



ETHNOGRAPHY OF DANCE PRACTICES

DCE 402

SPRING 2025

T, Th 12noon-1:15pm

ASU Tempe Campus, Wilson Hall 114

1/13/2025 - 5/2/2025 (C)

INSTRUCTOR: Shan Chuah

OFFICE LOCATION: Bulldog Hall 115, 611 E Orange St., Tempe, AZ 85281

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OFFICE HOURS: By Request

Course Description

This course introduces ethnography as a dynamic and evolving methodology for exploring and writing about dance practices. Students will engage with diverse dance cultures and examine how anthropological perspectives, and theoretical frameworks have historically been used to understand dance across cultural contexts. Emphasis will be placed on the shifting focus towards the embodied, conscious experience of dance.

Through this lens, students will critically interrogate ethnography as both a tool and a process for observing, documenting, and analyzing dance practices within varying cultural landscapes. They will develop essential skills in movement observation, descriptive writing, and critical thinking, while questioning assumptions and exploring the ethical implications of ethnographic research.

By the end of the course, students will be equipped to apply ethnographic methodologies to their study of dance, fostering a deeper understanding of the interplay between cultural practices, embodied movement, and societal meaning.

Enrollment Requirements

Pre-requisite: DCE 201 with C or better; ENG 102, 105, or ENG 108 with C or better. Pre-requisite knowledge: Students are expected to know basic concepts about dance culture and cross-cultural processes introduced in DCE201 Dance, Culture, and Global Contexts.

Course Objectives

- 1. Understand and Evolve Ethnographic Methodologies**
Define and critique ethnography as a methodology for studying dance practices, emphasizing its evolution toward a more conscious, inclusive approach.
- 2. Develop Research and Analytical Skills**
Cultivate skills in movement observation, descriptive writing, critical thinking, and the use of material sources, including primary resources from archives like the Cross-Cultural Dance Resources Collections.
- 3. Foster Cultural Awareness and Ethical Practice**
Enhance self-awareness, cultural humility, and ethical understanding in exploring global dance practices and the roles of researcher, practitioner, participant, and witness.
- 4. Engage with Diverse Perspectives**
Explore the aesthetics and purposes of dance across cultures, integrating theoretical and embodied perspectives to deepen understanding of cultural practices.
- 5. Conduct Fieldwork and Applied Research**
Learn to design and carry out ethnographic fieldwork, combining new and existing knowledge to analyze, document, and interpret dance practices within their cultural contexts.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will:

1. Understand and be able to discuss ethnography and its evolution as a research methodology to study various dance practices and their contexts [HUAD L01 and L03; Group 1]
2. Apply ethnographic methods to increase observation skills of movement, recognize and discuss movement beyond the physical, and examine dance practices to make meaningful connections to/with/among them [HUAD L01, L02, L03 and L04; Group 1]
3. Practice accessing and utilizing material sources for study of dance practices [HUAD L02 and L04; Group 1]
4. Identify the different roles that exist in ethnographic research and appraise their value and connection to one another in ethically conducting such research [HUAD L01, L02 and L03; Group 1]
5. Recognize own cultural histories and their influence on how we experience 'other' dance practices; question perspectives and approaches to this [HUAD L01, L02 and L03; Group 1]
6. Demonstrate improved writing skills by producing papers and a portfolio presentation of critical investigation of topics in the course [HUAD L06; Group 1]
7. Develop a theoretical basis for conducting fieldwork and a practical grasp on principles for registering and archiving material collected from fieldwork [HUAD L02 and L04; Group 1]

General Studies Gold Syllabus Statements

This course fulfills the ASU **Humanities, Arts and Design** General Studies requirement. Students completing a Humanities, Arts and Design course will be able to:

1. Analyze cultural creations or practices in historical or contemporary context. (Student learning outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5)
2. Interpret the formal, aesthetic, and creative elements in literary, visual, or cultural texts. (Student learning outcomes 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)
3. Articulate relationships among tradition, innovation, individual creativity, and communal expression in cultural creations or practices. (Student learning outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5)
4. Communicate narratives, ideas, or arguments using such elements as evidence, creativity, and critical thinking. (Student learning outcomes 2, 3, 6, 7)

What to Expect

- Key concepts are explored through required readings, class discussion, assigned media viewing, guided research activities, and written assignments.
- Emphasis is on ethical behavior and collegiality in creative collaboration projects undertaken with peers. Each student is responsible for participating fully, communicating respectfully, being accountable, maintaining equity of effort, and generating supportive enthusiasm for group success.
- This upper-level course promotes an open, creative, supportive, and respectful class environment for students to engage with multiple perspectives and an exchange of rich ideas.
- Completing the course successfully will require time management, effort, class participation and enthusiasm to share and gain knowledge together.
- **NOTE:** Graduate students or undergraduate students taking the course for honors credits will have additional assignments to be determined in consultation with the professor.

Course Access

Your ASU courses can be accessed by both my.asu.edu and myasucourses.asu.edu; bookmark both in the event that one site is down.

Additional Requirements

This course requires the following technologies

- Web browsers ([Chrome](#), [Mozilla Firefox](#), or [Safari](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) (free)
- [Adobe Flash Player](#) (free)
- Webcam, microphone, headset/earbuds, and speaker
- Microsoft Office ([Microsoft 365 is free](#) for all currently enrolled ASU students)
- Reliable broadband internet connection (DSL or cable) to stream videos.

Classroom Technology (Your specific Technology Usage policy)

- It is encouraged that you bring technology (cell phones, tablets and laptops) to class to help you take notes and do research, however, please turn off cell phone ringers and do not use your phone to make personal calls in class or use any technology to use social media in class. Do not answer your phone in class. If you believe you are receiving an emergency call, please step outside to take it.

Student Success

To be successful:

- check the course daily
- read announcements
- read and respond to course email messages as needed
- complete assignments by the due dates specified
- communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
- access [ASU Student Resources](#)

Required Primary and Secondary Materials

Required Readings will be available on Canvas with each Module.

Assignments

Attendance, Class Participation, and Reading Responses (20 points)

Active engagement in the course is essential. Throughout the semester, students will complete assigned readings and respond to prompts on the Canvas discussion board.

Written Assignments, Field Reports, and Peer Reviews (20 points)

Students will conduct short field trips to explore and practice ethnographic methods. By attending dance events from diverse cultures—familiar and unfamiliar—they will participate in and observe the events, honing their skills as novice ethnographers. Students will submit field reports, reflecting on their experiences, observations, and insights gained from the field. Students will engage in a peer feedback process, reviewing and offering constructive insights on their classmates' field reports. This collaborative process will help refine their own and others' work.

Curate a Dance Exhibition (20 points)

Students will curate a dance exhibition. This project challenges students to creatively translate their findings into an accessible and engaging format that highlights the cultural, historical, and aesthetic dimensions of the dance practices they studied.

Class Presentation on Ethnographic Project (20 points)

Toward the end of the semester, students will deliver a 15-minute presentation summarizing their ethnographic project. The presentation allows students to complete the ethnographic cycle by articulating their key insights in a professional and academic format.

Final Essay on Ethnographic Project (20 points)

Students will submit a final essay (2000–2500 words) synthesizing their ethnographic experience. The final essay serves as a comprehensive documentation of their ethnographic journey, demonstrating both their methodological and analytical skills.

These assignments are carefully designed to guide students through the entire ethnographic process—from reading and responding to research, conducting fieldwork, analyzing data, and presenting your findings. Each component builds on the last, ensuring a holistic learning experience in the ethnography of dance practices.

Grading, including grade scale

97-100	A+
93-96.9	A
90-92.9	A-
87-89.9	B+
83-86.9	B
80-82.9	B-
77-79.9	C+
70-76.9	C
60-69.9	D
0-59.9	E

20 Attendance, Class Participation, Discussion, Readings with Response

20 Papers (2 @ 10pts each) - 1000-1500 words

- 20 Final Essay - 2000-2500 words
- 20 Curating a Dance Exhibit
- 20 Class Presentation

Rounding Policy

If points are half or more, the grade will be rounded up to the next whole number.

Y Grade

The Y (Satisfactory) grade is an option for all classes and does not impact DARS requirements, although it is NOT included in GPA. If students will have the option for a Y grade in this course, then please include the conditions and processes they should follow to request a Y grade.

Incomplete Policy

The incomplete is not a routine process for successful completion of coursework. Rather, it is a limited academic exception intended to address situations where a student who has been doing acceptable work experiences exceptional extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control preventing their timely completion of the course. In evaluating requests for incompletes, I not only assess the nature of the extenuating circumstances and whether such circumstances were beyond the student's control, but also whether the student's record of performance in the class demonstrates the likelihood for successful completion of the remaining coursework. All incomplete contracts must also be approved from the academic unit leads. Finally, while policy dictates the maximum time for contract completion, I take into account what materials are outstanding and consider the appropriate extension. Statistically at ASU, the shorter the contract length the more likely students will be able to successfully complete their classroom obligations. You can read more about the incomplete policy at <https://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm203-09.html>

Late or Missed Assignments Policy

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, MUST be submitted to the designated area in Canvas. Assignments submitted late will incur a 10% deduction per day beyond the due date, up to a maximum of five days. Assignments submitted more than five days late may not be accepted and will require instructor approval.

Please follow the appropriate University policies to request accommodation for religious practices or to accommodate a missed assignment due to university-sanctioned activities.

Subject to change

The instructor reserves the right to change portions of this syllabus (assignments, deadlines etc.) by verbal instructions during scheduled class time. The student is responsible for noting changes and acting accordingly. Grading and absence policies are not subject to change.



Anti-Discrimination Statement

(Authored by HIDA students, Olivia Hernandez, Camille Bruya, Josephine Ortiz Merida, Sloane McFarland and Milla Nguyen.)

The Herberger Institute of Design and the Arts at Arizona State University upholds, values, and cherishes student and faculty diversity, no matter the circumstance. As members of the ASU community, we are charged with challenging injustices and social inequities of any kind through education. These values are an integral part of our standing as an institution and must be upheld by all members of the ASU community, including but not limited to all Herberger Institute of Design and the Arts staff, faculty and students. The call is clear and present at ASU for every member of our community to do their part in fostering a culture of Inclusive Excellence that contributes meaningfully to lasting equity for all. For students and faculty alike, this culture of Inclusive Excellence creates role models, broadens perspectives, combats negative stereotyping and enables artists, designers and makers of the 21st century to think creatively, critically and, above all, compassionately about our impact on the world at large.

This course and Arizona State University welcomes all students regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, Veteran status, citizenship status, nationality and other diverse identities that we each bring to class. Each of us bear intersectional perspectives that are born out of our backgrounds and identities, and each of us has a contribution to make towards our culture of Inclusive Excellence. As your instructor, I expect that all of my students abide by the following community agreements:

- to bring a willingness to deeply inspect your own assumptions about the world, identifying areas in which you may need to unlearn implicit biases and behaviors
- to help others learn by respectfully voicing your thoughts and reactions, acknowledging that they are partial to and shaped by the way you make sense of the world
- to demonstrate a curious and eager inquiry into how others make sense of the world

Diversity of experiences, backgrounds and opinions are essential to cultivating a rich academic environment which in turn strengthens our capacity to be ethical and empathetic creative thinkers. I aim for students of all backgrounds to be well served by this course and that the diversity students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. The materials of this course, including readings and assignments, will reflect this commitment to diverse and inclusive knowledge. If a student feels that there has been a discrepancy between my teaching practices and the university's commitment to Inclusive Excellence, you are encouraged to discuss your concerns directly with me. I value your learning experience and welcome all opportunities to enrich the efficacy of this course for all student groups. Here are resources available to all students to report incidents of bias, harassment, and other forms of discrimination inside and outside the classroom:

- Unsure of whether the concern you experience, or witness falls under the criteria of bias, harassment, and other forms of discrimination? You can fill out the Herberger Institute Community of Care form at herbergerinstitute.asu.edu/caring describing the situation. One of the members of the Herberger Institute Behavioral Response Team will connect with you.
- Anyone who believes that they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in violation of this policy, or who believes that this policy has been violated, should report the matter immediately to the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities or the Dean of Students office or directly fill out an incident report.

- Unless a person is restricted by law from doing so, any employee who is informed of or has a reasonable basis to believe that sexual harassment has occurred, shall immediately report all information regarding the occurrence(s) to the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities or the Title IX Coordinator or the Dean of Students office.
- More reporting pathways are available to students on the University's Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation policy page.



Policies and Procedures

Attendance Policy

Attendance and participation for the duration of the class period is mandatory. If you have more than 3 absences (unexcused), your final grade will be lowered 1/3 grade for each subsequent absence (i.e. B to B-). You should notify me by email prior to absence if possible and provide doctor's note where applicable. Repeated tardiness and leaving class early will be recorded, and as a result, your final grade will be lowered. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of his/her absences.

Excused absences related to religious observances/practices in accord with ACD 304-04, "Accommodation for Religious Practices." Students may be excused for the observance of religious holidays. Students should notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester about the need to be absent from class due to religious observances. Students will be responsible for materials covered during their absence and should consult with the instructor to arrange reasonable accommodation for missed exams or other required assignments.

Excused absences related to university sanctioned activities in accord with ACD 304-02, "Missed Classes Due to University-Sanctioned Activities." Students required to miss classes due to university sanctioned activities will not be counted absent. However, absence from class or examinations due to university-sanctioned activities does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of the absence. Students should inform the instructor early in the semester of upcoming scheduled absences and immediately upon learning of unscheduled required class absences. Reasonable accommodation to make up missed exams or other required assignments will be made. Consult the instructor BEFORE the absence to arrange for this accommodation.

Line-of-duty absence and missed assignment policy

A student who is a member of the National Guard, Reserve, or other U.S. Armed Forces branch who misses classes, assignments or examinations due to line-of-duty responsibilities shall have the opportunity to make up the coursework in accordance with SSM 201-18 Accommodating Active Duty Military Personnel. This accommodation also applies to spouses who are the guardian of minor children during line-of-duty activities. This policy does not excuse students from course responsibilities during their absence. Students should first notify the Pat Tillman Veterans Center of their activation and then the instructor to discuss options.

Instructor Absence Policy

Students should wait for an absent instructor 15 minutes in class sessions of 90 minutes or less, and 30 minutes for those lasting more than 90 minutes, unless directed otherwise by someone from the academic unit.

Academic Integrity and Student Honor Code

The ASU student honor code affirms the commitment of ASU to uphold the values, principles, and ethics of academic integrity. All students are expected follow the code which states,

"We, the students of Arizona State University, have adopted this code as an affirmation of our commitment to academic integrity and our participation in ethical education. We embrace the duty to uphold ASU's Honor Code, and in light of that duty, we promise to refrain from academic dishonesty. We pledge to act with integrity and honesty to

promote these values among our peers. We agree to always abide by the Sun Devil Way and uphold the values of the New American University."

Every student is expected to produce his/her original, independent work. Any student whose work indicates a violation of the ASU Academic Integrity Policy including cheating, plagiarism, and dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action. Plagiarism is defined as deliberately passing off someone else's words or ideas as your own. All necessary and appropriate sanctions will be issued to all parties involved with plagiarizing any and all course work. Plagiarism and any other form of academic dishonesty that is in violation with the Student Code of Conduct will not be tolerated. Arizona State University and the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts expect the highest standards of academic integrity from all students. Failure to meet these standards may result in suspension or expulsion from the university or other sanctions as specified in the ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy (<http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>), "[e]ach student must act with honesty and integrity and must respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments." This policy also defines academic dishonesty and sets a process for faculty members and colleges to sanction dishonesty. Violations of this policy fall into five broad areas that include but are not limited to:

- Cheating on an academic evaluation or assignments
- Plagiarizing
- Academic deceit, such as fabricating data or information
- Aiding Academic Integrity Policy violations and inappropriately collaborating
- Falsifying academic records

I sanction any incidents of academic dishonesty in my courses using University and HIDA guidelines. Should you have any questions about whether or not something falls subject to this clause, feel free to contact me or review the university policy on academic integrity at the above link. Per ASU policy, a student may not avoid the consequences of academic dishonesty by withdrawing from a course and may be placed back in the course in order to face sanctions resulting from academic integrity violations. You are responsible for abiding by this policy.

Student Learning Community Conduct

ASU adheres to a university-wide Student Code of Conduct. The philosophy behind this policy states, the aim of education is the intellectual, personal, social, and ethical development of the individual. The educational process is ideally conducted in an environment that encourages reasoned discourse, intellectual honesty, openness to constructive change and respect for the rights of all individuals. Self-discipline and a respect for the rights of others in the university community are necessary for the fulfillment of such goals. The Student Code of Conduct is designed to promote this environment at each of the state universities. You are expected to treat your instructor and your fellow classmates with respect and kindness. In all correspondence and in Discussion Board postings, you should show respect for the viewpoints of others who may disagree with you or see things from a different perspective. Criticizing, ridiculing, insulting, or belittling others will not be accepted. Keep in mind that electronic communications do not have the advantage of nonverbal cues that are so much a part of interpersonal communication. Humor or satire can sometimes be misinterpreted in strictly electronic communication forums. In addition, all students should be aware of their Rights and Responsibilities at Arizona State University.

Herberger Institute Professionalism Standard

Further, Herberger Institute students are expected to adhere to the Herberger Institute Professionalism standards. Professionalism entails a set of skills critical for workplace and creative successes, and professional behavior creates an atmosphere promoting safe and high-quality spaces for constructive learning as well as individual and community well-being. The institute expects students to show professional behavior with clients, members of the community, and others in the university environment (e.g., classrooms, clinics, labs, studios) including members of the faculty and administration, other students and staff. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a

professional manner, including arriving on time with an open attitude to learning, engaging in ethical behavior, resolving conflicts in an appropriate manner at all times, holding partnership information confidential, and using prudence in written and verbal communications. Professionalism includes:

- self-control
- respectful communication
- following all university and studio safety protocols and behavioral expectations
- attendance and punctuality
- honesty and integrity.

Copyright

Students must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work, unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement. The course content, including lectures and other handouts, is copyrighted material. Students may not share outside the class, upload, sell, or distribute course content or notes taken during the conduct of the course (see [ACD 304-06](#), "Commercial Note Taking Services" for more information). THIS CONTENT IS PROTECTED AND MAY NOT BE SHARED, UPLOADED, SOLD, OR DISTRIBUTED.

AI Code of Conduct

Use of Generative AI Permitted Under Some Circumstances or With Explicit Permission

Some assignments in this course may include or allow use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), including ChatGPT or related tools for the creation of text, images, computer code, audio, or other media. The instructor will inform you when, where and how you may use these tools, and provide guidance for attribution. Use of generative AI tools in any other context in this course will be considered a violation of the ASU Academic Integrity Policy, and students may be sanctioned for confirmed, non-allowable use. If at any point you have questions about what is permitted, contact the instructor to discuss before submitting work.

Statement on ASU's Community of Care standards

The Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts complies with the spirit and the letter of ASU's community of care standards with regard to social distancing, masking, and student, faculty, and staff safety and well-being. <https://eoss.asu.edu/communityofcare>

Disruptive, Threatening, or Violent Behavior

In the classroom and out, students are required to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes an environment that is safe and conducive to learning and conducting other university-related business. All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student will be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. Such incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the policies and procedures described in Section 104-02 of the Student Services Manual, available at <https://public.powerdms.com/ASU/documents/1560490>

Withdrawal

If you are unable to complete the course, it is your responsibility to arrange for withdrawal from the class. You will not be automatically withdrawn and unless you are officially withdrawn from the course you will receive a final grade based upon the total points you have earned for the semester. Students are required to pay all tuition and fees for any registered course unless enrollment is officially cancelled during the 100% refund period. Please visit the Academic Calendar to review the withdrawal deadlines for this semester. For more information on Drop/Add and Withdrawal visit <https://students.asu.edu/drop-add>

Special Accommodations

Your instructor will make any reasonable adaptations for limitations due to any disability documented with the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS), including learning disabilities. Please contact the instructor during office hours or by appointment to discuss any special needs you may have. You must contact the SAILS to process the paperwork for special course accommodations. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the SAILS (<https://eoss.asu.edu/drc>); Phone (480) 965-1234; TDD (480) 965-9000). Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered SAILS should contact SAILS immediately. Students should contact the Center on the campus that your class is being held. Campus-specific location and contact information can be found on the SAILS website. SAILS offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday. Check the above website for eligibility and documentation policies (<https://eoss.asu.edu/drc>). This is a very important step as accommodations may be difficult to make retroactively. If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, in order to assure that you receive your accommodations in a timely manner, please present this documentation to me as soon as possible so that your needs can be addressed effectively.

Title IX and Mandated Reporter Policy

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Policy on Sexual Discrimination

Policy on sexual discrimination as described in ACD 401, "Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation", including the fact that the instructor is a mandated reporter and therefore obligated to report any information regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination. Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

Student Services & Resources

You will find a list of student resources at <https://eoss.asu.edu/resources>

Resources included are advisement, registration, financial aid, disability services, counseling, tutoring, library, and more.

Novel Coronavirus Information and Updates

You will find information and Frequently Asked Questions here
<https://eoss.asu.edu/communityofcare>

You will find Novel Coronavirus updates and announcements here
<https://eoss.asu.edu/health/announcements/coronavirus>

Non-emergency Student Care process

If you are concerned about your own or a fellow student's well-being, please review the information and complete the form at herbergerinstitute.asu.edu/caring and the HIDA Care Team will reach out. FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 911. (Be prepared with the physical address of the location.)

Academic Calendar and Important Dates

The academic calendar can be found here <https://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar>

