Dance and Gender
ART 2260
Spring 2011

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Class Time: MTh 8:00-9:20
Credits: 4
Pre-requisite: Permission of Instructor

Course Description
This course will examine the many ways in which gender is represented, constructed, and questioned through the dancing body. American stage performance and the training of stage performers will be our primary locus of study. However, the course will also engage in some investigation of social dancing, exotic dance, and dances of other cultures. Drawing from gender theory, feminist theory, queer theory, we will build a conceptual framework to help us analyze the embedded gender narratives in the dances we see and do.

Course Objectives
At the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

• Speak and write articulately about how gender is represented/constructed/questioned through specific dance performances or practices
• Situate their own arguments about dance and gender within the context of other major arguments and counterarguments that have been made (both in the literature and by peers)
• Think critically about a variety of forms of dance scholarship, dance film, and dance experiences, and integrate visual, textual, and kinesthetic information
• Write effectively about dance

Requirements:
Read and come to class prepared to discuss
Attend class regularly
Engage in constructive dialog with others
Complete weekly assignments, creative project, and final project

Attendance:
Participation in class is a necessary component of this course. Excessive absence will affect your quality of participation grade. If more than 6 classes are missed, no credit will be given for this course. Students are responsible for work missed due to absence.

Tardiness:
Out of respect for others, please arrive on time to class. Late arrivals will affect your quality of participation grade.

Assignments:

1. Readings and Videos
There will be 60-100 pages of reading per week for this course. See class calendar for specific assignments. Readings will be made available on e-reserve via Courses. Students will also be asked to view 1-3 videos per week online or on reserve in the dance seminar
2. **Short Writing Assignments and other Homework**
Short papers and/or responses to reading assignments will be assigned on a regular basis. Writing prompts will be given for some assignments. In the absence of specific questions or discussion topics, students writing a reading response may choose to analyze any one of the texts, compare two texts, raise questions for discussion, or relate the text(s) to critical frameworks used in class. In the reading responses, students should cite the text(s) specifically and to develop one or two ideas in a focused way over the course of 1-2 pages. To receive full credit, writing assignments must be submitted before or at the start of the class at which they are due to be discussed. Some writing assignments will be shared in class for peer review.

Other homework assignments will include some simple movement tasks (that do not require dance training) and “field” observations of movement around campus and in a dance class.

3. **Creative Project**
At the mid-point of the semester, students will be asked to consult their own lists of questions about the intersection dance and gender, consider the ideas they’ve studied thus far, and choose one issue to try to address. The task is to find a creative way to draw attention to a question, highlight an idea, and/or explore how dance can participate positively in cultural dialogue around gender. This project could take the shape of a short piece of choreography, a site-specific performance on campus or in the community, a performed lecture, a creatively structured piece of writing, or...

- **Proposal Due:** March 10
- **Draft Due for Peer Feedback:** April 10
- **Project Due:** April 17

4. **Final Paper**
The final assignment for this course is to write a 10-page paper analyzing a particular piece of choreography, dance film, or dance event (social dance or dance training) through the lens of gender. Students should cite relevant arguments for and against their ideas (gathered throughout the course). Students should also do some research to see what others have written about their chosen topic.

- **Proposal Due:** April 14
- **Paper Due:** May 5
- **Mandatory Second Draft Due:** May 11

**Required Performance Viewing:**

- **Alumna Showing:** Cookie Harrist ’12, March 7, 7pm, Serkin Center dance studio

**Suggested Performance Viewing:**
Plan Performance: Hannah Ruth Brothers, April 25 and 26, 7:30pm, dance studio
Plan Performance: Maia Talbot Holloway and Anna Lucia Uihlein, May 3 and 4, 7:30pm, dance studio
Plan Performances: Kate Roché-Sudar and Sophia Romeri, May 9 and 10, times TBA, campus locations TBA and dance studio

**Grading:**
- Quality of Participation 25%
- Reading Responses/Homework Assignments/Short Papers 25%
- Creative Project 20%
- Final Paper 30%

This syllabus is subject to modification by the instructor at any point during the semester.

**Bibliography:**


Class Calendar:

January 27  Opening the Conversation

Readings Due: Judith Lynne Hanna, Dance, Sex, and Gender  p. 6-12

Resources for defining Gender, Sex and Sexuality:
http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/sexual-orientation-gender-4329.htm
http://genderqueerid.com/defining-genderqueer
Assignments Due: Reflecting on the dancing that you care about right now, how are notions of gender and sexuality present in the dancing? What questions could you ask about gender and/or sexuality with regard to the dancing you do, watch, remember, aspire to, etc.?

What is meant by the terms “gender”, “sex” and “sexuality”? What kinds of questions can we ask about the intersections of dance and gender? What questions interest you?

January 30   Foundations 1 – Gender and Daily Movement

Readings Due: Iris Marion Young “Throwing Like a Girl” (21 pages)

Assignments Due: Answer the reading questions posted on Courses to help you absorb the main ideas of Young’s article

Observe the “comportment, motility, and spatiality” of men and women on campus or in town for a minimum of one hour. Thirty years after the publication of Young’s article and in a local culture that supports a range of masculinities and femininities, do you see any remnants of the kind of gender differences that Young described? (2 pages)

Study your own comportment, motility and spatiality. How are your physical habits similar to or different from people of other gender? Make a sequence of four simple daily actions (e.g. sitting down in a chair, taking a sip of coffee, etc.). First perform them as YOU normally would. Then find a more feminine way to perform the movements and a more masculine way. Use this process to research your own internalized ideas of feminine and masculine. Be prepared to demonstrate all three versions in class.

How is gender encoded in daily movement? How do you see gender performed by the bodies around you? What notions of gender do you have stored in your body?

February 3   Foundations 2 – Feminist Perspectives

Readings Due: Ann Daly “Unlimited Partnership” (from Critical Gestures) (5 pgs)
Alexandra Carter “Bodies of Knowledge: Dance and Feminist Analysis” 12 pages)

Video Viewings: Dancing: The Individual and Tradition

Assignments Due: Make a list of analytical approaches offered in the readings that you could apply when viewing and discussing a dance

Make note of questions about modern dance and about feminisms/feminist theory
What are feminist perspectives and how could we use them as a lens for viewing and discussing dance?

February 6  Foundations 3 – Integrating Feminist Theories, Masculinity Studies, and Queer Theory

Readings Due:  Ramsay Burt, The Male Dancer, Chapters 1 and 2 (48 pages)

Assignments Due:  List of ideas that could be applied to analyzing gender in dance
  Reading questions

What new kinds of questions do masculinity studies and queer theory prompt us to ask about the dances we see and do?
Where did the Western notion dance performance as feminine come from?

February 10  Applying the Questions

Readings Due:  none

Video Viewing:  assorted videos posed on course website

Assignments Due:  Written analysis of one video clip (2 pages)

What connections can we make between our own ideas about gender in dance performance and the theories discussed in the reading?
Where are there gaps between your ideas and the concepts presented in the texts? What kinds of arguments are missing from the approaches we’ve read thus far?

February 13  Ballet Bodies

Readings Due:  Cynthia Novack “Ballet, Gender, and Cultural Power” (14 pages)
  Alastair Macauley “Timeless Alchemy, Even When No One is Dancing”, plus ensuing critique (Huffington Post, Jezebel, Today show, etc.) and Macauley’s rebuttal “Judging the Bodies in Ballet” (6 pages)
  Marian Goldberg “Homogenized Ballerinas” (14 pages)

Assignments Due:  Drawing on Novack’s of using personal story as a way into analysis and Goldberg’s creative non-linear approach to scholarly writing, write a reading response that uses your own lived experience as a point of entry for discussing some ideas from the reading. Think first about your own experiences with ballet whether they are direct (e.g. ballet lessons, seeing performances live) or indirect (e.g. hearing references to ballet in popular discourse, seeing representations of ballet in popular media). Then consider these experiences in light of the readings. Have fun
with this writing! (Hint: Think about WHAT you want to say and then figure out HOW to best represent those ideas through a creative use of space and language.) (2-3 pages)

In what other ways do the bodily ideals and notions of gender in ballet affect women who dance ballet? Are women who do not dance ballet affected by the idea(l)s contained in ballet? How are men affected by the cultural presence of ballet?

February 17  The Balanchine Woman

Readings Due: Ann Daly “The Balanchine Woman: Of Hummingbirds and Channel Swimmers” and “Classical Ballet” (from Critical Gestures) (15 pages)

Video Viewing: The Four Temperaments by George Balanchine
Dancing for Mr. B: Six Balanchine Ballerinas

Assignment: Argument and Counterargument Pairs from Daly

How did George Balanchine change ballet and in particular, change the ballerina’s body? How can we reconcile the beauty of his work with feminist critiques of his treatment of women (on and off stage)?

February 20  Romantic Ballet

Readings Due: Susan Leigh Foster “The Ballerina’s Phallic Pointe” (24 pages)
Sally Banes “Giselle” (12 pages)

Video Viewings: Giselle (view in class)

Assignments Due: Reading questions

Are Romantic ballet’s images of women unrelentingly patriarchal? Is there room for female agency and desire in the staging of historical ballets? How did the images of women in Romantic ballet support or resist patriarchy at the time they were created?

February 24  Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo and Matthew Bourne’s Swan Lake

Readings Due: Bud Coleman “Ballerinos en Pointe” (from Choreography and Dance) (15 pages)
Excerpts from Susan Leigh Foster “Closets Full of Dances” (from Dancing Desires) (16 pages)

Video Viewing: Les Ballets Trockadero
Matthew Bourne’s Swan Lake
Assignments Due: Three Discussion Questions*
*avoid minutia (e.g. how do the Trocks find pointe shoes that are big enough?) and questions that cannot be answered via class discussion
Revise Creative Essay

What does it mean for men to claim roles that are historically female?
What kinds of gender commentaries are produced when an all male cast performs a dance that is traditionally heteronormative?

February 27  Isadora Duncan and Male Gaze Theory

Readings Due: Ann Daly “Dance History and Feminist Theory “ and “About Interpretation” (in Critical Gestures) (24 pages)
Laura Mulvey “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (from Routledge Reader in Gender and Performance) (5 pages)
Sharon Freidler “Fire and Ice: Female Archetypes in American Modern Dance” (from Dancing Female) (15 pages)

Video Viewing: selections from Duncan, Graham, etc.

Assignments Due: Argument and Counterargument

Is Duncan’s self-positioning of her performance as outside the realm of the erotic a strategy that could be employed by artists today?
What are archetypes? How have they been present throughout the many dances we’ve already seen? What or who is missing from the usual array of female archetypes? What are male archetypes? Do you embody one or more archetypes when you dance?

March 3  Ted Shawn’s Men Dancers

Readings Due: Julia Foulkes “Dance is for American Men” (from Dancing Desires) (26 pages)
Jennifer Fisher, “Maverick Men in Ballet” (from When Men Dance) (13 pages)

Video Viewings: The Men Who Danced

Assignments Due: Discussion Questions

How does the” masculine” dancing of Ted Shawn compare to the roles for men you witnessed in Romantic ballet, the work of Martha Graham, and the work of Balanchine?
Do you see echoes of the hyper-masculine movement style that Shawn embraced in any contemporary performance or social dance?

March 6  Contemporary Strategies: Muscles and More
Readings Due: Ann Cooper Albright “Techno Bodies” (from *Choreographing Difference*) (27 pages)

Video Viewings: Clips to accompany Albright article
Other clips provided by visiting artists Cookie Harrist, Delaney McDonough and Caity Richards

Assignment: Reading Questions

*What strategies do you see these choreographers using to engage questions of gender? How effective do you think they are?*

*Does a choreographer need to take a moral stand about his or her representations of gender?*

**March 7**  
See Alumna Showing: work-in-progress by Cookie Harrist, with Delaney McDonough and Caity Richards, 7pm Serkin Center Dance Studio

**March 10**  
More Strategies: Jane Comfort, Bill T. Jones, Urban Bush Women, Mark Morris

Readings Due: (pick two out of three)  
Nadine George-Graves, Chapter 2 of *Urban Bush Women* (34 pages)  
Gay Morris “What He Called Himself: Issues of Identity in Early Dances by Bill T. Jones” (from *Dancing Desires*) (18 pages)  
Gay Morris “Styles of the Flesh: Gender in the Dances of Mark Morris” (17 pages)

Video Viewings: (pick 3 out of 4)  
Urban Bush Women *Batty Moves*  
Jane Comfort *S/He* (excerpts)  
Bill T. Jones solo TBA  
Mark Morris *The Hard Nut*

Assignment: Creative project proposal due  
Gathering Strategies

*What other strategies do you see these artists using? What questions are they addressing?*  
*What does it mean to queer the representation of gender in dance? Must one identify as “queer” to use queer strategies?*  
*How does race affect notions of gender? Is Zollar’s vision of black femininity or Jones’s black masculinity similar to or different from the white femininities and masculinities we’ve seen in the work of other artists? What does it mean that most of the artists we’ve studied have been white? When is whiteness a subtext in gender studies?*

**March 13**  
Pina Bausch (and whomever else we want to talk about…)

Readings Due:  
Royd Climenhaga, Chapter 2 of *Pina Bausch* (30 pages)
Video Viewings:  Pina Baush videos TBA

Assignment:  Discussion questions

March 15 – March 30  Spring Break

March 31  Camp and Drag: Kings, Queens, and Dance Covers of “Single Ladies”

Readings Due:  David Bergman, Introduction to Camp Grounds (13 pages)
Carol Ann Tyler “Boys Will Be Girls” (from Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject)
Harmony Bench “’Single Ladies’ is Gay: Queer Performances and Mediated Masculinities on YouTube” (from Dance on its Own Terms) (20 pages)

Video Viewings:  Drag video clips
Single Ladies Clips (as referenced in the article above)

Assignment:  Reading Questions

How do drag queen and drag king performances address and/or contribute to dominant notions of gender? What issues are raised by drag king performances, as distinct from those raised by drag queen performances?

April 3  Camp and Self-Objectification as Feminist Strategies: Madonna, Lady Gaga and Miley Cyrus

Readings Due:  Pamela Robertson, Chapter 4 from Guilty Pleasures: Feminist Camp from Mae West to Madonna (23 pages)
Nancy Bauer “Lady Power” (NY Times blog)
Open letters between Sinead O’Connor/Miley Cyrus in Fall 2013

Video Viewings:  Music videos from Madonna, Lady Gaga, Sinead O’Connor and Miley Cyrus

Assignment:  Argument/Counterargument

Do Camp, Female Drag, and Self-Objectification function as feminist strategies in the work of pop icons such as Madonna and Lady Gaga?

April 7  Strip Tease  (or Creative Project works-in-progress showing – decide as a class)

Readings Due:  Katherine Liepe-Levinson, Introduction of Strip Show (36 pages)
Sheila Kelly, Introduction to The S Factor: Strip Workouts for Every Woman. (7 pages)
TBA
How does striptease play a role in cultural constructions of gender? Why do some women feel empowered by stripping? How does the empowerment that some women feel when stripping intersect with existing notions of femininity and female value?

April 10  Creative Project – Work-in-Progress Showing

Readings Due:  None
Video Viewings:  None
Assignment:  Creative Project – full draft

What is your work communicating to viewers/listeners/readers? How does the act of performing your creation give you new information about it?

April 14  Burlesque

Readings Due:  Michelle Baldwin, Chapter 3 in Burlesque: The New Bump-and-Grind (17 pages)
Rachel Shteir, Conclusion from Striptease: The Untold History of the Girlie Show (6 pages)
Video Viewing:  Burlesque documentary
Assignments Due:  Final Project Proposal

How is burlesque performance similar/different to other forms of stripping or exotic dance? How do the different waves of feminism view the performance of disrobing differently?

April 17  Creative Project – Final Draft Showing

Readings Due:  None
Video Viewings:  None
Assignment:  Creative Project – final draft

In what ways does the form of a presentation shape your understanding of its content?

April 21  Practice for Final Project

Readings Due:  none
Video Viewings: TBA

Assignment: Reflection on Creative Project

How do the many arguments about gender and sexuality that we’ve studied this semester intersect with one another?
Can you look at a work of dance both through your own eyes and through the eyes of the many authors we’ve read?

April 24  Dance Education

Readings Due: Jill Green “Foucault and the Training of Docile Bodies” (29 pages)
Sue Stinson “Journey Towards a Feminist Pedagogy for Dance” (13 pages)
Doug Risner “What We Know About Boys Who Dance” (17 pages)
Sherry Shapiro, chapter 6 in Pedagogy and the Politics of the Body (13 pages)

Video Viewings: Observe a dance class on or off campus

Assignment: Reflection on the gendered messages of your own dance education

What kind of citizens does dance pedagogy produce?
How do the conventions of dance training shape the behaviors of dancers outside the studio?
Given that the majority of students being trained in dance in this country are women, how do behaviors learned in dance class affect women’s roles in American society?
What ideas do men bring with them when they step into a dance class?

April 28  Social Dance

Readings Due: Katrina Hazzard-Donald “Dance in Hip-Hop Culture” (15 pages)
Miguel Muños-Laboy, Hannah Weinstein, & Richard Parker “Hip-Hop: Gender, Grinding, and Sex” (15 pages)
TBA

Assignment: Discussion Questions

How do you see gender play out on the dance floor at parties, clubs, etc.?
How do you participate in performing your own gender and sexuality through your dance movement, clothing, interactions, etc. when you go out dancing?
How can all the theories we’ve studied this semester shine light on other social dances such as contra dance, swing dance, country line dance, etc.?

May 1  Course Review + Tying Up Loose Ends
Where do we find ourselves at the end of this journey?
How/Do you see gender in dance differently now?
What experiences shifted/clarified your perspective most profoundly?
What questions stay with you?

May 5   Sharing of Final Papers

   Readings Due:       none

   Video Viewings:    none

   Assignment:        Final Paper  -- bring hard copies to class

May 11  Mandatory Revision of Final Paper Due