

**This Everyday Itinerary Lesson Plan was developed by Takiyah Nur Amin for the *Dunham's Data* Teaching Toolkit. Please find the associated archival reproductions in a separate file at <https://www.dunhamsdata.org/blog/toward-teaching-toolkit>.**

*Dunham's Data: Katherine Dunham and Digital Methods for Dance Historical Inquiry* is a three-year project funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AH/R012989/1), led by Kate Elswit (PI) and Harmony Bench (CI), with postdoctoral research assistants Takiyah Nur Amin, Antonio Jimenez-Mavillard, and Tia-Monique Uzor.

For further information on *Dunham's Data*, see [www.dunhamsdata.org](http://www.dunhamsdata.org)

For further information on the Teaching Toolkit see <https://www.dunhamsdata.org/blog/toward-teaching-toolkit>.

## Letter to Instructor

Dear Instructor:

Thank you for downloading the Dunham's Data Teaching Toolkit #1. *Dunham's Data: Katherine Dunham and Digital Methods for Dance Historical Inquiry* is a three-year project (2018-2021) funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), under the direction of Kate Elswit (PI, University of London, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama) and Harmony Bench (CI, The Ohio State University). The project as a whole works to bring dance history and the digital humanities together to represent the global legacy of renowned artist, activist, and scholar Katherine Dunham.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide instructors with an easy-to-follow, two-day lesson plan, intended to support the following learning objectives:

- To introduce students to archival research methods common in performance history
- To introduce students to the international artistic legacy of Katherine Dunham
- To provide students an opportunity for metacognitive reflection
- To foster interest in research at the intersection of dance and digital humanities

This teaching toolkit is divided into two sections intended for those working with undergraduate students over the course of two 50-75-minute class sessions. Section I includes possibilities for group discussion, sharing of relevant media clips and in-class writing assignments. Section II focuses on archival exploration for students participating in the lesson.

Components of this toolkit include:

- Letter to Instructor (this document)
- Suggested preparatory readings/materials to assign to students
- Suggested preparatory readings for faculty
- Lesson plan with prompts and instructions
- Images and other assets for in-class exploration

This is a trial version of the teaching toolkit associated with the *Dunham's Data* Project. We are eager to hear how this went in your classroom. If you are participating in the toolkit trial, please submit feedback via the form provided. If you have any questions about the Dunham's Data Project please contact Kate Elswit ([kate.elswit@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:kate.elswit@cssd.ac.uk)) and Harmony Bench ([bench.9@osu.edu](mailto:bench.9@osu.edu)).

Suggested Preparatory Readings/Materials for Students: You might choose 2-3 preparatory readings to introduce content to students prior to the first day of in-class instruction on Dunham.

Das, Joanna Dee. "Katherine Dunham, 1909 - 2006." *Dance Heritage Coalition*, 2012. [http://www.danceheritage.org/OLDSITE/treasures/dunham\\_essay\\_deedas.pdf](http://www.danceheritage.org/OLDSITE/treasures/dunham_essay_deedas.pdf)

Parks, Trina. "Katherine Dunham: Dancer-Choreographer- Anthropologist- Activist." *Dance Heritage Coalition*, 05 July 2011. [http://www.danceheritage.org/OLDSITE/treasures/dunham\\_trina\\_parks.pdf](http://www.danceheritage.org/OLDSITE/treasures/dunham_trina_parks.pdf)

"Collection: Selections from the Katherine Dunham Coalition." *Library of Congress Music Division*. Library of Congress, 2004. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/katherine-dunham/about-this-collection>

Clark, VèVè A. "Performing the Memory of Difference in Afro-Caribbean Dance: Katherine Dunham's Choreography, 1938-1987." In *Kaiso!: Writings By and About Katherine Dunham*. Ed. VèVè A. Clark and Sara E. Johnson. Madison: Wisconsin Press, 2005. 320-340.

Kitt, Eartha. "Touring Europe with the Dunham Company." In *Kaiso!: Writings By and About Katherine Dunham*. Ed. VèVè A. Clark and Sara E. Johnson. Madison: Wisconsin Press, 2005. 310-316.

Perpener, John O. *African-American Concert Dance: The Harlem Renaissance and Beyond*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

Please Note: Katherine Dunham was a prolific writer. We encourage faculty to consider assigning students a combination of these shorter writings by Dunham as this brief lesson plan does not make room to explore her book-length works. The suggested works below might be of use in framing her work as both anthropologist, dancer, choreographer and author so that students become acquainted with Dunham through her own words. This is also suggested to encourage students to embrace the notion that dancers often also write and research as essential to their creative praxis. Notably, the time period in which the pieces were written make use of anachronistic terms, including "primitive," and "negro," which while currently outmoded will require an effort on your part to explain and discuss with your students; students should be made aware of the historical meanings and usage of the terms and discouraged from applying them in their own work. Any of these four very short pieces by Dunham would make an excellent companion to any of the previously listed works; alternatively, readings number one and two or three and four below might be assigned as companion works.. They can all be found in *Kaiso!: Writings By and About Katherine Dunham*. Ed. VèVè A. Clark and Sara E. Johnson. Madison: Wisconsin Press, 2005.

- Form and Function in Primitive Dance (p. 502)
- Need for the Study of Dances in Primitive Peoples (p. 520)
- The Anthropological Approach to the Dance (p. 508)
- Notes on the Dance (p. 514)

*Dunham's Data: Katherine Dunham and Digital Methods for Dance Historical Inquiry*, "Everyday Itinerary Lesson Plan," 2020. For further information on *Dunham's Data* (AH/R012989/1), visit [www.dunhamsdata.org](http://www.dunhamsdata.org). Do not cite, copy, or circulate without permission of the authors.

## Suggested Preparatory Readings for Faculty

Amin, T.N. "African American Dance Revisited: Undoing Master Narratives in the Studying and Teaching of Dance History." In *Rethinking Dance History: Issues and Methodologies*, edited by Lorraine Nichols and Geraldine Morris. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Bench, Harmony and Kate Elswit "Dance Touring and Embodied Data: Some Approaches to Katherine Dunham's Movement on the Move." *Current Research In Digital History* vol 2 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.31835/crdh.2019.12> [open access]

Bench, Harmony and Kate Elswit. "Mapping Movement on the Move: Dance Touring and Digital Methods." *Theatre Journal* 68, no. 4 (2016): 575–96. <https://doi.org/10.1353/tj.2016.0107> [open access]

Foulkes, Julia L. "Ambassadors with Hips: Katherine Dunham, Pearl Primus, and the Allure of Africa in the Black Arts Movement." In *Impossible to Hold: Women and Culture in the 1960s*, edited by Avital H. Bloch and Lauri Umansky. New York: New York University Press, 2005.

Kraut, Anthea. "Between Primitivism and Diaspora: The Dance Performances of Josephine Baker, Zora Neale Hurston, and Katherine Dunham." *Theatre Journal* 55, no. 3 (Oct., 2003): 433-50.

Martin, John. "Negro Dance Art Shown In Recital." *New York Times*, February 19, 1940, 2. "Modern Dancers Praised at Stevens." *Chicago Defender*, December 24, 1932, 12.

Ramsey, Kate. "Melville Herskovits, Katherine Dunham, and the Politics of African Diasporic Dance Anthropology." In *Dancing Bodies, Living Histories: New Writings About Dance and Culture*, edited by Lisa Doolittle and Anne Flynn. Banff: Banff Centre Press, 2000.

## Lesson Plan/Instructions

Note that Section I presumes you have introduced Dunham-related content to students via materials listed above on the “Suggested Preparatory Readings/Materials for Students” heading.

Section I: (in class) - You are encouraged to open discussion with students regarding the content you assigned on Dunham prior to this class session. You might use any or all of the following for a timed written response (3 to 7 minutes) or as discussion prompts:

- Dunham began her professional dance career in the U.S. in the late 1930s. What ideas or images do you associate with this period in history?
- Dunham was a trained anthropologist in addition to her work in dance. How do you imagine this had an impact on her work?
- As a Black woman, what particular or unique challenges do you imagine Dunham faced during her career?

Proceed by sharing any additional content about Katherine Dunham’s work you find useful and/or appropriate for your students. Video links are accessible via the Library of Congress link located on the provided list above and may be useful for in class viewing.

Choose 1 to 2 articles or essays from the suggested reading list that students will complete before the next in-class session. You may choose to provide any or all of the prompts below for students to answer as a part of homework, in conjunction with the assigned readings and/or video viewings. Alternatively, you may choose to begin Section II with in-class discussion or reflective writing in response to any or all of the following prompts:

- In what ways does Dunham’s work look stylistically different than the work of other artists you’ve explored for this class?
- What specific particularities about Dunham’s work in dance interest you most? Why?
- Dunham’s spent almost  $\frac{2}{3}$  of her career touring internationally with various dancers coming in and out of her company. How do international influences impact Dunham’s approach to modern dance?

Section II (in class) – After the optional in-class discussion using the prompts noted above, divide students into small groups of 3 to 7. Instruct students to work with the archival materials provided via this link (<https://www.dunhamsdata.org/blog/toward-teaching-toolkit>) in their groups for 15 to 20 minutes in order to answer the following questions:

*Working with the provided archival materials, can you tell where Katherine Dunham was and when? Be prepared to explain how you arrived at this answer.*

After the 15 to 20 minutes has elapsed, instruct your students to re-convene and compare their notes regarding where Dunham was and what evidence they have used to get there.

Students should then consult the Dunham's Data interactive timeline (<https://dunhamsdata.org/1950-53timeline/>) to ascertain whether or not they arrived at the correct information pursuant to Katherine Dunham's location. Then, allow further time to explore the timeline as a whole and discuss the relationship(s) between dance and travel:

- Why do dance and travel go together?
- What do your students think it feels like to travel so much?
- Why do you think it is important that someone like Dunham was traveling so much in terms of how we think about her body of work?

You are encouraged to engage your students in discussion about how data visualizations like the Dunham's Data interactive timeline are useful for reconstructing important elements of dance history.

As a final step, you are encouraged to engage your students with the following metacognitive prompts, intended to support students in reflecting on their own learning:

- What were the strategies and skills I used to complete this assignment?
- What did I learn from this assignment that I can apply elsewhere?
- How did ideas in class relate to previous class sessions/topics?