

FA260

Dance it Out!

Seminar Leader: Justin F Kennedy

Times: Mondays 10-13h15

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Office Hours by appointment

Course Description

Dance it out! Dance to get out of your own way! Dance spirit forward! Dance from your desires! Dance out all you already possess!

'Dance it Out' is an experimental dance lab underlining the emancipatory potential of dancing and embodied knowledge. This course builds on principles of movement research to provide tools for open performance scores. Students take turns improvising and witnessing instant compositions under various prompts upheld for longer durations—treating the gaze itself as a tangible material.

The lab utilizes movement, vocal, and imagination-based tasks alongside sustained focus to tap into both artistic and spiritual processes. Physical and vocal warm-ups incorporate meditation, breathwork, Qi Gong, Activated Somatics, and lymphatic drainage. Meanwhile, 'Dance it Out!' freely accesses multiple bodily archives, including Authentic Movement, Body-Mind-Centering, Katherine Dunham techniques, mythical creatures, corporealities, and the uncanny.

Known and unknown fictions—collective myths and dreams—will emerge to inform and shape the dances, discursively framing the work within a radical Afro-Caribbean queer politic. Through this process, students will develop a range of performative skills and affects, navigating a continuum between spirit possession and tools for everyday life. The latter part of each class will involve watching and analyzing dance on film and other artworks, linking these embodied experiences to larger geopolitical movements and artistic mediums.

Requirements

Students are expected to:

-arrive 5-10 minutes early to change clothes and settle in, wear clean, comfortable, and warm attire for dancing for longer durations, where one may sweat or come into physical contact with others, bring whatever one needs to stay hydrated and nourished (The class will include a break), practice basic hygienic standards for a movement class (clean socks, layers if necessary, etc.)

-come prepared with journals and writing utensils to engage in durational dance scores with openness, curiosity and concentration, and to give feedback about their experiences and what they witness, as well as to watch and analyze clips of filmed dance and artworks.

-be punctual

-to respect any urgent access/bodily needs of the individual students as well as the group at large including any personal covid restrictions (wearing mask, keeping distance, etc.)

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Students should not attend class when they test positive for COVID-19.

Assessment

There will be 2 assignments given throughout the course: One mid-term assignment in the form of a written review of a live performance. The deadline is, by the latest 16 October 2026. A final assignment will be due during class 16 November 2026+ 30 November 2026, where students will be assigned to direct and perform in each other's individual and collaborative micro scores (between 5-20 minutes), followed by automatic writing/response tasks and an assessment from the teacher.

Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations

Assignments (artworks, essays, performances, oral presentations) that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). The Professor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will

receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

The student's grade will be assigned according to 3 criteria: the quality of participation during all classes (attendance intended as an active, focused/concentrated, cooperative engagement with the activities proposed) (60%), the level of commitment and personal contribution both at a physical and creative/artistic level (25%), and filmed dance review and the self-directed open scores (15%). Please note that for this class punctuality is of great importance, and being late to more than one class will affect the student's grade.

Schedule Fall 2026

WEEK 1 / 31 Aug 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Opening and Closing the Portals/Intro to Authentic Movement Practice and Altered States

Warm up: Seated or laying Meditation, improvised 3-part activation, introduction to breathwork (Longer Exhales) & intro to sonic landscaping, micro trance states exercises ('Sausage Finger' & Arms and Legs through the floor)

Durational Dance Score: Authentic Movement + One Filter?

Anatomical Considerations: Peripheral vision, regulation of nervous system, The Lungs, the diaphragm, the belly, the throat

Discussion Topics: Community Guidelines. Translate the word 'Trance' or 'Channeling' into your native language. Discuss tools for Improvising Together / Tools for finding materials while also composing together (Ensembling-am k nmqgle gl pc_jrg k c) / the by-product of catharsis? Memesis / Mirroring? Djmaigle= Discuss Politics of Black Radical Queer Liberation through the Five Portals of Dinkinesh Method (when feedbacking, question one's own power and position. Commitment to non-violent communication and accountability once and if another is harmed/ how to be critical of our bias as we witness each other and others as subjects), Solo Abandon on film, discuss intersectionality.

Film/Discourse: Hpc k w Qf_u Nf_qc Qfgdrg le Glbcv &0.0.', U s Rq_le U g j b l c q q &0./0'* Mark Leckey – Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore (1999), Gaspar Noé – Climax (2018), Korakrit Arunanondchai – with history in a room filled with people with funny names 4 (2017), Dan Graham – Rock My Religion (1983–1984), Drug and Party Scene from Martine Syms' African Desperate 2022.

Readings about murmuration from Sierra Pickett and Kei Miller. Solo Abandon (You're on your own trip with others' Text on Altered States: Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley alongside Timothy Leary on psychedelics, Video from Gaia about Channeling.

5 minute meditation

WEEK 2 / 7 Sept 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Staying Grounded in the Organic / the unreliable goopiness

Warm up: Guided meditation, improvised 3-part activation,

breathwork (root chakra pranayama \$ pmmr qms lbg l e rmecrfcp), 6 Healing Sounds

Durational Dance Score: Sending sounds to and from the organs, "Kneeding" the organs. BMC organ exploration, Octopus

Anatomical Considerations: Organic Matters

Discussion Topics: Discuss the complications of ethnographic gaze, cite Tina M. Campt's 'The Black Gaze', Ria Higler's book 'Movement Research - Stories and Journeys'

Film/Discourse: 'Kneeding' from Jefta Van Dinther, Issawa rituals, Text from the Shed about Cyphers/Group Assisted Trance/Ceremony, Of Men and Gods (Des Hommes et Dieux), Quickeners- Jeremy Shaw, the work of Phyllis Akinyi.

WEEK 3 / 14 Sept 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Oceanic Feeling / the Ghastly and Fluid

Merfolk

Warm up: Seated meditation with water mudra, somatic activation, breatheology (background noise sounding), Qi Gong Water Meridian Exercise/ 4 elements (Water) Exercise, 6 Healing Sounds, Lymphatic drainage.

Durational Dance Score: Aquatic Coordinations/Pleasure Principle/BMC cellular fluids, internal wave energy (Sistema), docking stations, recharging NPC, embodied restorative justice

Anatomical Considerations: Cellular Fluids

Discussion Topics: Merpeople Associations /Water Spirits, Interference and Climate Justice (Restorative vs Transformative Justice 'Mia Mingus'), Bodies of Water (Hydrofeminism), how do we describe othered subjects? Discuss the complications of the ethnographic gaze, cite Tina M. Campt's 'The Black Gaze'

Film/Discourse: JFK Apocalypso, Mayfield Brooke's 'Whale Fall', Julien Creuzet's work, Jaamil Olawale Kosoko – Black Body Amnesia / Seasick, Okwui Okpokwasili – Adaku's Revolt & Bronx Gothic, Ligia Lewis – Water Will (in Melody), Wura-Natasha Ogunji – Speculative Aquatic Performance Art, Paintings, Drexciya Paintings by Ellen Gallagher, The Otolith Group: Hydra Decapita, Arthur Jafa, The Girl with All the Gifts, Contact Juggling, Merpeople folklore, The Lure, Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley (queer Afro-caribbean merperson folklore), hydrofeminism, Sedna (Inuit merperson folklore) about femme revenge, a scene from 'Merpeople' (Netflix).

WEEK 4 / 21 Sept 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: The Uncanny

Animatron

Warm up: Seated meditation with fire mudra, Osho rose dynamic mediation, glitch choir

Durational Dance Score: Zombie Animatronics (Incremental micro-movements), Stop-Motion Animation, Simulation Studies (Bruno Listopad), Stereotypical robots

Anatomical Considerations: Vascular System, The Endocrine System, outer musculature

Discussion Topics: Black Meme, Glitch Feminism (Legacy Russell)

Film /Discourse: Uncanny Valley, Bina48, Na'vi Shaman, Jordan Wolfson's artworks, Five Nights at Freddy's, Italian Carnival (surveillance animatrons), Sami Schalk's 'Bodyminds Reimagined', more on Bodyminds (Trans Care)

WEEK 5 / 28 Sept 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Zombies

Warm up: guided meditation, Pranayama (alternative nostril breathing in constructive rest pose, sounding (the cackle & zombie linguistics), operatic co-speculation(‘Zombie Apocalypse Banal’), Lymphatic drainage.

Durational Dance Score: Zombie hording (including demonic gestures and celebratory Zombie), Emancipation through restrictive/constrained movements, limbs falling off the bone, faceless sphere as head (Bruno Listopad), the cursor.

Anatomical Considerations: intracellular breathing, liver, outer musculature

Discussion Topics: Discuss how ableism functions in dance and the many metaphors that the figure of Zombie evoke (ie: Viral culture, contagion, colonial revenge, apocalypse, etc.)

Film/Discourse: Zombie (1979) Advertisement, Racial and gender terror through the lens of Jordan Peele’s films, MJ’s Thriller, Night of the Demons (HD) - Angela’s Dance, Poor Things (Film), Frankenweenie, ‘World War Z’, Octavia Butler’s ‘Bloodchild’.

Extra Vampire-lore: The Story of Black Panther/ Red Wolf, Singaporean Vampire Folklore, “Nosferasta”- New Red Order (The Indigenous Present), True Blood scenes.

WEEK 6 / 5 Oct 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Shapeshifting

Chimera

Warm up: Guided mediation, Call and Response, Kundalini Kriyas, Sonic Landscaping.

Durational Dance Score: Shapeshifting, Hybrid dislocation, Chimera

Anatomical Considerations: Polycentric Control: Moving multiple centers of the body (e.g., hips, chest, and head) in independent, overlapping rhythms simultaneously - Tawala Technique

WEEK 7 / 12 Oct 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Object-Oriented Movement Research.

In preparation for class, students should bring in objects (in pieces or that can be parceled (ie. water pipes, etc.)) and conduct physical research with the objects (see how the objects inspire movement and vice versa)

Warm up: Guided mediation, Wim Hof Method, Kundalini Kriyas, Sonic Landscaping.

Durational Dance Score: Object-oriented movement research

Anatomical Considerations: worlding, creativity, left brain function, neurology.

Discussion Topics: Discuss Animism.... cite Nkisis of Palo Mayombe.

Film Discourse: Show the choreographic works of Dana Michel and Chilean artist, Rodrigo Sobarzo.

WEEK 8 / 19 Oct 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

NO CLASS

FALL BREAK OCT 19-25

Week 9 / 2 Nov 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Folkloric Footwork

MEGASTROLL

Film Discourse: Dabke

Week 10 / 9 Nov 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Headbanging

Film Discourse: Moroccan Femmes in private.

Week 11 / 16 Nov 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Open Jam

Free flow improvising /composing in realtime (agree on filters or not)

Traveling in and out of session; jamming with the parameters of Voice and movement/
total integration?

WEEK 12 / 23 Nov 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Warm-up: Seated Mediation and 3-part activation.

Theme: Micro-Score presentations: Students will direct and perform in each other`s individual and collaborative micro scores (between 5-20 minutes), followed by automatic writing/response tasks and an assessment from the teacher.

WEEK 13 / 30 Nov 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Micro-Score presentations / **Takeaway Inventory / Recollecting the Archive**

Warm Up: recall warm-ups (both physical and vocal)

Journaling Task (from Trans Care): to recall materials from the class

Film Discourse: Students can share filmed dance clips that inspire them.

WEEK 14 / 7 Dec 2026 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Cave Rave (3-hour dance party live djed by the seminar leader) and closure.