

AFR 229 Syllabus

Dances Born of Oppression in Argentina and Brazil

Berea College
2006 Short Term Course

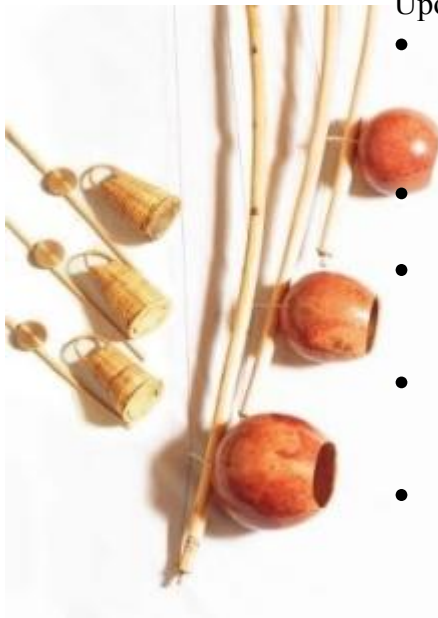
Instructors: by José Pimienta-Bey and Jan Pearce



Course Goals and Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will...

- Better appreciate the significant contribution to the arts that have grown out of the music and dances that accompanied the enslaved African populations when they were brought to the Americas.
- Be able to discuss the role folk arts such as dance plays in oppressed subcultures.
- Describe their first-hand knowledge of how the dominant cultures in Brazil and Argentina view dance forms born of oppression.
- Be able to discuss what is known about the historical and social roots of the Brazilian Capoeira and the Argentine Tango.
- Understand a selection of the basic dance movements of the Brazilian Capoeira as well as the rules of lead and follow for selected basic dance codes of the Argentine Tango.
- Be able to discuss form, style, structure, and pacing in choreographies of Brazilian Capoeira and Argentine Tango
- Engage in thoughtful conversation about the reasons art forms are suppressed and/or adopted by the dominant culture.



Course Description: Dance has been called “poetry in motion,” naturally leading one to try to decipher the puzzle of meaning that is being expressed through various dance forms. By not only practicing basic dance steps but also learning the social and historical context of the development of two distinct South-American dance forms students will be better equipped to interpret first-hand the poetic idioms expressed in two dances with related roots: the Brazilian Capoeira and the Argentine Tango. These dances forms have much in common: created by those in abject poverty, claiming roots in the dances brought to the Americas by enslaved Africans, both dances were originally condemned by the wealthier classes, and are now widely embraced by those of affluence. This international travel course will travel to Brazil and Argentina in search of the rationale for this surprising embrace. This course satisfies elective courses in the Dance Minor as well as in the African and African-American Studies Minor and may be used to satisfy the GSTR 209 Arts in Context requirement.

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Required Texts:

- Almeida, Bira. Capoeira, a Brazilian Art Form: History, Philosophy, and Practice, (1986).
- Thompson, Robert Farris. Tango: The Art History of Love, (2005).
- Course Packet: Includes syllabus; itinerary; current travel, history, and cultural information on Argentina and Brazil, as well as the essay *Tough Guys Do Dance* by Robert Farris Thompson.

Grading Structure:

20%	Advance Capoeira Paper
20%	Advance Tango Paper
10%	Presentation
10%	Group discussions
10%	Teamwork and overall constructive participation
10%	Daily Journal required during travel portion including final reflective entry after travel
10%	Dance development in Capoeira
10%	Dance development in Tango

Possible Course Grades*:

A, A-: All Aspects Outstanding
B+, B, B-: Overall Good Work
C+, C, C-: Acceptable Competence
D+, D, D-: Minimally Adequate
F: Unworthy of Credit
* Please see the current Berea College Catalog for a more detailed explanation of the College-wide meanings of assigned grades.

Before writing the two papers, you are expected to have read ALL of both of your course texts as well as the Robert F. Thompson article "*Tough Guys Do Dance*" found in your course packet.

Both papers and the presentation are due January 3rd.

THE CAPOEIRA PAPER: Using your course text Capoeira: A Brazilian Art Form by Bira Almeida, along with Robert F. Thompson's article "*Tough Guys Do Dance*" found in your course packet as the primary references, write a 5-7 page paper which addresses/answers the following questions:

1. Why is *Capoeira* most typically called an "*Afro-Brazilian*" or "*Brazilian*" art, rather than an *African* art- practiced within Brazil? What does the available scholarship say about its historical roots/origins? What clear "African" cultural elements are found?
2. What is the *berimbau*? What is its basic role in the "game" of Capoeira?
3. Often associated with Asian-based martial arts, is the philosophy ("religion") of Buddhism (*Zen* in particular). What- if any- philosophical or ideological teaching(s) exist within the art of Capoeira? Provide some explanation with specific examples, as to how Capoeiristas are instructed to view life and the larger world.

THE TANGO PAPER: Using your book Tango: The Art History of Love by Robert F. Thompson as the primary reference, write a 5-7 page paper which addresses/answers the following questions:

1. Why are the African roots of *Tango* largely unrecognized by most people today? What does the available scholarship say about tango's historical roots/origins? What clear "African" elements are found in the music? What clear "African" elements are found in the music?
2. What other historical elements in the history of tango come from a oppressed subcultures?
3. How did tango develop from a dance that was originally danced by only the poorest classes of the Argentine society into the respectable social dance that it is today?

THESE PAPERS MUST BE DOUBLE-SPACED, 12-FONT, AND DOCUMENTED WITH THE APPROPRIATE FOOTNOTES OR ENDNOTES. USE THE "CHICAGO-STYLE" FOR DOCUMENTATION FOR BOTH PAPERS.

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THE PRESENTATION: Using the course textbooks as your primary references, create a 10-minute presentation that compares and contrasts a selected aspect of Capoeira and Tango. Use of PowerPoint is encouraged, but not required. In developing this presentation, you are free to focus on any aspect of these two distinct art forms: the music, the dances, the historical development, etc.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is mandatory at all course activities, and students must follow course rules 24 hours per day everyday even during un-programmed time. Mandatory course activities include all class discussion times, regular dance classes, special presentations, cultural visits and events, and excursions of all types related to the program. In addition, a mandatory curfew will be imposed on some evenings, and all students are expected to adhere strictly to these announced curfews. The academic program has priority over all other activities the student may be interested in engaging in while abroad. During all un-programmed times while abroad, students are required to stay in a subgroup of three or more members of the course. Subgroups of students three or more who leave the rest of the group during un-programmed times are required to record the time that they leave, their planned destination, and the time that they return. Failure to adhere to any of these policies is grounds for failure of the course and early return to the US.

Alcohol Policy: Alcoholic or any other kind of substance abuse or intoxication will be considered a serious violation of the code of conduct. The social drinking of wine is part of the culture in South America, so this alcohol policy is designed to allow students to experience this particular cultural activity in a way that differs from on the Berea College campus. However, consumption of more than one alcoholic drink per day will be considered "alcohol abuse" and offenders will be subject to failure of the course and early return to the US.

Dress Code: Some course activities require specific attire, including formal clothing and appropriate footwear. All of these items are included in the packing list. Students who fail to pack these required items or who fail to dress appropriately to course activities are subject to early return to the U.S.

Sleep Policy: Sleep patterns in some areas South America can be radically different than in the United States, and the instructors understand that this can take time to adjust to. However, programmed events will take only a small portion of each day, so students are expected to plan sufficient rest that they are rested and alert at all programmed activities. Repeated failure to plan in sufficient rest time, as evidenced by repeated drowsiness at planned course activities, may result in the restriction of subgroup privileges, mandatory curfew, and if these measures are not sufficient, failure of the course and early return to the US.

Early Return to the US: If a student fails to behave in a responsible manner and/or to uphold the agreed upon Code of Conduct, he or she is subject to failure of the course and early return to the US. Irresponsible behavior that may lead to failure of the course and early return to the US include (but is not limited to) failure to attend any of the course activities, failure to stay with at least 2 other member of the group, failure to log their coming and goings during un-programmed times, drinking more than one alcoholic drink in a day or other substance abuse, sleeping during course activities, offensive or disruptive behavior, etc. Early return to the US will include the immediate return to Berea, Kentucky. If this occurs, the student is responsible for all additional expenses associated with this return. These expenses will be added to the student's account and must be paid along with all other course fees and any other charges on that account.

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Packing – Suitcases and Luggage

- 1 travel wallet (large enough to hold passport) small enough to fit under clothing
- 1 daypack (a bookpack is fine)
- 1 personal item (purse or other small pack like a fanny pack)
- 1-2 Medium-Large Suitcases - no more than 42 pounds each when packed and with extra space for bringing back purchased items

Packing – Clothing and Other Items to Pack

- Passport, International ID, and Health Documentation – do not place in checked luggage!!
- 1 suit jacket - MEN: 1 suit jacket WOMEN: 1 suit jacket or dress sweater good for cool evenings at dressy events
- 1 rain jacket or windbreaker for rainy weather
- 1 small packable umbrella
- 1 baseball cap or sun hat for beach
- socks for a week--be sure to include dark socks and white socks for tango and capoeira
- a week's worth of casual shirts for sightseeing
- 2-3 pairs shorts for sightseeing
- 1-2 pairs jeans or other comfortable casual pants
- 1-2 pairs casual shoes or sandals good for walking and sightseeing
- a weeks's worth of underclothes
- 2-3 Tango and dressy outfits --MEN: 2-3 button shirts, belt, and 2-3 long dress pants
WOMEN: 2-3 outfits dress pants or dresses or skirts (for tango)
- 1-2 pairs smooth-soled dressy shoes that stay on feet well for tango dancing
- 3+ Capoeira outfits - a week's worth of all white T-shirts and
1-2 pairs loose long white pants (may be white sweats)
- 1 pair sneakers for Capoeira dancing
- 2 sets of sleepwear
- 1 lightweight robe
- 1 swimsuit and beach towel
- 1 pair sunglasses
- chapstick
- suntan lotion
- toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, and other toiletries
- medicine and other necessary personal items
- address book
- bug spray that repels mosquitoes
- 1 NEW notebook and 1-2 pens for journaling
- Woolite (1 small bottle or several packets) for washing clothes in the sink

Packing – Optional Things to Consider Bringing

- cards, games, balls, books for leisure time, stationary
- make-up and/or inexpensive jewelry
- washcloth
- camera with lots of film or camera with extra storage cards and extra batteries--do not place in checked luggage!!
- personal stereo or mp3 player with headphones--do not place in checked luggage!!
- hair dryers and/or curling irons
- electricity travel converter (if needed for any electrical items)
- laundry bag -for separating dirty clothes inside luggage
- 1 16 oz water bottle or canteen to take to dances
- 1 flashlight with extra batteries for reading in bed

Things you should NOT Consider Bringing

- Expensive electronics like computers or TVs
- Alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs