In one scene, a dancer tells of the tragi-comical process of training a goldfish to become a land animal, with the outcome that the creature, its environment having become alien to it, threatens to drown in water.

The process of civilisation – it would seem – leaves people high and dry in exactly the same way: in a physical reality that is like a foreign element.


1 The image is of Julia Gray, Darwin based Mekeo/Australian choreographer, dancer and director of Sunameke.
Introduction and Overview of the Course

For centuries and especially prior to the arrival of the written word, people in the Pacific survived creatively in and through their bodies and oral traditions. Throughout the region human bodies are intimately connected to place, landscape, plant and animal life and the spiritual realms. Bodies and their movements are also reflections of history, social, political and cultural orders and are vehicles for the expression of identity and creativity. In Pacific Studies where decolonisation and indigenous epistemologies are central it is crucial that we incorporate the body as both corporeal and literary device in our approaches to learning Oceania.

We will start with gaining a sense of geography, history and culture across the region and situating our approaches in the context of Pacific Studies. We will then explore the significance of dance in Oceania and the ways in which movement knowledge shapes or is shaped by society. Our readings include engaging bodies in cross-cultural contexts and corporealities—the physical body in writing—in history, cultural studies, Pacific Studies, anthropology and dance studies. We will pay specific attention to the different ways in which aspects of culture and history, ideas about morality, labour, gender, emotion, power, identity, health, beauty and the nation are written on the body, and enacted or performed in everyday life, clothing, ritual and dance.

Along the way we will discuss a variety of tools for seeing, understanding, and describing the moving body and bodies in relationship to each other.

At the end of this seminar students should be able to imagine writing or speaking from the perspective of their own or other bodies and to understand what it means to exist as a corporeal (physical/ material) being—to learn in and speak through our bodies. We should understand how discourses of race, gender, sexuality, class, culture and nationality are inscribed on bodies in specific ways and be able to think critically about why bodies across Oceania or in the diaspora perform certain choreographies and reflect particular aesthetics and social values in different historical, cultural and political contexts.

As the body is not a popular subject of writing on the Pacific, readings will be drawn widely from within and beyond the region. Writing in dance studies most directly focuses on the physical body and movement and thus comprises a good portion of our reading list. We should take the ideas from these readings and apply them to Pacific contexts. At the end of this course students should be able to imagine the physical body as a potential methodological and theoretical vehicle for doing Pacific Studies.

Students will be required to attend at least one dance/theatre performance and participate in one field excursion, and to reflect on the history, politics, movement and emotions expressed by the performing bodies they observe.
Course Components

Class Sessions
The seminar is a 2.5-hour session per week with 5 minutes of body movement led by students or instructors at the beginning of class and a 10-minute break. All Pacific Studies seminars involve food of some kind, so if students would like to continue this tradition we will all sign up to bring food to class.

Course Texts
Susan Leigh Foster’s *Choreographing History*
Ann E. Becker’s *Body, Self and Society in Fiji*
Weekly handouts

Videos
Excerpts from videos will be shown in class and students can also view programs at Wong Audio-Visual Centre in Sinclair library. Students will be required to view some videos on their own at the library.

Guide for Discussion Sessions, Reviews and Reflection papers
Reflection papers should be 2-3 pages long (12 pt. font, 1.5 line-spacing) and should reflect on at least 4 of the assigned readings for the current week. You may also include anything beyond class that is relevant to the theme. The Black Grace excursion must be integrated into one of your reflection papers. The reviews of Becker and Foster are mandatory and should be 3-5 pages.

For all sessions try to address the following with respect to readings and videos:

1. What is your gut reaction to the material? What did you like or not like about it? Would you recommend it to others to read? Why or why not? Was the material easy or hard for you to understand?
2. Briefly summarize the content and indicate how it relates to course themes.
3. What is the nature of the research that had to be done for the material presented?
4. Does the material contain description? Theory?
5. What is the nature of the writing? What sort of language is used? How is the material organized? Is the material accessible? Does it require specialized knowledge to understand it?
6. What kinds of supplementary information/material are used?
7. How could the material have been improved? What could/should the author have done differently?
8. Relate the chapter, in terms of the items above and any other things you wish, to a topic you might research. Does the material suggest kinds of resources you might wish to check? Ways to conduct research? Things to consider? Theories that might be applicable?
9. How might the material be applied to either a local Hawaii’i or other Pacific context? To any other context you’re familiar with?
**Reading Discussion Leaders**
Each student will be expected to lead at least one class discussion. This means the student will be in charge of summarizing the readings and highlighting points which are relevant to the class, and will prepare at least 4 discussion questions. These should be substantial questions, typed up and handed out in class. Sign up for this in week 1 or 2 of the semester.

**November 22 Session**
As a group students will organize 1 class session on any topic within the theme “The Body and Pacific Studies.” Students are free to organize this session in any way they choose. It may be held within or beyond the classroom. Time will be given throughout the semester for students to meet as a group, but they will also have to meet on their own time to prepare.

**Class Excursions**
There are 2 required class excursions. The first will be to the performance by the all male Polynesian Black Grace dance company from Aotearoa New Zealand, directed by Neil Ieremia. Black Grace is scheduled to perform at Leeward Community College, October 22, 7:30 pm. (see [www.blackgrace.co.nz](http://www.blackgrace.co.nz)). The second will be to observe bodies in Waikiki during our regularly-scheduled class time on Tuesday, October 4.

**Final Projects**
Students will be required to put together a creative final piece or research paper. They may use one or a combination of the following: dance, graphics, artwork, video, music, poetry and creative or analytical writing. All students will hand in a 1-2 page proposal for their final project and present it orally in class for feedback prior to the due date. Only students doing the performance option will perform at the end of the semester.

If students choose the performance option this will be presented either on December 9 or December 13 depending on what students decide.

The subject of this project should be the body or bodies in any social, cultural, historical or political context in Oceania. A good performance should include a clear narrative, experience, opinion or argument elaborated in or in addition to the piece (as a written attachment, for example). It should be informed by readings and class discussions. It may also take the form of a film or visual essay created by the student, a piece of artwork, oral or dance performance with accompanying narrative and bibliography. Research papers should be approximately 12-15 pages, 1.5 line-spacing and 12 pt. font, with consistent citation styles and a bibliography or list of references.

**Attendance**
Attendance is mandatory. This is a graduate seminar and participation in class discussion is necessary to earn a final grade. Each absence automatically results in the deduction of 5% from your grade. If you are absent because of serious illness please provide a doctor’s
NOTE: Two copies of all written assignments must be submitted—one for each instructor.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 reflection papers on readings of your choice (4 readings per paper and</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>any 5 weeks</td>
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<td>one of these must include reflections on the Black Grace performance)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and reflection on <em>Choreographing History</em></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Sep 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and reflection on <em>Body, Self and Society</em></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Oct 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project proposal (to be submitted orally and in writing)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>any week 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading class discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>any week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research paper, art, dance or film project</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Due Dec 9 or 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Grading scale**

- 95-100% = A+
- 80-85% = B+
- 65-70% = C
- 90-95% = A
- 75-80% = B
- 85-90% = A-
- 70-75% = B-

**Weekly Schedule**

**WEEK 1—AUG 23**

*Introductions, overview of the course, signup to lead class discussions, signup for research proposal dates, sign up for food, discuss final oral presentation dates.*

*Film: Dance and Human History (excerpts shown in class)*

**WEEK 2—AUG 30**

*Pacific Studies, The Body, Oceania, cultures, politics and environments*

Background on the Pacific context and any historical, political, cultural, social, economic or ethical issues that shape body movement across the region. We will also ask “What is Oceania” and “What is Pacific Studies”?

Students should review the Pacific map, explore the Pacific Islands Report and any relevant links at [http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/graphics.shtml](http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/graphics.shtml), the arTok website (especially the dance page) [http://www.abc.net.au/arts/artok/](http://www.abc.net.au/arts/artok/), Culture Moves website at [www.hawaii.edu/cpis/dance](http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis/dance) and come prepared with 2 questions e about any aspect of...
the Pacific that they are unfamiliar with and 2 examples of things they learned that they didn’t already know about the region.

Teaiwa, 2002 (visual study “Between our Islands: dancing connections”) [4 mins]

WEEK 3—SEP 6
Introduction to Movement Knowledge, Part I


1. Movement knowledge is a kind of cultural knowledge: to speak of movement as a way of knowing implies that the way people move is as much a clue to who they are as the way they speak.
2. Movement knowledge is conceptual and emotional as well as kinaesthetic. It addresses: Where do I belong in the world? How do humans behave? Where do I come from and with whom do I go through life?
3. Movement knowledge is intertwined with other kinds of cultural knowledge: speaking or singing and movement are usually combined to express culture.
4. One has to look beyond movement to get at its meaning: the concepts embedded in movement are not necessarily evident in the movement itself.
5. Movement is always an immediate corporeal experience: the cultural knowledge that is embodied in movement can only be known via movement.

Hutchinson Guest, 2005, pp. 1-16.
Kaeppler, 1993, pp. 174-177, and 238-249. (Don’t worry about “understanding” what you see. Just get an idea of what is on the page.)
Shennan, 1981

NOTE: Come to class in comfortable clothing that will allow you to move. Pants, shorts (not too short!), etc., but no skirts for women.

WEEK 4—SEP 13
Dances of Life: the significance of dance in Oceania

Kamahele, 1992
Lilolahia, 2001
Hereniko, 1991
Grau, 1998
Teaiwa, 2005 on website: www.picom.org/dancesoflife (Read all 7 short essays on dance in Oceania)

Film: *Dances of Life* [55 mins], viewed in class.

**WEEK 5—SEP 20**
Introduction to Movement Knowledge, Part II

Hall, 1968
Lomax, Bartenieff, and Paulay, 1969
Van Zile, 1976

Film: *Dance and Human History* (view the entire film at the library, and excerpts will be shown in class)

**WEEK 6—Sep 27**
Choreographing History

Kempf, 2004

Due: a review and reflection paper on the introduction plus 4 articles of your choice from Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreographing History*, 1995.

**WEEK 7—OCT 4**
Bodies on display in Waikiki

This class session will be held at Waikiki at the junction of Kapahulu and Kalakaua and will involve a short research exercise on observing bodies in Waikiki.


Historic Waikiki at www.downwindproductions.com (explore the site, get a sense of the what the artists and storytellers are trying to say about this place, get a sense of the diversity of peoples, activities and histories that converge in this area)

**WEEK 8—OCT 11**
Body adornment: clothing, tattooing and decorating the body

Leota-Ete, Kihara and Raymond, 2002.
Mallon and Fecteau, 2002.
Linker, 1983.
Tcherkezoff, 2003

Film: Skin Stories, 2003 (excerpts viewed in class) [60 mins]
Surface, Black Grace 2001 (excerpts viewed in class)

WEEK 9—OCT 18
Building community through dance

**Guest speaker:** Julia Gray (see photograph on cover of this syllabus)


Due: a review and reflection paper on *Body, Self and Society: the view from Fiji*, this book will be discussed in the following week.

WEEK 10—Oct 25
Body image, gender and health issues

Figiel, 1998
Pollock, 1999
Becker, 1995
Bolton, 2003
Hokowhitu, 2004
Macdonald, 1994
Moulin, 1989
Teaiwa, 2000

WEEK 11—NOV 1
Writing about bodies in motion

Kaeppler, 1983, pp. 29-36
Moulin, 1979, pp. 53-69
Radakovich, 2004, pp. 30-58
Van Zile, 1988
Van Zile, 2001, pp. 65, 84-98, and just scan pp. 241-247, reading any one section from 241-247 thoroughly

film: TBA (this will be viewed in class)
WEEK 12—NOV 8
Judy and Katerina away at *Culture Moves* dance conference (see www.hawaii.edu/cpis/dance), students meet to organize November 22 session

WEEK 13—NOV 15
The politics of performance: a critical look at dance at the Pacific Festival of the Arts and other dance festivals and competitions

Stillman, 1990
Stillman, 1996
Stevenson, Kaeppler, Moulin and Flores in *Pacific Arts* 2002

Film: Select two films to view: one from the Merrie Monarch festival and one from the Festival of Pacific Arts and view in the Wong audiovisual centre. We will bring in one from each category to view excerpts in class.

WEEK 14—NOV 22
Student-organized session

WEEK 15—Nov 29
Pan-Pacific, diasporic and Global performances of identity

Osumare, 2002.
Henderson, forthcoming.
Taouma, 2002.
Moyle, 2002.
Ram, 2000.


WEEK 16—DEC 6
Wrap up and review of the semester

Individual reflections on the course and relevant events throughout the semester, highlighting things that were particularly interesting, relevant, new, etc.

FINAL PERFORMANCES: DEC 9/ DEC 13
FINAL PAPER DUE DEC 13, by noon
Bibliography


Teaiwa, Teresia: “Intro to the Stretch” and “The Stretch” from *Terenesia: Amplified Poetry and Songs by Teresia Teaiwa and Sia Figiel* Hawaii Dub Machine: 2000


Suggested Readings


Huntsman, Judith, 1981. Future Directions in the Study of the Arts in Oceania.


Teaiwa, Teresia: “Intro to the Stretch” and “The Stretch” from *Terenesia: Amplified Poetry and Songs by Teresia Teaiwa and Sia Figiel* Hawaii Dub Machine: 2000


--- "bikinis and other sp/acific n/oceans," in *The Contemporary Pacific*, 1995 (?)