

DEPARTMENT OF DANCE

About

Chair

Jennifer Pontius (dnc_jkp@shsu.edu)

Graduate Advisor

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Mission

The Department of Dance at Sam Houston State University delivers a dynamic, holistic, challenging experience that integrates creativity, performance, and scholarly pursuits designed to prepare each student for a 21st-century career in dance.

Contact Information

(936) 294-1875
dance@shsu.edu

Website

Department of Dance (<http://www.shsu.edu/academics/dance>)

Highlights

All MFA candidates participate in a thorough and broadly-based curriculum that prepares them across a wide range of skills and sensibilities. The curriculum has four major components:

1. Theory and analysis
2. Production
3. Studio practices
4. Creative process

Further, the curriculum is constructed to encourage the student to explore areas of interest beyond the specific discipline of dance that will inform and facilitate future artistic and scholarly investigations. The capstone thesis project requires the candidate to draw on all of his or her talents and education to produce a substantial and meaningful work of creative imagination.

Career Opportunities

Graduates of the Department of Dance are successfully employed around the nation and the state as:

- Dance educators at all levels
- University and community college professors
- Public high school teachers
- Studio owners and teachers
- Performing artists in dance
- Artistic directors of dance companies
- Performing arts presenters and administrators

- Master of Fine Arts in Dance

Scholarships

The Department of Dance awards scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$3,000 per academic year. For scholarship consideration, all students must apply through Scholarships4Kats (<http://www.shsu.edu/scholarships>). For other funding opportunities please visit Graduate Studies website (<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-studies/paying-for-school.html>).

Graduate Assistantships

The Department of Dance awards competitive graduate assistantships each year to students based on qualifications and academic standing. The graduate assistantships are usually awarded to second and/or third year students. Assistantship responsibilities include fulfilling six credit hours of assignments in support of the department's activities, equivalent to .50 FTE. Assignments are determined based on departmental needs. Once graduate assistants have completed eighteen hours of course work, they may be listed as instructors of record for courses and assigned classes to teach as part of their responsibilities.

Assistantship criteria:

- Remain enrolled as a graduate student in the Department of Dance at Sam Houston State University throughout the academic year.
- Fulfill academic requirements as specified by the graduate course of study and graduate faculty.
- Maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
- As a recipient of a graduate assistantship, understand that one is representing the Department of Dance. The award may be reevaluated or revoked at any time based upon the review and discretion of dance faculty.

To apply for an assistantship from the Department of Dance, a Graduate Assistantship Application (<http://www.shsu.edu/academics/dance/documents/Dance%20Graduate%20Assistantship%20Application.pdf>) must be submitted along with a teaching resume, two letters of recommendation (at least one from a non-SHSU employee), and unofficial transcripts. Click here (<http://www.shsu.edu/academics/dance/current-students/mfa.html>) for more information.

DANC 5092. Special Topics. 1-3 Hours.

Special Topic. The course content and subject matter for this course is adaptable to the needs of the student body and provide additional opportunity for student investigation of a topics not generally offered in the graduate dance curriculum. May be repeated for credit provided the repetition is in a different area of study. Variable credit (1-3).

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or department approval.

DANC 5093. Independent Study. 1-3 Hours.

This course is adaptable to the needs and interests of the individual student. Students with specific interests are provided the opportunity to investigate and make application in theoretical, creative or field experience approaches to their area of concentration. May be repeated provided the repetition is in a different area of study.

Prerequisite: Permission of Dance Program Coordinator.

DANC 5301. Pilates Tching Methods Seminar. 3 Hours.

Students will prepare to teach Pilates Matwork from the fundamental through the Super Advanced level in a class or individual private setting. Essential aspects of the course include personal practice, observation of professional Pilates teachers in practice, and student teaching hours.

Prerequisite: Acceptance into the MFA program.

DANC 5333. Dvlpmt Advanced Skills In Dnc. 3 Hours.

This course includes theoretical concepts and laboratory experiences in modern dance and ballet. Course may be repeated for credit with approval of Dance Program Coordinator.

DANC 5360. Smnr In Dance Production. 3 Hours.

This course provides experience and information regarding all aspects the presentation of a of a dance performance. Fundamental design skills such as costume, lighting and sound design as well as practical skills such as light board operation, sound recording and board operation, development and distribution of publicity materials, fund raising, box office operations, house management and video operation, are experienced in actual production settings.

DANC 5371. Theory Of Dance. 3 Hours.

An examination is made of the philosophical context within which of dance as an art form functions. Two vastly contrasting aesthetic theories are presented and explored as a means to developing in the student a well-considered and grounded personal aesthetic.

DANC 5373. Laban Movement Analysis. 3 Hours.

This course provides an overview of Laban Movement Analysis at the graduate level. It emphasizes the areas of Body, Effort, Shape, and Space as means of describing and understanding non-verbal communication. Focus is on the psychophysical connections that facilitate efficiency and expressivity in movement. Course concepts are introduced through observation, improvisation, exploration, composition, readings, group discussions, and movement assignments. The methodologies of observation and description are explored as means of identifying and analyzing the meaningful and qualitative aspects of human movement. A brief history/application of LMA is included in the curriculum.

Prerequisite: PHYS 1305 and BIOL 2401 or their equivalents.

DANC 5374. Laban Movement Analysis II. 3 Hours.

This course builds on the exploration of the Laban system categories of Body, Effort, Shape and Space, established in DANC 5373. Focus is on refining the student's understanding of these descriptive terms and their interrelationship. In addition, deeper concepts, such as the coalescence of these factors as they are observed in the physical relationships between people, are addressed. Throughout, the course emphasizes the context and implications of movement as a meaningful mode of human communication.

Prerequisite: DANC 5373.

DANC 5376. Dance Composition I. 3 Hours.

This course includes the analysis of various components of design and development of basic dance studies into more extended dance works.

DANC 5378. Dance Composition II. 3 Hours.

The purpose of this course is to extend understanding of dance as an art and a craft, and to improve ability to choreograph an extended dance work.

Prerequisite: DANC 5376 or permission of instructor.

DANC 5380. Dance Composition III. 3 Hours.

This graduate level choreography course builds upon earlier classes and examines various approaches to the creative process. Emphasis will be placed on preparing students for the graduate thesis concert. Exercises and assignments will test the student's ability to adapt to a variety of situations and hone problem-solving skills.

Prerequisite: DANC 5376, DANC 5378.

DANC 5384. Dance Pedagogy in Higher Ed.. 3 Hours.

This course examines various philosophical, theoretical, and methodological approaches to dance pedagogy for teaching at the collegiate level. Content areas include practical application of methods and theories, including designing lesson and unit plans, and composing teaching philosophies.

DANC 5385. Research Methods In Dance. 3 Hours.

Research methods specific to dance theory, choreography, and performance are introduced. Standard and electronic information resources, methods of investigation, and various means of organizing a review of literature are examined. Written and organizational skills are evaluated. Competencies and deficiencies in oral presentations are reviewed, recorded, and assessed. The course culminates with the development, refinement, and oral presentation of a written thesis proposal in dance.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

DANC 5388. Dance & Integrated Technol. 3 Hours.

This course introduces methods of integrating media technologies into the dancer's experience in the areas of dance graphics, sound design for dance, and dance video. Graduate students learn camera, computer and software skills that will facilitate their ability to expand creative expression, as well as enhance their ability to package and promote themselves as artists in a variety of media.

DANC 5389. Professional Issues in Dance. 3 Hours.

This course is designed for the graduate level student who is preparing to enter the dance profession. Major emphasis will be placed on identifying professional issues in the field of dance and preparing the student for career advancement. By the end of this course, each student will create and package a portfolio in the areas of performance, choreography and academia.

DANC 6098. Thesis. 1-3 Hours.

This phase of the thesis development involves the selection and design of a suitable performance and/or creative project with the completion of review of related literature and research work necessary. The thesis committee must approve a pilot showing of the work-in-progress. Variable Credit (1-3).

DANC 6099. Thesis. 1-3 Hours.

The exhibition of the thesis will consist of a formal thesis concert of the student's performance and/or creative work accompanied by a supporting paper. The written paper must comply with the specifications of the written thesis, which are available in the Office of the Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication. The student must also pass an oral examination, testing general knowledge of dance concepts and traditions that relate to his/her thesis work. (The student must be registered in DANC 6099 the semester in which he/she receives the M.F.A. degree.) Variable Credit (1-3).

Prerequisite: Permission of Dance Program Coordinator.

Chair: **Jennifer Karen Pontius**

Elijah Alhadji Gibson, MFA (elijah@shsu.edu), *Assistant Professor of Dance, Department of Dance, MFA, Univ of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; BFA, Sam Houston State University*

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Interim Faculty

David James Deveau, MFA (djd017@shsu.edu), *Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance, Department of Dance, MFA, Sam Houston State University; BFA, Sam Houston State University*