

**University of Iowa India**  
**Winterim 2011–12**  
**(December 27th, 2011 - January 15/16th, 2012)**

**Introduction to the Music, Dance, Theater and Cinema of South India**  
**165:197 International Development, Section 008**

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**Background**

Last year, for the first time as part of the UI India Winterim program, students travelled to Chennai, India on a cultural learning journey for a new course with a performing arts educational component and for first-hand experiences with respected Indian arts professors and renown professional artists.

*Carnatic music* and the Indian classical dance form *Kuchipudi* was the main focus of lectures, demonstrations and practice. With the Chennai Music and Dance Festival as the backdrop, world-class performances were seen, and field trips to historic sites conducted.

The course culminated in a performance presentation by the students at Chennai's TAG Center for which the American Consul General in Chennai was in attendance.



*Cultural Connections Through The Performing Arts*, a documentary of last year's course created from photos and videos of participating students may be viewed at this link:

[http://www.uiowa.edu/~geog/india/videos/india\\_dance\\_2010.shtml](http://www.uiowa.edu/~geog/india/videos/india_dance_2010.shtml)

The second offering of this course promises to be even more diverse, informative and exciting! And so... "Vanakkam"... the Tamil greeting spoken by US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton on her July 2011 visit to India, a diplomatic trip that included an Indian classical dance performance at the Kalakshetra Foundation in Chennai.

### **Course Description and Content**

This course is a three-week introduction to the origin, history and evolution of the traditional music, dance, theater and culture of South India. Lectures, demonstrations and performances will be presented by professors and professional artists, experts in *Carnatic music*, the Indian classical dance forms of *Bharata Nrityam*, *Kuchipudi* and *Kathakali*, traditional folk and contemporary theater (*Therukoothu* and *Adishakti*), as well as a variety of related cultural and performing arts topics including Indian cinema. The course is offered while the world-renown Chennai Music and Dance Festival is in progress. Field trips will be made to live performances, historic sites within the region and film institutions in Chennai. Classes in yogic tradition will also be offered. The course will culminate in an informal performance presentation, and is open to all students of music, dance and theater, as well as enthusiasts of the performing arts.

One of our sponsoring organizations is the Siva Foundation, a leading dance academy situated in the heart of the city of Chennai. Its director is Madhavapeddi Murthy, a world acclaimed dancer in the tradition of the classical dance *Kuchipudi*. Mr. Murthy and his organization are outstanding devotees of classical dance forms of India. The *Carnatic music* content coordinator in India will be Dr. M. A. Bhageerathi of the famous Parur family of performers. Dr. Bhageerathi will arrange for musicians and vocalists to present a series of lectures, demonstrations and mini-concerts. Dr. Geetha Rajagopal, Executive Director of Sampradaya, the Center for South Indian Music Traditions located at the world-renown Kalakshetra Foundation, will provide an historical music context for the course, as well as organize lecture/demonstrations by traditional and contemporary Indian theater exponents. In addition, M. Subbulakshmi (M. Sc, Yoga), a well-respected Chennai-based yoga instructor, will sponsor yoga study.

Joining us this year is Bala Devi Chandrashekar, a senior artist, choreographer and teacher of Bharata Nrityam. Ms. Chandrashekar focuses on creating and consolidating awareness about *Natya Shastra*. Along with core aspects of *Nritta* and *Abhinaya*, she also teaches the important components that constitute the *108 Karanas*, the sculptures of which will be examined on a field trip to the Nataraja Temple of Chidambaram.

Other field trips will include a visit to the original *Kuchipudi Art Academy* founded by the great Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam. Also, a visit to a Kollywood movie set will take place. *Studio Green*, a Chennai based Tamil film and distribution company, will be in production. *Studio Green* was established by Suriya, a very popular Indian film actor. Plans are currently in motion to experience a performance and workshop at *Adishakti*, a laboratory for theater arts research in Auroville, under

the direction of Veenapani Chawla, a recent recipient of the nationally prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for contemporary theater.

The University of Iowa faculty facilitator for the course is Professor Alan Sener, whose 35-year career in the performing arts has taken him across the United States and throughout the world to numerous countries within Eastern and Western Europe, Central America, the Near and Far East, Africa and India, as well as Mexico, Australia and Canada. Professor Sener has presented over 80 dances at the University of Iowa where he teaches improvisation, choreography and western contemporary dance technique.

### **Course Requirements**

Attendance and participation in all scheduled activities and excursions is essential along with active discussion about your learning process during our group meetings in India.

Participation in the culminating performance both in India and its presentation at the University of Iowa Winterim Symposium in February 2012 is required. (Iowa date TBA)

A maximum ten-page assessment paper recounting your experience and what you learned is also required. This content of this assignment will be determined for you in consultation with the UI Faculty Facilitator, and is due no later than Monday, January 30, 2012.

### **Course Grading**

Grades will be based on your attendance, the extent of your active participation in all planned activities, classes, group discussions, readings, viewings, culminating performances, and the timely submission of your final assessment paper.

### **Course Materials, Suggested Readings and Viewings**

Before departure for India you will be provided with a South Indian cultural orientation manual and supplementary information to familiarize you with the various contents of the course. For further preparation, some suggested readings and viewings are listed below. Consult with the UI Faculty Facilitator regarding these materials with respect establishing a specific area of in-depth study. There is a plethora of publications and public information available about these subjects. The materials listed below are adapted for the course on an ongoing basis; they presently include and are not limited to excerpts from the following sources:

#### Indian Culture

Books:

*South Indian Heritage: An Introduction*. 2nd Edition. Edited by Dr. Prema Katuri and Dr. G. Sundaram. Revised Edition by EastWest Books by Westland Limited, 2011.

#### Indian Mythology

Books:

*Indian Mythology*. Veronica Ions. Bounty Books, 2004.

*Myth = Mithya: A Handbook of Hindu Mythology*. Dr. Devdutt Pattanaik. Penguin Books, 2006.

#### Carnatic Music

Books:

*Music in South India: The Karnatak Concert Tradition and Beyond. Expressing Music Expressing Culture.* T. Viswanathan and Matthew Harp Allen. Oxford University Press, Inc., 2004.

Some Carnatic music websites:

<http://www.carnaticindia.com/>

<http://www.carnaticcorner.com/>

<http://www.carnatic.com/>

### South Indian Classical Dance

Books:

*Indian Classical Dance.* Shovana Narayan. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2005.

*Kuchipudi (Dance of India).* Raja Reddy and Radha Reddy. Edited by Alka Raghuvanshi. Photography by Avinash Pasricha. Wisdom Tree, 2009

*Indian Theater and Dance Traditions.* Shavana Narayan. New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 2004

*Karanas: Common Dance Codes of India and Indonesia.* Padma Sabhrahmanyam. Nrithyodaya, 2003.

DVDs:

*Nandanar Charithram.* Bala Devi Chandrashekar. DVD released by London based cultural foundation Gnanalaya, March 2011

Some websites:

*The Kuchipudi Art Academy*

<http://www.kuchipudi.com/home.cfm>

*Kuchipudi:*

[http://chandrakantha.com/articles/indian\\_music/nritya/kuchipudi.html](http://chandrakantha.com/articles/indian_music/nritya/kuchipudi.html)

[http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=kuchipudi&aq=f](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kuchipudi&aq=f)

[http://chandrakantha.com/articles/indian\\_music/nritya/kuchipudi.html](http://chandrakantha.com/articles/indian_music/nritya/kuchipudi.html)

*Bharatanatyam*

<http://bharatanatyam.co.uk/bharatanatyam.html>

*Kathakali*

<http://www.malayalamresourcecentre.org/Mrc/culture/artforms/kathakali/kathakali.html>

*Mohiniyattam*

<http://www.malayalamresourcecentre.org/Mrc/culture/artforms/mohiniaattam/mohiniaattam.html>

### South Indian Theater

Books:

*South Indian Theatre.* Biswajit Sinha. New Delhi: Raj Publications, 2007.

Some South Indian Theater websites:

*Adishakti Laboratory for Theater Arts Research*

<http://adishaktitheatrearts.com/home.html>

*Theyyam. A ritualistic form of theater from Kerala*

[http://www.indianetzone.com/34/teyyam\\_indian\\_ritualistic\\_form.htm](http://www.indianetzone.com/34/teyyam_indian_ritualistic_form.htm)

*Thirayaattam. A ritual dance-drama from Kerala.*

<http://www.malayalamresourcecentre.org/Mrc/culture/artforms/thirayaattam/thirayaattam.html>

*Koodiyattam. Sanskrit drama from Kerala*

<http://www.cyberkerala.com/koodiyattam/index.html>

*Mudiyettu. A ritualistic devotional drama.*

<http://www.cyberkerala.com/mudiyettu/index.html>

*Bhagavata Mela. A Telugu dance-drama.*

[http://www.indianetzone.com/28/bhagavata\\_mela\\_indian\\_dance-drama.htm](http://www.indianetzone.com/28/bhagavata_mela_indian_dance-drama.htm)

*Therukoothu. Street drama of Tamil Nadu*

[http://www.indianetzone.com/25/therukoothu\\_street\\_play\\_tamil\\_nadu.htm](http://www.indianetzone.com/25/therukoothu_street_play_tamil_nadu.htm)

*Yakshagana. Classical folk theater from Karnataka.*

<http://www.bestindiansites.com/culture/yakshagana.html>

### South Indian Cinema

Books:

*History Through The Lens: Perspectives on South Indian Cinema.* S. Theodore Baskaran. Orient Blackswan Pvt. LTD. 2009

*Tamil Cinema.* Selvaraj Velayutham. Routledge. 2009.

Wikipedia websites for your *general* reference:

*Studio Green. Tamil film production and distribution company.*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Studio\\_Green](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Studio_Green)

And:

*Tamil Cinema*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil\\_cinema](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_cinema)

*Suriya*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suriya\\_\(actor\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suriya_(actor))

Tamil Films to see:

*Chandrlekha* (1948). Directed and produced by S. S. Vasan.

*Nayagan* (1987). Written, directed and produced by Mani Ratnam.

*Ayan* (2009). Written and directed by K. V. Anand.