



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Šokis, kultūra ir visuomenė Azijoje Dance, Culture, and Society in Asia	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered
Coordinator: Kristina Dolinina	Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies, Vilnius University University str. 5, LT-01513 Vilnius

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)
	Optional

Mode of delivery	Period when the course unit (module) is delivered	Language(s) of instruction
Lectures and seminars	Spring semester	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: English language proficiency (level B2 required)	Additional requirements (if any): None

Course (module) volume in credits	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	133	32	101

Purpose of the course unit (module): program competences to be developed		
<p>This course introduces students to the fundamentals of cultural and dance/movement anthropology and explores key performative traditions across Asia, with particular focus on South Asia. It examines dance as a cultural and social practice through which communities express identity, belief, and change. Students will learn to analyze dance within its historical, political, and religious contexts, and to recognize how embodied practices shape cultural meaning and social relations. By engaging with classical and contemporary sources, students will develop critical perspectives on embodiment, ritual, gender, globalization, and cultural hybridity. The course aims to enhance intercultural understanding and analytical skills, equipping students with tools to interpret performative cultures in Asia through both theoretical and contextual lenses.</p>		
Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Students will get acquainted with social and cultural contexts from historical perspective and their influence on the performative culture of the region.	Lectures, group discussions and presentations, analysis of case studies and performance excerpts.	Active participation in the seminars, testing, Q/A sessions, group and individual presentations, individual case study analysis.
Students will be able to identify and describe major performative and dance traditions in Asia within their cultural and historical contexts.		
Analyze the relationship between body, movement, and society using theoretical frameworks from anthropology and performance studies.		
Understand different styles of performativity in the region, identify structural and technical		

elements and interpret dance as a form of cultural expression, ritual communication, and social commentary.		
Will learn to understand how changes in societies, historical, ideological and political transitions can influence the cultural practices and performative appearances and will be able to apply this knowledge to other case studies.		
Students will get introduced to basic classical texts and contemporary critical literature on the subject.		

Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours						Self-study work: time and assignments		
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Internship / work placement	Contact hours	Self-study hours	Assignments
1. Theoretical framework: introduction to the regions socio-cultural, religious, political and historical contexts	2						2		Attendance.
2. Theoretical framework: Anthropology of movement, ethnography of performance, and critical frameworks for studying dance in cultural context (Dance History, Dance Philosophy, Dance Ethnography, Dance Analysis, Performance Studies)	2		2				4	10	Participation in class activities on regular basis; reading of academic literature (Vatsyayan, 2011: pp. 1-19; Vatsyayan, 1974: pp. 1-20); preparing for seminar assignment (Drid, 2004: pp. 1-40; Barz, Cooley2008: pp. 3-41, 108-140; Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 1995: pp. 321-354; Chakravorty, 2006); Q/A session.
3. Ritual, Religion, and the Sacred Body: Ritualized movement and performance in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Indigenous traditions of Asia; dance as devotion and offering	2						2	4	Participation in class activities on regular basis; reading of academic literature (Bose, 2001; Coomaraswamy, 1918: pp. 18-37, 56-66); Q/A session.

4. Dance as Cultural Heritage and National Identity: Modernity, nation-building, and revival movements; how dance shaped postcolonial and nationalist discourses in India, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia	2						2	2	Participation in class activities on regular basis; reading of academic literature (Soneji, 2012: pp. 112-160; Walker, 2010); Q/A session.
5. Knowledge transition and everyday practice: inscribing the body	2						2	2	Participation in class activities on regular basis; reading of academic literature (Zarrilli, 2000: pp. 65-100); Q/A session.
6. Gender, Power, and Performance: The dancing body and gender identities; courtesan traditions, female agency, and the politics of representation.	2						2	4	Participation in class activities on regular basis; reading of academic literature (Dutt, Munsu, 2010: pp. 185-209; Soneji, 2012: pp1-26; Vatsyayan, 2011: pp. 93-99); Q/A session.
7. Classical traditions	2		2				4	10	Participation in class activities on regular basis; reading of academic literature; preparing for seminar assignment (Vatsyayan, 1974); Q/A session.
8. Folk dances	2		2				4	10	Participation in class activities on regular basis; reading of academic literature; preparing for seminar assignment (Vatsyayan1976); Q/A session.
9. Tradition and modernity: Global contexts, Popular Culture and Contemporary Transformations Movement, Migration, and Diaspora: Transnational circulation of dance forms; embodiment, identity, and hybridity in diasporic South Asian and East Asian communities	2						2	4	Participation in class activities on regular basis; reading of academic literature (Chakravorty, 2009, 2011; Katrak, 2011: pp. 1-25; Dankworth, David, 2014: pp.13-36); Q/A session.
10. Dance, Politics, and Resistance: Performance as activism and protest; community dance, feminism, and postcolonial critique in Asian contexts	2		2				4	2	Participation in class activities on regular basis; reading of academic literature (Chakravorty, 2009, 2011; Katrak, 2011: pp. 1-25; Dankworth, David, 2014: pp.13-36; Reed, 2003); Q/A session.
11. Project: field work or case study.	2		2				4	30	Reading of academic/methodological literature on field work (Ashcroft,

									Griffiths, Tiffin, 1995); preparing and presenting case study.
12. Preparation for the exam.								23	Reading critical literature.
Total:	22		10					32	101

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Class work	40 %	During semester	During the semester students will have to be active in the lectures and seminars, ask questions, comment, read the given literature, involve into the discussions, etc. Depending on the number of students and their interest, some presentations will be done in groups or individually on chosen performative classical or folk tradition.
Fieldwork/case study/essay and presentation	60 %	At the end of the semester	<p>Students will need to prepare and present fieldwork/case study/essay on the chosen (preferable South Asian) tradition or performative event– live or from the internet. The assessment is based on student’s ability to accurately and creatively apply theoretical knowledge in the analysis of a selected object, the accurate use of terminology, originality and validity of the analysis.</p> <p>10 (excellent). Excellent, exceptional knowledge and abilities. 95-100% of questions answered correctly. 9 (very good). Very good knowledge and abilities. 85-94 % of questions answered correctly. 8 (good). Knowledge and abilities are above average. 75-84 % of questions answered correctly. 7 (average). Average knowledge and abilities; there are a few not essential mistakes. 65-74 % of questions answered correctly. 6 (satisfactory). Knowledge and abilities are below average; there are mistakes. 55-64 % of questions answered correctly. 5 (weak). Knowledge and abilities meet the minimum requirements. 51-54 % of questions answered correctly. 4, 3, 2, 1. Minimum requirements are not met.</p>

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Compulsory reading				
Vatsyayan, Kapila	1976	Traditions of Indian Folk Dance		New Delhi: Clarion Books
Vatsyayan, Kapila	2011	Asian Dance. Multiple Levels		Delhi: B.R. Rhythms
Coomaraswamy, Ananda	1918	The Dance of Śiva. Fourteen Indian Essays.		Available https://archive.org/details/danceofshivafourt01coomuoft/page/n5
Williams, Drid	2004	Anthropology and the Dance. Ten Lectures		Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press
Buckland, Theresa Jill	2006	Dancing from Past to present Nation, Culture, Identities		The University of Wisconsin Press

Barz, Gregory; Cooley, J. Timothy	2008	Shadows in the Field. New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology		Oxford University Press
Vatsyayan, Vatsyayan	1974	Indian Classical Dance		New Delhi: Publication Division
Chakravorty, Pallabi	2011	Global Dancing in Kolkata	In <i>A Companion to the Anthropology of India</i>	Available in www.academia.edu
Chakravorty, Pallabi	2006	The limits of Orientalism: Classical Indian Dance and the Discourse of Heritage	In <i>Reorienting Orientalism</i>	Available in www.academia.edu
Chakravorty, Pallabi	2009	Moved to Dance: Remix, Rasa, and New India	In <i>Visual Anthropology</i>	Available in www.academia.edu
Dutt, Bishnupriya; Munshi, S. Urmimala	2010	Engendering Performance. Indian Women Performers in Search of an Identity		New Delhi: Sage Publications https://www.researchgate.net/publication/298699119_Engendering_performance_Indian_women_performers_in_search_of_an_identity
Walker, E. Margaret	2010	Revival and Reinvention of India's Kathak Dance	In <i>MUSICultures</i>	Available in www.academia.edu
Zarrilli, Phillip	2000	Kathakali Dance-Drama. Where the Gods and Demons Come yo Play		Routledge
Zarrilli, Phillip	1984	"Doing the Exercise": The In-Body Transmission of Performance Knowledge in a Traditional Martial Art	Asian Theatre Journal, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Autumn, 1984), pp. 191-206 (18 pages)	https://www.jstor.org/stable/1124564
Reed, Susan	2003	The Politics and Poetics of Dance	Annual Review of Anthropology. 27. 503-532.	DOI:10.1146/annurev.anthro.27.1.503
Ashcroft, Bill; Griffiths, Gareth; Tiffin, Hellen	1995	Post-colonial Studies Reader		London and New York: Routledge
Bose, Mandakranta	2001	Speaking of Dance. The Indian Critique.		New Delhi: D.K. Printworld
Optional reading				
Walker, E. Margared	2014	India's Kathak dance in Historical Perspective		Ashgate (www.academia.edu)
Dankworth, E. Linda; David, R. Ann	2014	Dance Ethnography and Global Perspectives. Identity, Embodiment and Culture		Palgrave Macmillan
Soneji, Davesh	2012	Unfinished Gestures. Devadasi, Memory, and Modernity in South India		Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press
Katrak H. Ketu	2011	Contemporary Indian Dance. New Creative Choreography in India and the Diaspora	Studies in International Performance	Palgrave Macmillan

Mishra, Susheela	1992	Some Dancers of India		New Delhi: Harman Publishing House
------------------	------	-----------------------	--	---------------------------------------