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# ARTS 310-007

## FROM TEMPLE TO BOLLYWOOD: RELIGION AND DANCE IN SOUTH ASIA

University of North Carolina  
Asheville • Fall 2009  
TR 1:45-3:00pm  
Karpen Hall 006

Dr. Katherine Zubko  
Office: Carmichael 123  
Phone: (828) 350-4560  
E-mail: [kzubko@unca.edu](mailto:kzubko@unca.edu) (preferred method of contact)  
Office hours: TR 3-4, MW 10-11, or by appointment

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### REQUIRED TEXTS

- Dwyer, Rachel. *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Jayadeva. *Gita Govinda (Love Song of the Dark Lord)*, trans. Barbara Stoler Miller. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Nizami. *The Story of Layla and Majnun*. New York: Omega Publications, 1996.
- Swartz, Susan L. *Rasa: Performing the Divine in India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Other required readings available through course website on Moodle - noted by [M] in the syllabus; recommended articles will be noted by "REC."

### COURSE WEBSITE

To access the course website, click on 'Quick Links' in the upper right-hand corner of the UNCA homepage ([www.unca.edu](http://www.unca.edu)). Click into "Moodle" and enter your username and password. Click on ARTS 310 under 'My Classes' to open class website. A copy of the syllabus, announcements, assignments, and other course documents (case studies other than those from the required textbooks) will be available on the site. There is also a forum available to post questions and comments.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the performance of religion in two storytelling dance forms from South Asia: bharata natyam and kathak. These dance styles draw upon Hindu devotional (*bhakti*) and Sufi literary allegories of sacred and profane love in their choreography. Lover and beloved, as the ideal relationship between God and the human soul, becomes the model for the performed relationship between heroes and heroines (*nayaka-nayaki*) danced on stages and Bollywood screens. We will be asking the questions: How does the body "know" and participate in ritual and religious knowledge? What is love in South Asian contexts, and how is love performed?

Our inquiry includes investigating the mythology, ritual, history and aesthetic theory (*rasa*) of bharata natyam and kathak, along with the allied arts of music, theatre, and temple sculpture. Frameworks that broaden our conversation include comparative theories of audience-receptivity, Western performance theories and embodied knowledge, transnationalism, as well as Western encounters with and adaptations of "Oriental dance" reflected in photography, literature, film and other arts.

Source Materials: Classical literature and poetry, dance manuals, mythology, critical secondary readings, audio-visual resources – images, videos, music recordings, and in-studio opportunities to learn basic dance movements. (No prior dance training required!)

## COURSE GOALS

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and describe religious, historical, social, and aesthetic aspects of Hinduism and Islam as they have shaped both individuals and societies in South Asian and Western contexts
- Employ a working vocabulary and critical lens for analyzing the ideas, practices and social institutions of interactive, global religious traditions
- Locate, interpret and evaluate theory and practice on the role of the arts in transnational issues of global concern within diverse cultures
- Demonstrate the necessary skills, vocabulary and sensitivity to do effective and passionate cross-cultural work
- Translate insights into well-developed and effectively communicated written and verbal analyses

## — COURSE SCHEDULE —

Note: All readings, videos and assignments in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

### WEEK ONE

**August 18:** Introduction to the course

**August 20:** Introduction to Indian Classical Dance: Bharata Natyam

Swartz: 1-6, 21-47 (mostly pictures); [M] Kliger – Bharata Natyam: History  
[M] Puri – Abhinaya

### WEEK TWO

**August 25:** Religion and Dance: Gods as Dancers (Hindu Mythology)

[M] Smith – Dance of Siva, [M] Dimmitt and van Buitenan – Siva and Krishna Mythology

**August 27:** Dance as Religion (Hinduism), Part I

[M] Eck - Seeing the Sacred (Darshan), [M] Fuller – Worship (Puja)

### WEEK THREE

**September 1:** Dance as Religion (Hinduism), part II: Bhakti

[M] Ramanujan – Afterword to *Hymns for the Drowning*, [M] Hawley – Mirabai

**September 3:** Dancers as Religious Specialists

[M] Gaston – Dance and the Hindu Woman

[M] Gaston – Vestiges of Religion in Bharata Natyam (328-340 only)

[M] Muddupalani

REC: [M] Srinivasan – The Hindu Temple Dancer: Nun or Prostitute?

### WEEK FOUR

**September 8:** Rasa

Swartz: 7-20, 47-52; [M] Goswamy - Selection from the *Essence of Indian Art*

**\*\*PAPER #1 DUE September 8<sup>th</sup> in class\*\***

**September 10:** Rasa

[M] Zarrilli – What does it mean to become the character?

### WEEK FIVE

**September 15:** Nayaka-Nayaki and Sringara/Bhakti Rasa

Jayadeva: *Gita Govinda*; [M] Gaston – Sacred and Profane in Bharata Natyam

**September 17:** Gita Govinda, continued (Studio)

Jayadeva: *Gita Govinda*

## WEEK SIX

- September 22:** Performance and Embodied Knowledge  
[M] Bauman, [M] Bell – Performance  
REC: [M] Hanna – The Representation and Reality of Divinity in Dance
- September 24:** Western and Indian Performance Theories  
[M] Schechner – Rasaesthetics, [M] Hanna

## WEEK SEVEN

- September 29:** *Natyasastra* and Sculpture  
[M] *Natyasastra* selections  
[Website] Lopez y Royo - Dancing Ancient Texts and Temple Sculptures  
<http://humanitieslab.stanford.edu/117/849>
- October 1:** Bharatanatyam: Contemporary Issues and the Diaspora  
Swartz: 87-98; [M] Meduri – Bharatanatyam: What are You?  
[M] Kattrak - The Gestures of Bharata Natyam  
REC: Coorlawala – The Sanskritized Body

## WEEK EIGHT

- October 6: TBA**  
**\*\*PAPER #2 DUE October 6<sup>th</sup> in class\*\***
- October 8:** Introduction to Kathak  
Swartz: 52-56; [M] Khokar – Kathak

## WEEK NINE

- October 13: FALL BREAK, no class**
- October 15:** Islamic Perspectives on Dance and Sufism in South Asia  
[M] Schimmel – Mystical Islam and Sufi Brotherhoods,  
[M] Flueckiger – Religious Identities, Authority, and Gender at the Sama  
REC: [M] Clothey – The Coming of Islam (ch 6 Religion in India)

## WEEK TEN

- October 20:** Sufi Lover/Beloved  
Nizami: *Layla and Majnun*
- October 22:** Layla and Majnun (Studio)  
Nizami: *Layla and Majnun*

## WEEK ELEVEN

- October 27:** Islamic Religion and Music: Ghazals, Qawwali and the Spiritual Concert  
[M] TBA
- October 29:** Courtesans of Lucknow, Nautch, Patronage  
[M] Chakravorty - From Nautch to Classical Kathak  
[M] Sundar – Where is your dance?  
**\*\*ESSAY #3 DUE October 29<sup>th</sup> in class\*\***

## WEEK TWELVE

- November 3:** Introduction to Bollywood: Dancers leap to the screen  
Dwyer: Chapter 1  
[M] Gopal and Sen – Inside and Out: Song and Dance in Bollywood Cinema  
REC: [M] Desai and Dudrah – The Essential Bollywood
- November 5:** Hindu Devotion on Film  
Dwyer: Chapter 2  
**\*\*PROPOSAL for Final Project Due November 5<sup>th</sup> in class\*\***

## WEEK THIRTEEN

- November 10:** The Courtesan as Heroine  
Dwyer: Chapter 3  
**November 12:** TBA (studio)

## WEEK FOURTEEN

- November 17:** Traditional vs. “Filmi” Dance, Religious and Secular Revisited  
Dwyer: Chapter 4  
[M] Chakravorty – Public Modernity and Classical Kathak (72-95 only)  
**November 19:** Integrative Discussion (possibly a few presentations)  
[M] Dwyer – Tales of Love

## WEEK FIFTEEN

- November 24:** Presentations  
**November 26:** **THANKSGIVING BREAK, no class**

## WEEK SIXTEEN

- December 1:** Presentations  
**December 3:** Presentations

**\*\*FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE ON DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2PM IN MY OFFICE MAILBOX, CARMICHAEL 123 (MAY BE TURNED IN EARLIER)**

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION (15%)

Attendance at each class session is required. A good classroom experience requires a collaborative effort and a student’s absence detracts from the learning process of the whole. If you are unable to attend a session, please notify me. Any more than **two** absences will result in a demarcation of 5 points for each absence. After **five** absences, I will administratively drop you from the course with a failing grade. Excused absences will be granted according to university policy and my discretion, and may involve make-up work to avoid a failing grade. Absence from class can occur in other forms as well. The expectation is that you will come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and with at least one question or comment in mind. Discussion involves speaking, active listening, and raising questions that will move the conversation towards collaborative understanding. Participation in any studio workshops will be based on effort and attention. These workshops are an opportunity to add body knowledge to our exploration of these two dance forms. Prior dance experience not required.

In the case of inclement weather, we will follow the policies of the university regarding cancellation, make-up classes, and late start scheduling. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor weather announcements (available through radio, TV, and internet sources).

### VOCABULARY/CONCEPT QUIZZES (10%)

Becoming familiar with the vocabulary of the dance traditions we will be studying is necessary in order to enter into a more in-depth conversation. There will be a few short quizzes on primary concepts in order to encourage you to keep up with the readings. **No make-up quizzes will be given.**

### ON-GOING CLASS JOURNAL (20%)

Two to three entries a week responding to/reflecting upon class discussions, readings, and dance and/or South Asian cultural experiences. This is a place in which to work out your questions and confusion, record insights, make connections, and express your on-going integration of the different ideas discussed in the course. Some questions may be given out in class to encourage further reflection on a topic.

### THREE RESPONSE ESSAYS (30%)

These papers (1000-1200 words each, exclusive of annotations) give you an opportunity to develop a critique, argue for a pattern, analyze a significant idea, and/or integrate a few of the themes of that section of the class into a cohesive written essay. No outside research required. Topics/questions will be provided in advance. **Fourth response paper optional: must be a performance analysis.** More details will be provided in class.

### FINAL PROJECT and PRESENTATION (25%)

This assignment is an opportunity to explore a topic in further depth that has caught your attention over the course of our inquiry into religion and dance in South Asia. The best projects are the ones in which you develop your topic in connection with your own particular interests. This may take the form of a research paper, but also could be a performance-based project – documentary, play, dance, workshop, etc. – or involve ethnographic fieldwork, journalism, and/or photography, for example. This is an individual assignment, but group work may be proposed if a case is made that it will strengthen the project. All projects must be approved by me in advance through a **written proposal due November 3rd in class.** More details will be discussed in class, and developed in individual meetings with me. A mini-presentation will be given in class on your project during the last few weeks of classes. The **final form of the project is due on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2pm** in my office in Carmichael 123 (may be turned in earlier).

### PAPER FORMAT AND DOCUMENTATION

ALL PAPERS SHOULD BE: DOUBLE-SPACED WITH 11 OR 12PT FONT AND 1 INCH MARGINS.

Make sure that all of your papers are properly documented. Please follow Turabian parenthetical style formatting for all of your papers. Sample guides for documenting parenthetical references can be found at: <http://library.uncg.edu/depts/ref/handouts/turabian.asp>. The important thing is to be consistent in your documentation and make sure that you provide accurate page numbers in order for readers to locate quotes. Wikipedia is not a valid resource for papers and should not be used or cited as a reference.

### LATE POLICY

IF YOU HAVE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WILL PREVENT YOU FROM TURNING WORK IN ON TIME, PLEASE CONSULT WITH ME. EVERY DAY (24 HOUR PERIOD) AN ASSIGNMENT IS LATE, I WILL DEDUCT 10 POINTS.

### COURSE GRADES

Grades for the course will be based on a combination of the following means of evaluating student performance, each having the value indicated:

- |     |                  |  |
|-----|------------------|--|
| (1) | 15% (75 points)  | Participation and Attendance                                       |
| (2) | 10% (50 points)  | Quizzes  |
| (3) | 20% (100 points) | On-going Class Journal   |
| (4) | 30% (150 points) | 3 Response Papers (1000-1200 words each, exclusive of annotations) |
| (5) | 25% (125 points) | Final Project and Presentation                                     |

The grading scale for the course will be as follows:

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 94- 100% = A  | 74-76.9% = C  |
| 90-93.9% = A- | 70-73.9% = C- |
| 87-89.9% = B+ | 67-69.9% = D+ |
| 84-86.9% = B  | 64-66.9% = D  |
| 80-83.9% = B- | 60-63.9% = D- |
| 77-79.9% = C+ | below 60% = F |

With 500 points to be earned during the semester, 470 points would constitute an A, etc.

Extra credit beyond the course requirements should not be expected. If a special event of relevance such as an expert speaker or film occurs, all students will have the same opportunity to benefit from it.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

I will penalize to the fullest extent any acts of cheating, including plagiarism, starting with giving an “F” or “zero” to the assignment or exam. All written work in this course *must* be original to you. If you consult outside texts, please cite these sources in the proper format. This pertains to all external sources (books, journals, lectures, websites). I am required to report all suspected cases of plagiarism to the VCAA. For further information, please review the university’s policy on academic integrity on plagiarism and other related issues at <http://www.unca.edu/aa/handbook/8.htm> (especially section 8.3.1)

In many cases, students do not *intend* to plagiarize. These examples are cited from the University of Albany website ([http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate\\_bulletin/regulations.html#integrity](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html#integrity)):

EXAMPLES OF PLAGIARISM INCLUDE: failure to acknowledge the source(s) of even a few phrases, sentences, or paragraphs; failure to acknowledge a quotation or paraphrase of paragraph-length sections of a paper; failure to acknowledge the source(s) of a major idea or the source(s) for an ordering principle central to the paper’s or project’s structure; failure to acknowledge the source (quoted, paraphrased, or summarized) of major sections or passages in the paper or project; the unacknowledged use of several major ideas or extensive reliance on another person’s data, evidence, or critical method; submitting as one’s own work, work borrowed, stolen, or purchased from someone else.

### **INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

This course seeks to be inclusive of people of all genders, races, cultures, abilities, and sexual orientations. Throughout the course, we will endeavor to embody the principles set out in the student handbook. Please be mindful that, when writing papers, you should use terms like people, world, us, human being, humanity, etc. instead of the terms man, mankind, and men. There are all types of exclusions that have taken place in the history of scholarship; as responsible scholar-citizens in contemporary society and in a global context, we want to make sure that we do not further the subtleties of exclusion. If you have questions about the policy, please feel free to consult with the professor.

***If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible.***