

**Institut des Hautes Etudes de l'Amérique latine (IHEAL)  
Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3**

**Salsa: History in Motion**

HYSP006

Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30 h

Classroom: Salle de l'Espace Associatif et Culturel (EAC) do Campus Condorcet

Language of the Course: **English**

Professor Martha S. Santos

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**Office hours:** Tuesdays, 14:00 – 15:00; Wednesdays, 11:40 – 12: 40, and by appointment

**Office:** 5 cours des Humanités - Bâtiment recherche sud - Bureau 5.051



**Course Description:**

This class provides students with the opportunity to examine and experience the history, aesthetics, and movement of salsa dancing, from its origins in the Afro-Cuban sacred and profane rhythms and dances of enslaved and formerly enslaved peoples to its modern emergence in the Latino/a neighborhoods of New York during the 1960s and 1970s. Rather than being a purely intellectual exercise, this class makes the embodied practice of salsa dancing a central component of the learning experience. We will analyze how the various dances and rhythms encompassed in salsa emerged within complex histories of enslavement, racism, colonialism, nationalism, immigration, commercialization, urbanization, and globalization in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and New York City. We will also explore the changing ways in which different groups of people have used these dances as vehicles to express identities (cultural, religious, ethnic, gender, national, regional, sexual, and personal) and values (personal and cultural). Through exercises focused on the body movement, isolation, and footwork characteristic of the various ingredients of salsa, we will also discover the evolving aesthetics of salsa music and dance in connection to Afro-Caribbean sources, cultural hybridization, urban sensibilities, technological developments, and cultural commodification. Students will have the opportunity to design their own creative reflective assignments on the salsa scene in Paris, and/or to participate in a showcase dance performance of a salsa routine at the end of the semester.

**Course Objectives:**

To improve reading skills and the ability to locate and learn the significant aspects of the material read;

To improve writing skills through essay exams;

To improve, through class discussion and debate, skills in orally presenting information and in critical thinking;

To develop a salsa movement vocabulary that students can combine with personal expression and improvisational work;

To develop a general understanding of the historical development of salsa music and dance;

To develop an understanding of how scholars from the fields of dance, dance history, music history, social history, anthropology, and cultural studies approach the history of salsa music and dance;

To cultivate new ethical capacities for understanding and appreciating non-western music and dance.

**Required Course Readings:** The required articles and book chapters will be available in the **icampus** platform. Students need to print their own copies of all these materials and bring them to class on the day when we discuss them. Students can also bring a laptop computer to have access to the readings during class time.

Additional readings might be assigned throughout the semester. In such cases, you will get plenty of advanced notice as to the due dates for such readings.

### **Course Requirements and Grading:**

**Attendance:** Students are required to attend class regularly. A maximum of two (2) absences are allowed. Once a student reaches three (3) absences he or she will lose 5 points towards the final grade for each absence. Students who miss class are still responsible for all discussion and reading material, for watching the films screened in class, and for catching up on the dance styles introduced on studio days.

**Participation (20%):** Full participation in each class, both in discussion and dance, is essential to make this class a success.

To participate effectively in classroom activities, students need to come prepared to class by having done the readings, taken notes, thought about questions, interpretations or other issues related to the texts or other assignments. You will also need to actively contribute to discussions and other activities in class. Occasionally, you will be asked to write short answers, comments, or take unannounced pop quizzes on the assigned readings during class. These exercises also make up part of your participation grade.

This class will include a dance component, normally after discussion and analysis of readings and short lectures, on most class days. Participation in dance activities is also essential, whether you have danced in the past or not, because one of the main goals of the course is to experience in our bodies the history that we are learning. If you are unable to dance due to injury or non-contagious illness, you are still required to observe the dance activities or participate in a modified way. Please note that students will not be graded on their skills or abilities as dancers, but on their intention and willingness to experience the history of salsa in their own bodies.

Students will also be required to go in an outing to a salsa class or salsa activity in Paris at least once during the course. We will plan the time and date for this outing with plenty of time in advance.

**Take-home mid-term exam (35%):** There will be a take-home mid-term exam which will consist of an essay question in response to a pre-circulated question based on assigned readings. Instructions for this assignment will be given to students well in advanced of its due date.

**Final project (45%):** Students will have the option to write an analytical essay on the salsa scene in Paris, using concepts and ideas from the readings done throughout the course, or a reflective assignment on the material learned and its personal meanings, and/or to participate in a group choreography project to be performed at the end of the semester. All class participants will decide on what the format the final project will be for the class during the first three weeks of the semester. Instructions for this assignment will be provided well in advance of its due date, once the class has determined the nature of it.

**Technical Guidelines for Written Assignments:** All written assignments should be typed, double spaced, and use a 12 size, “Times New Roman” or similar font. Use standard margins (1 inch margins at top and bottom, 1 to 1.25 inches on the sides). All written work should be checked for grammar and spelling mistakes. All quotes and paraphrases in your papers must be attributed to their author(s).

**Late Policy:** All written assignments are to be turned in on the days and times established by the instructor in the syllabus. The standard penalization for unexcused late assignments is 5 points (1/2 a grade) per day that a paper/assignment is late. I will allow for an extension on a deadline only when students can document illnesses or other crisis and when they contact the instructor regarding their particular situations before the time to turn in the assignment.

**Plagiarism and academic dishonesty:** Plagiarism consists of using (copying or paraphrasing) words, ideas, or materials from another person, or from the internet, without giving proper credit to the source, thus, representing them as your own. Plagiarism in written assignments will result in a grade of an F (0/100) for that assignment. In severe cases of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, a student may receive a grade of an F for the course.

**Instructor Email Contact and Reply Policy:** Please email me at [martha.santos@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr](mailto:martha.santos@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr) with any questions or concerns regarding the course, course materials, assignments, etc, and for any questions that are not already explained in the syllabus. I would be happy to answer any of your questions. Typically, I will reply to your email within 24 hours on a weekday or 48 hours on a weekend or holiday.

### **Activities, Readings, and Assignments Schedule**

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the course, there might be some date changes, additional activities or readings, or deadlines that are not established in this schedule. Just as the most exciting salsa dancing involves a great deal of improvisation, this class will require flexibility

and ability to improvise. The instructor will give you plenty of notice for additional readings or meetings or changes in due dates.

**Wednesday, September 22. What is Salsa?**

**Wednesday, September 29. Ingredients: African Rhythms, New World Experiences**

\* Brenda Dixon Gottschild, "Crossroads, Continuities and Contradictions: The Afro-Euro-Caribbean Triangle," in Susanna Sloat, ed., *Caribbean Dance from Abakúa to Zouk: How Movement Shapes Identity* (University Press of Florida, 2002), pp. 3-10.

\* Fernando Ortiz, "The African Roots of Cuban Music" in John Charles Chasteen, ed., *Born in Blood and Fire: Latin American Voices*. 2d ed. (New York: Norton, 2016), pp. 247-249.  
*Orichás*

**Wednesday, October 6. Ingredients: Rumba**

\* Yvonne Daniel, "Cuban Dance Culture," in *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 26-44.

*Rumba*

**Wednesday, October 13. Ingredients: Danzón and Son**

\* Robin Moore, "Controversy over the *Danzón*," and "Echale Salsita: Sones and Musical Revolution," in *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), pp. 23-26; pp. 87-113.

*Son*

**Wednesday, October 20. Ingredients: Bomba and Plena**

\* Peter Manuel, "Puerto Rico," in *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), pp. 51-71.

*Bomba and Plena*

**Wednesday, October 27. Ingredients: Mambo**

\* Julie McMains, "From Mambo to Salsa: Dancing Across Generational Divides," in *Spinning Mambo into Salsa: Caribbean Dance in Global Commerce* (Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 30-37

\* Danielle Goldman, "Mambo's Open Shines: Causing Circles at the Palladium," in *I Want to Be Ready: Improvised Dance as a Practice of Freedom*, (University of Michigan Press, 2010), pp. 28-54.

*Mambo*

**Wednesday, November 3. No Class**

Take-home mid-term paper due online by Friday, November 5, 17:00

**Wednesday, November 10. Ingredients: Latin Boogaloo (New York City)**

\* Juan Flores, "Cha-cha with a Backbeat: Songs and Stories of Latin Boogaloo," in Lise Waxer, ed., *Situating Salsa: Global Market and Local Meaning in Latin Popular Music* (Routledge, 2002), pp. 75-99.

*Cha-cha and Boogaloo*

**Wednesday, November 17. Salsa Politics, Liberation, Puerto Rico and El Barrio**

\* Karl Hagstrom Miller, "Crossover Schemes: New York Salsa as Politics, Culture and Commerce," in Normal Kelley, ed., *R&B Rhythm and Business: The Political Economy of Black Music* (New York: Akashic Books, 2005), pp. 192-217.

*Salsa*

**Wednesday, November 24. The Commercialization of Salsa Dance in New York City**

\* Juliet McMains, "Commercialization of New York Salsa Music and Dance: How Fania, Hustle and Salsa Romántica Gave Birth to Studio Salsa," in *Spinning Mambo into Salsa*, pp. 75-110.

*Salsa*

**Wednesday, December 1. Salsa Music, Gender and Identity**

\* Christina Abreu, "Celebrity, 'Crossover' and *Cubanidad*: Celia Cruz as 'La Reina de la Salsa,' 1971-2003," *Latin American Music Review*, vol 28, no 1 (Spring/Summer 2007), pp. 94-111.

\* Christina Abreu, "Más que una reina: Race, Gender, and the Musical Careers of Graciela, Celia, and La Lupe, 1950s-1970s," *Journal of Social History* vol. 52, no. 2 (2018), pp. 332-352.

**Wednesday, December 8. Salsa, Ethnic Identity, and Stereotype**

\* Juliet McMains. "Hot Latin Dance: Ethnic Identity and Stereotype," in Anthony Shay, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.

**Wednesday, December 15.**

**Final Project due**

**Selected Bibliography**

Abreu, Christina. "Celebrity, 'Crossover' and *Cubanidad*: Celia Cruz as 'La Reina de la Salsa,' 1971-2003," *Latin American Music Review*, vol 28, no 1 (Spring/Summer 2007): pp. 94-111.

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Aparicio, Frances. *Listening to Salsa: Gender, Latin Popular Music, and Puerto Rican Cultures* Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1999.

Berrios-Miranda, Marisol, "Salsa as Expressive Liberation," *Centro Journal*, vol. 16, no 2 (Fall 2004), pp. 159-173.

Boggs, Vernon W., ed. *Salsiology: Afro-Cuban Music and The Evolution of Salsa In New York City*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1992.

Carwile, Christey. "'The Clave Comes Home': Salsa Dance and Pan-African Identity in Ghana." *African Studies Review*, vol. 60, no. 2 (2017): pp. 183-207.

- Daniel, Yvonne. *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Delgado, Celeste Fraser and Jose Esteban Munoz, eds. *Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
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- García, Cindy. *Salsa Crossing: Dancing Latinidad in Los Angeles*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.
- García, David F. *Arsenio Rodríguez and the Transnational Flows of Latin Popular Music*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006.
- Goldman, Danielle. *I Want to Be Ready: Improvised Dance as a Practice of Freedom*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.
- Jottar, Berta. "Central Park Rumba: Nuyorican Identity and the Return to African roots." *Centro Journal*, vol. 23, no. 1 (March 2011): pp. 5-29.
- Hutchinson, Sidney, ed. *Salsa World: A Global Dance in Local Contexts*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015.
- Kelley, Norman, ed. *R&B Rhythm and Business: The Political Economy of Black Music*. New York: Akashic Books, 2005.
- Loza, Steven. *Tito Puente and the Making of Latin Music*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999.
- Malnig, Julie, ed. *Ballroom, Boogie, Shimmy Sham, Shake: A Social and Popular Dance Reader*. Indianapolis: University of Illinois Press, 2008.
- Manuel, Peter. *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Puerto Rican Music and Cultural Creative Appropriation of Cuban Sources from Danza to Salsa." *Ethnomusicology*, vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring - Summer, 1994): pp. 249-280.
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- Moore, Robin. *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana*,

- 1920-1940. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997.
- Pietrobruno, Sheenag. *Salsa and its Transnational Moves*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006.
- Renta, Priscilla. "Salsa Dance: Latino/a History in Motion." *Centro Journal*, vol. 16, no. 2 (Fall 2004), pp. 139-157.
- Rondón, Cesar Miguel. *The book of salsa: a chronicle of urban music from the Caribbean to New York City*. Translated by Frances R. Aparicio with Jackie White. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
- Ruel, Yannis. *Les soirées salsa a Paris: regard sociologique sur un monde de la fête*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000.
- Salazar, Max. *Mambo Kingdom: Latin Music in New York*. New York: Schirmer Trade Books, 2002.
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- Washburn, Christopher. *Sounding Salsa: Performing Latin Music in New York City*. Temple University Press, 2008.
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