

Course FS-09 MUSIC AND SOCIETY: THEORY AND PRACTICE OF FLAMENCO
(45 contact hours)

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Objectives

Broadly defined, Flamenco is a complex performative art which includes song (cante), dance (baile) and guitar music (toque), originally embedded in a particular lifestyle and world view. Tracing its origins to approximately the mid-nineteenth century, Flamenco has been associated with Spanish Gypsies (gitanos), a community instrumental in its development and who represent the majority of its practitioners, and with the culture of Andalusia in Southern Spain. The exoticization of Spain during the 19th century stimulated Flamenco's broader development and popularity until it eventually grew to become a powerful national icon, while it continues to be regarded as a quintessential expression of Spanish culture.

Our emphasis is on acquiring an aural, visual, and theoretical understanding of Flamenco, of the streams of culture which created it, and of its role within Spanish culture, and on using the study of Flamenco as a vehicle to explore the relationship between art and culture, music and society, and the ways in which we think, talk and learn about Flamenco.

The intention of the practical part of the Course, the Flamenco dance class, is not to train future Flamenco dancers, although many students go on to further study. Rather, it is designed to give students an understanding of the mechanics, aesthetics, and basic canons of an art form that is so often described as being purely spontaneous and free. The dance class centers on learning the basic postures and steps of the Flamenco vocabulary and the techniques of footwork. We also study the "compás" (rhythmic cycle) and learn to play "palmas" (rhythmic handclapping). Above all, we try to understand how Flamenco dance is structured and the essential relationship that links dancer, guitarist and singer.

At the end of the Course, in addition to a final paper and final exam, students will perform the simple choreography they have learned, accompanied by a professional singer and guitarist. This tends to give them an entirely new appreciation of the complexity of both the dance form and the culture in which it is embedded. Evaluation in this part of the class sessions is based on attendance, effort and improvement, each student performing at his or her own level; ability or prior dance training is not necessary.

Requirements: The pre-requisites for this Course are an interest in Cultural Studies and a love of music and/or dance.

Methodology

The class may meet twice a week or once a week for a double session. Each class is divided approximately into one half dedicated to lecture time and the other half to the dance class, although this may vary from session to session. Video screenings, listening sessions, and live performances are an important complement to the theoretical studies offered. Students' personal responses to these sessions are an important part of developing an understanding of the art form.

The basic text material to be used during the Course is drawn from a variety of sources, ranging from the Romantic travel writers to the biography of the great Gypsy flamenco dancer, Carmen Amaya, whose career spanned most of the modern history

of Flamenco and intersected with all the important figures of the time. Students will also choose one out of three short books written about an individual's personal experiences in the Flamenco world of the 1950s and 1960s, and will be expected to present a "book report" on his or her chosen text.

Syllabus

- UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION: What is Flamenco?
Resources; what do we know and how do we know it?
- UNIT 2 The Flamenco Repertory –
El cante, El toque, El baile.
LECTURE DEMONSTRATION of guitar and cante.
- UNIT 3 Pre-flamenco
Spanish folk music and other influences
- UNIT 4 The Gypsies.
Gypsies of the world; Gypsies of Spain. The Flamenco Fiesta
- UNIT 5 The Beginnings of Flamenco
18th and 19th century travellers, the Foreign eye and the Romantic aesthetic. bailes de candil, tavernas, salones, academias.
- UNIT 6 Flamenco's "Golden Age"
Cafés Cantantes, The cuadro flamenco; development of a format and a repertory
- UNIT 7 Intellectuals and Flamenco
The Generation of '98, Antiflamenguismo,
Lorca, Lorca, Falla and the Concurso / Competition of 1922.
- UNIT 8 Flamenco in the Theater.
The Opera Flamenca, "Spanish Ballets", and the beginnings of theatrical Flamenco, Flamenco styles abroad
- UNIT 9 The Flamenco Renaissance
Antonio Mairena and the New Purism.
The Tablao Flamenco.
The "Boom" and Tourism in Spain.
Franco and the Marketing of Spain.
- UNIT 10 Modern Flamenco Andalucía: 1950 - 1970; "Rock Andaluz", Morón de la Frontera, The roots of today's dance, Mario Maya and Antonio Gades.
The Musical Transition: Paco de Lucía, Camarón de la Isla.
Baile Gitano, cante gitano; Flamenco as a marker of Gypsy identity.
New training grounds; Flamenco de Tablao, Flamenco de Academia
Stretching the limits; Flamenco Fusion.
- TEMA 11 The New Flamencology
New trends in Flamenco research

FINAL PERFORMANCE

Bibliography

Course reader (selected readings from a range of sources)
Gerald HOWSON. *The Flamencos of Cadiz Bay* (Cádiz in the 1950s).
Paul HECHT. *The Wind Cried* (Granada in the 1960s).
Donn POHREN. *A Way of Life* (Morón de la Frontera in the 1970s).

Assessment

Weekly readings, short written assignments;

1. Written Assignments: Personal commentary on visits to Flamenco tablaos, theatrical performances and other activities
2. Book report on a title chosen from among three (see above).
3. Mid-term exam ("test" on flamenco repertory and terminology).
4. Final paper; 3-5 pages. Essay on a specific topic of particular interest to each student.
5. Final exam

Evaluation:

Attendance and class participation (in both academic and dance sessions) 20 %

Written assignments 15%

Mid-term exam 15%

Final paper 20%

Final exam 30%

(The final exam grade will also take into account students' participation in the final performance within the dance class.)