interfaces. Please see the links below for technology support.

USC Technology Support Links

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

USC Technology Rental Program

We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program. To apply, please [submit an application](#). The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

Synchronous Participation

In general, students should plan to attend every synchronous session for the classes in which they are enrolled, irrespective of when it occurs in their time zone. For this course, the weekly synchronous ZOOM session will be Mondays, from 10:00AM-11:40AM Pacific Time.

USC Shibboleth Log In

Students are expected to be signed-in to their USC account prior to the start of each Zoom class session to ensure a safe and smooth experience for all students.

Time Zone Accommodations

USC considers the hours from 7:00am to 10:00pm, in the local time zone for each student, as reasonable times for students to attend synchronous sessions or engage in synchronous learning activities or assessments. Should students be unable to attend synchronous sessions they are expected to watch the recorded Zoom session and any related PowerPoint presentations (both will be posted to Blackboard once done live) and complete the assignments for each week.

USC's Nine International Offices

Support for international students is also available through USC's offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and South China, Taiwan, South Korea, India, UK and Europe, Brazil, and Mexico. Additional details and contact information can be found at <https://global.usc.edu/global-presence/international-offices/>.

Recording Online Classes

For the Fall 2020 semester, USC policy requires that all classes conducted online be recorded for asynchronous viewing with transcriptions made available.

“Camera On” Policy

For this course, students are expected to have their cameras on during synchronous online sessions. Students facing challenging situations (internet connectivity, illness, home environments, etc) are encouraged to use a virtual background, which will eliminate most privacy concerns, and earphones or headsets to improve audio quality. Please contact your professor directly for additional accommodations.

Netiquette and Participation

Participation includes being attentive and focused; actively participating in physical exercises, discussions, breakout rooms, and group activities; asking thoughtful questions; coming to class fully prepared; and exercising personal responsibility and consideration of others at all times. Texting/Chatting during Zoom class sessions via cell phone and/or other private message apps is considered highly disrespectful.

Religious Holy Days Policies

University policy grants students excused absences for observance of religious holy days. You must inform the professor at least one full week in advance to request such an excused absence. You will be given an opportunity to make up missed work if necessary.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.
equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations.
dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student
EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu