

# Dance, Trance and Ritual 3938, Fall 2015

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**Rodney Sebastian** (Religion Dept., University of Florida)

## ***Class Time & Location***

Tuesday, (3pm to 4.55pm)

Thursday, (4.05 to 4.55pm)

Location: MAT 105

## ***Office Hours & Contact Information***

Tuesday and Friday 12:00–1:45 pm, and by appointment; 123 Anderson Hall; tel: (352) 278 4797; email: [r.sebastian@ufl.edu](mailto:r.sebastian@ufl.edu) (to be used for all written communications).

## ***Course Description***

This course is designed to familiarize students with religious rituals and cultural performances in diverse religious traditions. We will explore expressions of religion through various performances such as art, music, dance, trance, healing, ritual and pilgrimage. We will look at how diverse traditions such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Native American and African religions contact the divine through the body and the environment. During the course, we will also interact with religious performers and ritual specialists, who will be invited to demonstrate and share their experiences. Students will be encouraged to actively participate in this exploration as we analyze case studies of different types of performance in diverse religious traditions, and discuss how these performances take on various meanings, religious, social and political, and how they are adapted in the local context. We will also examine performance theories and concepts related to the study of religion.

## ***Objectives***

- 1) Students will develop an understanding of how religious practitioners engage in performances through ritual, dance, theatre, trance and pilgrimage.
- 2) They will also be able to discuss how social, political and localized tropes emerge from or influence such performances.

## ***Prerequisites***

There are no formal prerequisites.

## ***Assignments and Requirements***

1. Reading of assigned materials, class attendance, participation in class discussions and activities (10 % of the final grade).

Students are expected to attend all the classes, do all readings, and participate in discussions.

2. Class Presentations, and leading of discussions (15 %)

When students are responsible for leading weekly discussions, they have to prepare a 400-500 word summary and response to the assigned readings. The reading response must be uploaded on e-learning by 10am on the day of the class. It should contain a brief summary of the readings, critical response and discussion topics for the class.

3. Reading Responses (30%)

Students are required to post their 250-300 word reflections on the readings in the course website for each week. Each student will be allowed to miss two weeks of readings without having points deducted.

4. Paper abstract and annotated bibliography or film project proposal(10%) due by 16 Nov 2015, 10pm.

The abstract and bibliography must clearly state the topic of the final paper. It should contain a short 250 words abstract of the paper and at least 10 titles of academic publications relevant to the topic. Each of them should be annotated with 2-3 lines about the content and how it is relevant to the topic.

Students doing the film project should submit a one-page proposal with IRB approval (if necessary).

5. Final Research paper or ethnographic film. (35%)

Students have an option of either submitting a final paper or an ethnographic film. The final paper should be about 3000 – 4000 words inclusive of notes and references. Students are welcome to submit early drafts of their papers for feedback. Final papers are due on 15 Dec.

The ethnographic film should be about 10 – 15 min on a religious ritual, dance or drama performance. If interviews are going to be conducted students should go through the IRB process. Films will be shown during the last week of class.

## **Required Texts**

### **Course Schedule and Discussion Topics**

#### **Week 1, Aug 25: Introduction and syllabus overview**

Why is it important to study rituals, dance, and trance?

#### **Week 2, Sep 1: Ritual and Performance Theories Overview**

What are the definitions of ritual and performances?

Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2013. Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter 2.

#### **Week 3, Sep 8: Society and Performance**

What is the relationship between ritual and society?

Turner, V. (1969). Liminality and Communitas *The Ritual Process* (Chapter 3 and 5): Cornell.

Greenwald, D. E. (1973). Durkheim on Society, Thought and Ritual. *Sociological Analysis* 34(3), 157-168.

Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2013. Chapter 3.

Film: Norelli, G. (Director). (1994). *The Sunrise Dance* [Video file]. Documentary Educational Resources (DER). Retrieved July 13, 2015, from Ethnographic Video Online: Volume I

#### **Week 4, Sep 15: Power and Performance**

How is performance and power related?

Guss, D. M. (2000). Variations on a Venezuelan Quarter. In D. M. Guss (Ed.), *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism as Cultural Performance* (pp. 1 - 23). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Guss, D. M. (2000). The Selling of San Juan: The Performance of History in an Afro-Venezuelan Community. In D. M. Guss (Ed.), *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism as Cultural Performance* (pp. 24 – 49). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

MacLean, K. (2003). Making the Colonial State Work for You: The Modern Beginnings of the Ancient Kumbh Mela in Allahabad. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 62(3), 873 - 905.

### **Week 5, Sep 22: Aesthetics and Performance**

How does aesthetics affect performance?

Schieffelin, E. (1996). On Failure and Performance: Throwing the Medium Out of the Seance. In C. Laderman, & Roseman, M. (Ed.), *The Performance of Healing* (pp. 59 - 90). New York: Routledge.

Sullivan, L. (1986). Sound and Senses: Toward a Hermeneutics of Performance. *History of Religions*, 26(1), 1-33.

Watch film in class: “Trance and Dance in Bali” by Bateson, Gregory, Margaret Mead and Jane Belo. New York: NYU Film Library 1951. Available on youtube.

### **Week 6, Sep 29: Performance and non-Human Communication**

How does ritual serve to communicate with other-than-humans?

Erndl, K. M. (1991). *Victory to the Mother: The Hindu Goddess of Northwest India in Myth, Ritual and Symbol*: Oxford University Press, Introduction pp. 3- 17 (Recommended), Chapter 5 pp. 105- 134.

Apffel-Marglin, F. (2012). *Subversive Spiritualities: How Rituals Enact the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chapter: Introduction pp. 3 – 20, and Chapter 9 pp. 149 - 166

## **Week 7, Oct 6: Cultural Preservation and Performance**

Mukhopadhyay, D. (1998). Chho Dance of Purulia - A Fusion of Classical, Folk and Tribal Dances. In D. Waterhouse (Ed.), *Dance of India: History, Perspectives, and Prospects* (pp. 117 - 133). Mumbai: Popular Prakashan Ltd.  
Chho Dance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojkj37wzOnc>

Sebastian, R. (Forthcoming). "Reverse Pilgrimage": Performance, Manipuri Identity, and the Ranganiketan Cultural Arts Troupe. In J. Whalen-Bridge & A. M. Pinkney (Eds.), *Religious Journeys in India*. New York: SUNY.

Watch film in class:

Glazebrook, K., Kovgan, A., Konaté, Y., Tiérou, A., Kinodance (Film), Documentary Educational Resources (Film), & Festival international de nouvelle danse. (2007). *African dance: Sand, drum and Shostakovich*. Watertown, Mass: Documentary Educational Resources.

Dalhoff, A. (Director). (2002). *Inca Music, Journeys and Rituals* [Video file]. Filmmakers Library. Retrieved July 13, 2015, from Ethnographic Video Online: Volume I

## **Week 8, Oct 13: Ritual and Drama**

Hardison, O. B. (1965). The Mass as Sacred Drama *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (pp. 35 - 79). Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Read: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-let-yourself-be-transformed-by-the-eucharist-61965/>

Johnson, Todd E., and Dale Savidge. *Performing the Sacred (Engaging Culture): Theology and Theatre in Dialogue*. United States of America: Baker Academic, 2009. Chapter 2 "The Theology of Theatrical Process

Hess, Linda. "Ram Lila: The Audience Experience." In *Bhakti in Current Research, 1979-1982*, edited by Monika Thiel-Horstmann. Berlin: D. Reimer Verlag, 1983, pp. 171-190.

## **Week 9, Oct 20: Performance and Healing**

How is performance involved in religious healing rituals?

Laderman & M. Roseman (Eds.), *The Performance of Healing*, Introduction pp 1 -17. New York, London: Routledge.

Csordas, T. J. (1996). Imaginal Performance and Memory in Ritual Healing. In C. Laderman & M. Roseman (Eds.), *The Performance of Healing* (pp. 91-114). New York, London: Routledge.

"Unseen Power: Aesthetic Dimensions of Symbolic Healing in Qawwuālī" by James R. Newell, *The Muslim World*, Vol. 97, October 2007, pp. 640 - 656

Film: Fate of the Lhapa

Film: Ritual and Healing: Blue Buddha Lost Secrets of Tibetan Medicine:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orVH\\_RwGJe0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orVH_RwGJe0)

## **Week 10, Oct 27: Dance**

What are the issues that emerge in the interplay of text, dance traditions and modernity?

Hanna, J. L. (1988). The Representation and Reality of Religion in Dance. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 56(2), 281-306.

O'Shea, J. (1998). "Traditional" Indian Dance and the Making of Interpretive Communities. *Asian Theatre Journal*, 15(1), 45 - 63.

Jones, B. T. (1987). Kathakali Dance-Drama: A Historical Perspective. *Asian Music*, 18(2), 1-14.

Recommended: Haberman, D. (1988). *Acting as a Way of Salvation - A Study of Raganuga Bhakti Sadhana*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chapter 2.

Guest visit: A dancer will be invited to perform in class and talk about their performance.

## **Week 11, Nov 3: Trance**

*How is trance a performance?*

Lee, Du-Hyun. "Korean Shamans: Role Playing through Trance Possession." In *By Means of Performance*, edited by Richard Schechner and Willa Appel. 149-66.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Freeman, Rich. "Thereupon Hangs a Tail: The Deification of Vali in the Teyyam Worship of Malabar." In *Questioning Ramayanas* edited by Paula Richman. 187 - 222. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001.

*Film: N/um Tchai: The Ceremonial Dance of the !Kung Bushmen*

## **Week 12, Nov 10: Art and Architecture**

How has art and architecture transmitted religious meanings in Chinese history?

Wang, M. C. (2014). Buddhist Art and Architecture in East Asia. In M. Poceski (Ed.), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to East and Inner Asian Buddhism*. 424 - 443.

Kieckhefer, R. (2004). *Theology in Stone: Church Architecture From Byzantium to Berkeley*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter: Introduction

Recommended: Craven, R. C. (1976). *A Concise History of Indian Art*. New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press.

*Activity: Field trip to Harn Museum*

## **Week 13, Nov 17: Pilgrimage**

*How is pilgrimage a transformative ritual?*

Turner, Victor. "Pilgrimages as Social Processes." In *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors - Symbolic Action in Human Society*, edited by Victor Turner. 166 - 230. New York: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Radhanath Swami "The Journey Home", Part 1: Chapter 1, 4.Part II, 1-6

## **Week 13, Nov 24: Pilgrimage**

Reader, Ian. "Sites and Sighs: Temples and Shrines as Centres of Power and Entertainment." In *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, edited by Ian Reader. 134-67. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991

Radhanath Swami “The Journey Home”, Part III, and IV.

**Week 14, Dec 1: Course Review: Theoretical Reflections**

Grimes, R. (2008). Performance. In J. S. Jens Kreinath, Michael Stausberg (Ed.), *Theorizing Rituals - Issues, Topics, Approaches, Concepts* (pp. 379 - 394). Leiden, Boston: Brill

**Week 14, 8 Dec: Student Presentations (End)**



## **Grading and Academic Policies**

### **Grades and Grading Policies**

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-93	92-90	89-86	85-82	81-79	78-76	75-73	72-70	69-67	66-63	62-60	<60

In addition, please familiarize yourself with the official UF policies on how grade points are assigned: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/Pages/home.aspx>

### **Academic Honesty**

Students must conform to UF's academic honesty policy regarding plagiarism and other forms of cheating. This means that on all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment. "The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php> and <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>.

All students found to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in any assignment for this course will be prosecuted to the full extent of the university honor policy, including judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code.

For serious violations, you will fail this course.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Please do not hesitate to ask for accommodation for a documented disability. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office.

(<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>).

The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting

accommodation. Please ask the instructor if you would like any assistance in this process.

***Cultures are most fully expressed in and made conscious of themselves in their ritual and theatrical performances. A performance is declarative of our shared humanity, yet it utters the uniqueness of particular cultures***

– Richard Schechner