Human Synchrony
UGBA 157.1 | Spring 2015 | Wednesdays 5-6pm
Instructor: Tanya Vacharkulksemsuk, Ph.D.

An interdisciplinary class for all majors, incl. business, psychology, sociology, anthropology, music, communications. Taught in partnership with Cal Performances.

Course Description
This course seeks to explore the connection between synchronized human body movements, human emotion, and collective behavior in work settings. Across various streams of research, a common theme emerges: that moving similarly with other people leads to psychological and social consequences that form the basis of collective strength. For example, rowers who row in synchrony have elevated pain thresholds, work teams who are more coordinated demonstrate greater creativity, and strangers who achieve synchrony during an initial conversation report greater social connection. Synchrony is also linked to prosocial outcomes, like compassion and cooperation.

This course is in partnership with Cal Performances! It will feature Cal Performances’ world-class programming as a basis of discussion and illustration of human synchrony, to spark discussion and provide a foundation by which students can draw on to understand the phenomenon. What’s it like to be in synchrony? What does it look like? What are the varieties of human movement that underlie collective greatness? What it’s like to see synchrony. What is the psychological experience like? What emotions are associated with seeing people move in concert with one another? What implications does it have for leaders and managers?

Through readings, discussion, interactive learning, and attending world-class performances (including Alvin Ailey Dance, Peking Acrobats, and Kodo Drums), this course invites students to deeply connect live arts experience to their studies and real life experience.

Tickets to performances will be provided for enrolled students.
See: http://calperformances.org/learn/discover-engage/ucb.php

About the Instructor
Tanya Vacharkulksemsuk earned her Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and her B.A. in psychology and sociology from UC Berkeley. She is currently a post-doctoral fellow at Haas, conducting basic and applied research around the topics of interpersonal relationships, emotions, nonverbal behavior, and groups/teams. Her work is supported by the National Science Foundation, and she has extensive teaching and mentoring experience with undergraduate students.