Course Description

In the Fall 2015 Project-Based Learning Course, *Dance, Ritual, and the Everyday*, we explore dance in a variety of social, cultural and artistic contexts using notions of ritual as a base. We consider the convergence between the sacred and secular and how dance has and continues to intersect with these dimensions of humanity. Utilizing a cross-disciplinary approach that includes research, movement practice and creative process, we will investigate distinctions between ritual and ritualized behavior, everyday ceremonies and their purpose, historical and contemporary ritual dance events, and the transformative power of dance within these contexts. We incorporate individual and collective rituals, both our own as well as ones celebrated in other cultures and explore the interface between ritual and performance. Themes explored include: space and place, time and life cycles, the body, gesture and the senses, nature and sustainability, myth, ethos, material culture and symbols, and states of consciousness. Throughout the semester we will engage in and create personally and community relevant dance rituals for our everyday life, and invite others to participate with us. As a final culminating semester project, each student will devise their own dance event related to course topics.

“Just as the ancients danced to call upon the spirits in nature, we too can dance to find the spirits within ourselves that have been long buried and forgotten.” – Anna Halprin
Course Objectives – by the end of the course students will be able to:

- Appreciate a wider range of global movement practices and ritual activities and the functions they serve across cultures.
- Articulate knowledge of how dance styles and artistic practices respond to changing social, political, cultural, environmental, or ethical dimensions.
- Learn and utilize methods to generate new creative processes and artistic products. Learn tools for translating research into embodied practice, while developing skills to expand range and relevance of student’s creative work.
- Bring kinesthetic and sensory intelligence into experiences of environmental awareness.
- Develop awareness of the body’s connection and interdependence with the earth and how daily decisions impact individual and natural resources.
- Effectively communicate how the arts, particularly dance, can contribute to a stronger ‘sustainability consciousness’, including promote healing, engender group solidarity, express individual or collective history, or nurture social change.
- Develop strategies and demonstrate ability to produce an original dance project integrating a variety of multidisciplinary modalities. Learn to create participatory or presentational dance events that have the capacity to impact individual, community and environmental renewal.

Calendar (subject to change)

Module 1 – Foundations of Ritual and Performance

Week 1-5: Sep 1 - Oct 1.

Module 2 – Applications of Dance, Ritual and the Everyday

Week 6-10: Oct 6-Nov 5.
Themes: extraordinary ordinary -- objects, altars, symbols, masks, myth, and connection to local environment. Select ritual dance forms from South Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America. Modern dance performed rituals.

Module 3 – Visioning-Creating Dance Ritual Events

Week 11-15: Nov 10-Dec 10.
Themes: Translating research into embodied practices; interweaving the elements, discovering the form. Dance as process, dance as product.

DANC488 Team

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Class Format and Expectations

**Class Participation is Essential.** In this course we explore and create dance in a variety of contexts using notions of ritual as a base. Considering class as community, we develop insights by learning from each other. We gain tools and discover new ways to create through small group explorations, collaboration, writing, drawing, sharing findings and discussions. Much will be done in class, some through online participation on ELMs: [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu).

**Attendance is Required.** Students are expected to arrive on time, remain for the entire class, be prepared for class, and actively participate in discussions and activities. Class preparedness and the quality of participation in class activities are factors in the determination of the final grade. See grading criteria for details. As classes are long, and credit is 4, more than two absences this semester will affect the participation aspect of your grade. Please notify me in advance (email) if you are going to have to miss class, and make sure to connect with a classmate to find out what was covered, get class notes, announcements and assignments. There are no class make-ups and no extra credit.

**Day-to-Day Class Schedule and Fieldtrips:** When we are working in the dance studio or other space, we will generally break for 10 minutes halfway through (3:20-3:30 pm approx) for restroom/snack break. Break time may be adjusted according to guest artists or field trips. Bring a snack with you vs. going to get/purchase food during that break, so we can stay together as a group. That time is also, in part to clear your head and allow class material to settle.

On campus/Off campus: Students will be expected periodically to travel to sites outside of the Center both on and off-campus. Every effort will be made to return back to the Center by the 5 pm class end time. If a fieldtrip or outside activity is expected to go beyond the parameters of class time, this will be arranged ahead of time. Some trips require outdoors activities so please be aware of weather expectations and adjust accordingly.

TDPS Productions: While I am aware of tech/dress rehearsals for those involved in TDPS shows this semester, please be in regular communication with me about your specific situation. Students are expected to check in with a classmate as far as any missed material.

Continued...
DANC 488 – Dance, Ritual, and the Everyday

Class Etiquette Guidelines.
Curiosity and the thirst for knowledge! Please be respectful of the learning environment while in class; help create and maintain a supportive, inclusive community. The instructor and TA are there to guide the class in the process of discovery; please respect them, guest artists and your classmates.

*Please remain in the classroom until a designated break. Use the bathroom before class or during break and bring snacks and a water bottle to class should you need to drink.

Technology Policy. Check your cell phones at break or after class. They are to be turned off and out of sight otherwise. Laptops may be used at designated times and for specific purposes outlined in class. Please show respect for your instructors and fellow classmates by using computers only for note taking and in-class research, not for social sites, email, or non-class related tasks. Students observed spending time on non-class related tasks will be considered absent for that day and may be asked to leave the classroom.

Classwork/Homeplay

Weekly Readings, Reflective Writings or Dance Studies. There will be weekly readings or investigative tasks that you will be asked to accomplish related to course topics. These include, readings to be discussed in class, watching videos or live performances, conducting different kinds of research, or creating a dance study. These often include reflections to incorporate in your journal or be turned in separately or posted on ELMs. Some of these will be shared with classmates and contribute to an ongoing group conversation. It is your responsibility to check ELMs for updates about course assignments or schedule changes. NO EXCUSES! Please bring journals and note-taking materials to each class. Note taking is highly encouraged as is journaling.

Journals: Keep a weekly journal to write reflections on class experiences, including dance explorations, learning different dance styles, guest artist presentations, in-class or outside observations of live or filmed dance, as well as reading responses (unless a separate paper is requested). Consider your journal
as ‘field notes’ to collect and create inspirations from course experiences. There will be readings or video viewings assigned throughout the semester that you will be asked to comment on in your journal. You may be asked to answer a particular question as a journal prompt. You will also use journals to reflect on creative process and collect, play, and design your final semester project.

**Journal specifications:** Please use an artist notebook (blank pages) of at least 8 1/2 x 11. Journals should contain **at least two entries per week** (but could be more) – 1) one entry directly related to in-class experience, assigned reading, observation or class question; 2) another entry should be about creative process and include notes, images, poems, maps, collages, found object with description, storyboards.

**Structure of entries:** You can create the journal in chronological order by date of entry, or make two sections (just indicate how you chose to structure it in an introductory paragraph when turning it in).

**Date each entry and indicate a title at the top of the page.** Entries should be at least a full page in length. They should reflect engagement with course materials. Make it fun and colorful, do artwork, collage, poetry! Creating dance can happen on multiple levels. Journals help to synthesize experience, and discover its application to your dancing and to your life.

**Journal collections due:** 09/24, 10/22, 11/19, and 12/10 (minimum of 8 entries each time).

**Papers/Projects.** In addition to weekly assignments, there will be two mid-semester paper-projects, and a final course project that includes creating a participatory or presentational dance event, writing a paper and giving a class presentation. More information and guidelines with specific details will be posted on ELMs. Please mark your calendar with the following dates:

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**Assignment Dates**

**Journal collection dates:**

- **Sep 24, Oct 22, Nov 19, and Dec 10.**

**Major Assignments**

- **Oct 1:** (Module 1)
  - Sacred Space Paper and Dance Study

- **Nov 5:** (Module 2)
  - Modern Choreographer/Dance Style Ritual Study Paper w Movement Phrase

- **Dec 8 & 10:** (Module 3)
  - Final Project Sharing & Paper

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**Akram Khan – Speaking about Vertical Road**

*More and more, I am pulled reluctantly towards a strong horizontal current, which is a place where time is moving at such high velocity, that even our breath is forced to accelerate just in order for us humans to survive. And I have always believed, that it is in our slow exhalation, where the sense of this deep spiritual energy resides. In a world moving so fast, with the growth of technology and information, I am somehow inclined to move against this current, in search of what it might mean to be connected not just spiritually, but also vertically.*
Grading. Grades will be computed as follows:

- **35% Participation**
- **20% Journals**
- **20% Mid-semester Reading Responses, Papers and Dance Studies**
- **25% Final Project**

Grading Criteria

**35% Participation.** Quality and degree of participation in class discussions and activities. This class requires the establishment of a supportive, inclusive community. This aspect of the grade reflects your contribution to that atmosphere, your willingness to participate fully in class activities and to engage thoughtfully in small group activities and class discussions. Uneven attendance and/or a pattern of late arrivals will negatively affect this portion of the grade. When you are absent, arrive late, or walk out in the middle of class, you affect more than just yourself. Please see attendance policy on page 3.

**20% Journals.** Depth of engagement with weekly journal entries (curiosity, creativity, clarity).

**20% Mid-semester Reading Responses, Papers and Dance Studies.** Quality of engagement with mid-semester papers and dance studies; thoughtfulness and accuracy of written papers or reading responses.

**25% Final Project.** Quality of final project and degree to which it integrates course concepts; accuracy of paper; quality, articulation and depth of engagement with dance event; and thoughtfulness of class presentation.

Late Paper Policy: Papers/projects must be submitted on the due dates to receive full credit. Late papers will be accepted up to one week from the due date, however, a late penalty of one grade lower on that assignment will apply.

**Plus Minus Grades:** The implementation of plus minus grading began in fall 2012. Under the new policy, quality points for each letter grade from A through D will reflect plus and minus components of the grade, as shown below. The plus/minus system will apply to both undergraduate and graduate courses.

- A+ = 4.0, A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, D+ = 1.3, D = 1.0, D- = 0.7, F = 0.

The University's present marking system defining the standards for letter grades is retained under the new plus/minus policy. The present marking system is as follows:

**Rubric For Grading**

- **A** = An ‘A’ means you have excellent in-class participation, offering insightful and constructive comments or questions, you actively involve yourself in weekly assignments and you demonstrate deep understanding of reading and other course material. Your written work has richness and depth, and displays high research and writing integrity, including, well constructed themes with consistent development, accurate facts and supporting examples, correct grammar and punctuation, and appropriate reference citations. Your final project is well researched and prepared, your presentation compelling and engaging. Final exam shows excellent mastery of course content. All work is completed on time.

- **B** = ‘B’ means you have good in-class participation with general comments and questions, you keep up with weekly assignments, and you show sufficient understanding of the reading and other course material. Written work is competent and accurate, has few errors and is written with theme and basic follow-through of ideas with adequate supporting documentation. Final project is well-researched and articulated, presentation well thought through. Final exam shows acceptable understanding of course content. All work is turned in on time.

- **C** = ‘C’ means you have attended most classes with moderate participation, completed most weekly assignments and readings. Your written work may be thematically weak with some inaccuracies, but shows improvement. Your presentation is coherent and clear, and all work was turned in on time. Final exam shows a basic understanding of course content.

- **D** = ‘D’ signifies that you demonstrate poor class participation (tardiness, lack of comments or questions, disruptive behavior), and complete partial weekly assignments and reading of the material. You do not provide all assignments or papers, written work is factually inaccurate or exhibits weak writing skills. Final project is poorly researched and planned, imprecise or incoherent. You show limited understanding of the material in the exam.

- **F** = Failing to participate in class, including, using cell phones, doing other work and activities not related to class, not completing weekly assignments and readings, giving a presentation or turning in a research paper or written final exam will result in an ‘F’.
Campus Sustainability at the University of Maryland

“The University Strategic Plan firmly establishes sustainability as part of the mission of the institution and sets the goal for the University to be ‘a national model for a Green University’” [source: www.sustainability.umd.edu/content/about/university_strategic_plan.php]

In May 2015 I attended The Chesapeake Project Workshop on sustainability, designed to help University of Maryland faculty integrate sustainability themes into our existing courses across all disciplines. Through these revised courses, students will have the opportunity to explore sustainability through multiple lenses to gain a more comprehensive understanding on the subject and consider the importance of this issue for their own lives, for their communities and the world. During the semester we will consider sustainability as an aspect of our study of dance, ritual and the human body. Through readings, movement exercises, work with guest artists, discussions and the final project, we will discover ways that dance can promote a stronger ‘sustainability consciousness.’

This course is committed to sustainability, defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Source: Brundtland Commission Report, "Our Common Future," 1987). I encourage each of you to visit the University of Maryland’s Campus Sustainability website, or speak with me, to learn more about the exciting work being done across campus to preserve our collective future through sustainable practices. http://www.sustainability.umd.edu/

University Procedures and Policies Specific to TDPS Courses

Please take note of the following University policies regarding academic accommodations, religious observances, academic integrity and civility. All University of Maryland students and faculty are expected to abide by these policies.

Attendance and absences: Please refer to attendance policy on page X. 3

In May 2011, the UMD Senate and President passed a new policy for excused absences at: http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/V-110G.pdf. A student may provide a self-signed note when missing a single lecture, recitation, or laboratory, with the understanding that providing false information is prohibited under Code of Student Conduct. Self-signed notes are NOT accepted during "Major Scheduled Grading Events.” "Major Scheduled Grading Events" are printed in the Syllabus. Specific questions concerning the TDPS policy on non-consecutive medical absences may be addressed with the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the School. Students are expected to inform the instructor in advance of medically necessary absences, and present a self-signed note documenting the date of the missed class(es) and testifying to the need for the absence. This note must include an acknowledgement that (a) the information provided is true and correct, and (b) that the student understands that providing false information to University officials is a violation of Part 9(h) of the Code of Student Conduct. [The university's policies on medical and other absences can be found at: https://faculty.umd.edu/teach/attend_student.html].
Absence due to religious observance will not be penalized, however, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor within the first 3 weeks of class regarding any religious observance absence(s) for the entire semester. The calendar of religious holidays can be found at: faculty.umd.edu/teach/attend_student.html-religious

Academic integrity: The student–administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge prohibit students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council: www.shc.umd.edu.

Students who engage in academic dishonesty in this course will receive no points for the assignment in question, and will be immediately reported to the Honor Council and Office of Judicial Programs for further action. There will be no warnings. Remember, cheating, plagiarism or other types of fabrication are never worth it.

Students with disabilities: The School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with a documented disability should inform the instructors within the add-drop period if academic accommodations are needed. To obtain an Accommodation Letter prepared by Disability Support Service (DSS), (a division of the University Counseling Center) please call 301-314-7682, e-mail dissup@umd.edu, or visit the Shoemaker Building for more information.

Copyright notice: Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted and they may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor.

Emergency protocol: If the university is closed for an extended period of time, classes will continue via directed independent study and ELMs.

Course evaluations are a part of the process by which the University of Maryland seeks to improve teaching and learning. Your participation in this official system is critical to the success of the process, and all information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. (Instructors can only view group summaries of evaluations and cannot identify which submissions belong to which students.) Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Please go to: www.courseevalum.umd.edu. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

Academic Accommodations for students who may experience sexual misconduct. The School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland is committed to providing support and resources, including academic accommodations, for students who experience sexual or relationship violence (as defined by the University’s Sexual Misconduct Policy). To report an incident and/or obtain an academic accommodation, contact the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct at 301-405-1142. If you wish to speak confidentially, contact Campus Advocates Respond and Educate (CARE) to Stop Violence at 301-741-3555. Disclosures made to faculty are not confidential and must be reported to the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct. For more information visit www.umd.edu/Sexual_Misconduct/. Diversity. The School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body. As your Instructor/Professor, I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate and unacceptable. [See Statement on Classroom Climate, http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content_section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540].