



SYLLABUS

Dance Performance and Aesthetics in Ghanaian Cultures

Instructor: Dr. Habib Iddrisu

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 5

Contact Hours*: 45 hours

TAMALE & ACCRA (*briefly* in KUMASI)

COUNTRY: GHANA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In most sub-Saharan African cultures, music and dance is not merely entertainment and exist in isolation from society that produces them. Rather, it is interwoven into the historical, socio-cultural, and the political lives of the people. This aspect of a three-component study abroad course is designed to use research and performance methodologies to evaluate and analyze the context within which these art forms are performed in Ghana and to some extent their global representations. The course centers on the concept of a total performance experience - combining dance, music, singing, and storytelling - with the intent to educate about diverse Ghanaian cultures. Though dance and music is central to the experience, no music-dance experience or talent is required.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The instructional methodology will include field trips, some lectures, dance movement and guest lectures (from faculty of the University for Development Studies-Tamale, University of Ghana-Legon, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology-Kumasi, and the Tamale Polytechnic-Tamale integrated into the entire trip). It will also include several experiential learning activities (traditional hut building, basket weaving, sewing clothes/costumes, and drum-making), 4 hours a day music-dance workshops 3-days per week, excursions and attending and documenting some local events such as naming ceremonies, weddings and interviews with locals. Occasional video/film viewing and audio listening will be added into course instructions. Additionally, 2-times a week Seminar-Style discussions lead by a Ghanaian expert on Dos and Don'ts while in Ghana (gender relation issues etc.) will be a part of this experience. Since we will be in at least 3 to 4 ethnic and geographical regions of Ghana, the Dos and Don'ts would be geographical based to give us the sense of similarities and differences of each region.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

- Three (3) weekly Essay Summaries: Students will write 1-2 pages that critically analyze a weekly reading regarding our term-long questions and probe(s). *A detailed guide will be provided at the start of each week.* **All weekly assignments are due at 2:00pm on Wednesday/midweek of the new week.**
- Music and Dance Workshops: Students enrolled in this portion of the course will have a weekly music and dance workshops with local teachers and experts. These workshops will use traditional modes of oral transmission of knowledge. At the end of each workshop, students will be asked to write down pedagogical differences and/or similarities and compare that to what they are used to back home. Students will need these notes and observations for their final project.
- Attendance & Participation: Course periods are used for discussions, lectures, videos, small group assignments, writings and other activities including classroom and field components. Attendance in all assigned events etc., is therefore mandatory and fundamental to your success in this course.
- Informal Project Presentation: Prior to departure from Ghana, students will have a minimum of 25minutes to present a dance or music piece that they’ve been working on since arrival. Project can a solo piece or a collaboration between students and/or with a local community groups or individuals. It could also be form of a documentary. *(Detailed guidelines to be distributed during pre-departure and arrival orientations)*
- Final Take-Home Research Paper: Students will have a final take-home research paper drawing from all lectures, events and daily activities. Students will conduct original research **(the topic must be approved by me)**. Based on the research topic, students will write 8-10 pages (not less than 8, and not more than 12). It must be written in essay format, 12-pt font, doubled-space, spelling and grammar checked). No need for an extensive library research. Take-Home Research Paper should be turned in shortly after you return. **Exact Due Date TBA. Canvas Submission Only.** *(Detailed guidelines to be distributed during pre-departure and arrival orientations).*

Grade configuration

Attendance and participation in course discussions/activities	= 25% of final grade
1-2-page response to 3 weekly readings/videos etc.,	= 25% of final grade
Music and Dance workshops	= 20% of final grade
Informal Research Presentation in Ghana	= 5% of final grade
Final (Take-Home Research Paper)	= 25% of final grade

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1		
Historical Overview: Ethnic Diversity & Traditional African Music-Dance in Context		
Date	Reading	Assignment Due
Day 1	Reading: Chernoff in	

Day 2	<i>African Rhythms and African Sensibility</i> (pp. 1-38)	
Day 3	Reading: Pearl Primus in <i>African Dance..</i> (pp 1-28)	
WEEK 2		
Traditional Music and Dances of Ethnic Groups in Ghana		
Date	Reading	Assignment Due
Day 1	Reading: Younge, <i>Music and Dance tradition of Ghana</i> (pp. 1-15)	Weekly summary # 1 due
Day 2	Reading: Younge, <i>Music and Dance tradition of Ghana</i> (pp. 16-90)	
Day 3	Reading: Younge, <i>Music and Dance tradition of Ghana</i> (pp. 91-130)	
WEEK 3		
Tradition and Continuity: Formation of Ghana National Music-Dance Ensembles		
Date	Reading	Assignment Due
Day 1	Reading: Younge, <i>Music and Dance tradition of Ghana</i> (pp. 131-202)	Weekly summary # 2 due
Day 2	Reading: Younge, <i>Music and Dance tradition of Ghana</i> (pp. 203-244)	
Day 3	Reading: Younge, <i>Music and Dance tradition of Ghana</i> (pp. 245-314)	
WEEK 4		
National Dance Companies in Selected African Countries		
Date	Reading	Assignment Due
Day 1	R Reading: Schauert in <i>Staging Ghana..</i> (pp. 1-77)	

Day 2	Reading: Schauert in <i>Staging Ghana..</i> (pp. 78-193)	Weekly summary # 3 due
Day 3	Presentations	
Take-Home Exams Papers due SHORTLY AFTER RETURN (TBA). Canvas Submission Only		

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Chernoff, John Miller. (1979). *African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African American Musical Idioms*. Illinois, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Dor, George Worlasi Kwasi. (2014). *West African Drumming and Dance in North American Universities: An Ethnomusicological Perspective*. Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi.

Ebron, Paula. (2002). *Performing Africa*. Princeton, NJ: Prince University Press.

Schauert, Paul. (2015). *Staging Ghana: Artistry and Nationalism in State Dance Ensembles*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Welsh Asante, Kariamu.(1994). In Memory of Pearl Primus. In Welsh Asante, Kariamu. Editor (ED.), *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry* (pp. 1-28). Trenton: African World Press, Inc.

Nicholls, Robert W. (1994). African Dance: Transition and Continuity. In Welsh Asante, Kariamu. Editor (ED.), *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry* (pp. 29-62). Trenton: African World Press, Inc.

Younge, Paschal Yao. (2011). *Music and Dance Traditions of Ghana: History, Performance and Teaching*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers