

DEPARTMENT OF DANCE

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

Mission

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

Academic Programs

The BFA program provides intensive study in modern, ballet, and jazz techniques; multiple performance opportunities; exciting guest artists and choreographers; opportunities for choreographic exploration, which include the integration of media into the creative process; and a solid academic grounding in coursework, which ranges from dance history, to criticism and analysis, to dance and technology. Admission to the BFA program is by audition only. The audition schedule is posted on the dance department's website (<http://www.shsu.edu/academics/dance/future-students/auditions.html>). Dance majors are required to meet with dance faculty for advisement prior to each semester.

Highlights

The Department of Dance at Sam Houston State University:

- is an accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD);
- was identified as one of the ten top dance programs in the country by Dance Teacher Magazine;
- is housed in the beautiful James and Nancy Gaertner Performing Arts Center, which includes four large studios with sprung floors, a state of the art dance theater, a 19-station Mac lab, a fully-equipped Pilates/conditioning studio, and spacious dressing rooms with showers;
- is an active member of the American College Dance Association (ACDA);
- has its choreography created by students and faculty regularly selected for gala presentation in American College Dance Association annual conferences;
- has been selected to present both student and faculty choreography at The Kennedy Center National ACDA conference, most recently in the spring of 2018;
- has presented work at the internationally renowned dance festival at Jacob's Pillow;
- has alumni of the program performing with diverse professional dance companies, including Pilobolus, The Houston Met, Hopestone, NobleMotion Dance, and Blue Lapis Light; and
- regularly hosts a wide variety of guest artists for master classes and residencies to choreograph works featuring dance majors, including Sidra Bell, Joshua Peugh, Mike Esperanza, The Houston Met, Dominic Walsh Dance Theatre, Paul Taylor II, Houston Ballet II, The Dance Gallery, Jane Weiner, Ben Stevenson, Bill Evans, Rennie Harris, Marlies Yearby, Astrid von Ussar, and Manuel Vignoulle.

Career Opportunities

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

Suggested Minors

The BFA in Dance does not require a minor. Many dance majors, however, choose to pursue a second area of study to broaden their education, either as a second major or as a minor. Depending on a student's career goals, pursuit of a minor in business, secondary education, biology, or another academic discipline will be appropriate.

- Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Dance (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/arts-and-media/dance/bfa-dance/>)
- Minor in Arts and Popular Culture (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/arts-and-media/arts-and-popular-culture-minor/>)

- Minor in Dance (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/arts-and-media/dance/minor-dance/>)

Student Organizations

Chi Tau Epsilon, the prestigious national dance honor society, recognizes, supports, and promotes superior achievement in dance and in the performing arts. Membership in the society is recorded on the student's transcript. Each year, Chi Tau Epsilon is an active student organization, sponsoring the student choreography showcase, Dances @ 8; conducting recruitment workshops for the department; and sponsoring community support activities that include Adopt a Highway, food drives, and participation in the Special Olympics. Chi Tau Epsilon also awards annual scholarships for outstanding choreographic and academic achievement.

Scholarships

The Department of Dance awards numerous scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$3,000 per academic year. Approximately \$20,000 in performance-based scholarships is awarded each year. In addition, the Mary Ella Montague Endowed Scholarship is awarded to the outstanding returning dance major each year, and the Kelley Barber Award is given annually to a dance major for outstanding performance. Dance majors may also qualify for the Theatre and Dance Endowed Scholarship and the Nancy Gaertner Performing Arts Scholarship. For scholarship consideration, all students must apply through Scholarships4Kats. (<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/financial-aid/scholarships/>)

DANC 1101. Dance Workshop. 1 Hour.

This is a practical workshop in support of the Department of Dance concerts and activities. Duties include costume construction, backstage and front of house support, and audio/video recording and dubbing.

DANC 1201. Pilates-Based Conditioning for Dance. 2 Hours.

This is an introductory course in Pilates-based body conditioning. Designed by Joseph Pilates in the early 20th Century, Pilates is a movement-based exercise method that stretches, strengthens, and balances the body. Much of its popularity today is due to its regenerative effects on the body-its ability to encompass and connect the mind, body, and spirit with result of health, wholeness and a highly refined overall movement system.

DANC 1204. Folk Dance Forms. 2 Hours.

Students study dances indigenous to Europe, Mexico and the United States are in relation to their cultural derivations. Special consideration is given to dance as a cultural and recreational activity.

DANC 1206. Theater Dance Forms. 2 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 1206]

Specific theatrical dance forms such as ballet, jazz, modern dance, and Hip Hop are studied in specially dedicated sections.

DANC 1221. Introduction to Ballet Dance Technique. 2 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 1241]

Students are introduced to the theory and practice of ballet. No previous experience in dance is required.

DANC 1222. Introduction to Modern Dance Technique. 2 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 1245]

Students are introduced to concepts of modern dance and gives students practice in self expression through movement. No prior experience in dance is required.

DANC 1223. Jazz Dance Technique I. 2 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 1247]

Students are introduced to the dance vocabulary and movement of jazz technique. No prior dance experience is required.

DANC 1228. Tap Dance Technique I. 2 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 1110]

Students are introduced to tap technique and practiced. No prior dance experience is expected.

DANC 1229. Hip Hop Dance Technique. 2 Hours.

This course provides students practice in forms of hip hop dancing. No previous experience is required.

DANC 1233. Intermediate Ballet. 2 Hours.

Students pursue classical ballet technique with an emphasis on technical development and extended movement sequences. Students explore movement, musicality, and artistry through the embodied study of classical ballet and its history.

Prerequisite: Dance Experience, Departmental Approval.

DANC 1234. Intermediate Modern Dance. 2 Hours.

Students pursue modern dance technique with an emphasis on improving anatomical awareness and developing integrated movement patterns often associated with contemporary dance. Students explore floor work and dance as a form of expression.

Prerequisite: Dance Experience, Departmental Approval.

DANC 1333. Ballet Dance Technique I. 3 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 1241]

This course establishes the fundamentals of ballet, including alignment, technique and vocabulary. May be repeated for credit, max of 6 credits.

DANC 1334. Modern Dance Technique I. 3 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 1245]

This course establishes the fundamental of modern dance technique. May be repeated for credit, max of 6 credits.

DANC 1372. Dance and Popular Culture. 3 Hours.

This course is a video survey of the vast range of theatrical dance that has taken place in the twentieth century. Forms and styles covered include ballet, modern/postmodern, jazz, musical theater, tap, contemporary dance, and dance for music video.

DANC 2223. Jazz Dance Technique II. 2 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 2247]

This course expands on the basic dance vocabulary and movements offered in DANC 1223, Introduction to Jazz. Students must have prior experience in jazz dance.

DANC 2228. Tap Dance Technique II. 2 Hours.

This course builds on the basics of tap offered in DANC 1228, Tap Dance Technique I. Students must have prior experience in tap dancing.

DANC 2331. Pilates Body Conditioning II. 3 Hours.

The focus of the course is to develop a solid personal matwork practice at all levels from pre-Pilates through intermediate work, with a strong application of the principles of the Pilates method of body conditioning. Experiences with classical Pilates apparatus will supplement and enrich the matwork exercises.

Prerequisite: DANC 1201.

DANC 2332. Social And Folk Dance Forms. 3 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 1128]

Social and folk dance forms of ethnic and social significance are studied and performed in relation to their cultural derivations and historical perspectives and their use in period theatrical/concert production. Special emphasis is placed upon the importance of ethnic art forms to contemporary society.

DANC 2333. Ballet Dance Technique II. 3 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 2241]

This is a ballet technique class designed for students with fundamental ballet technique. May be repeated for credit, max of 12 credits. Open by audition only.

DANC 2334. Modern Dance Technique II. 3 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 2245]

This is a modern dance technique class designed for students with fundamental dance technique. Students who are not dance majors must have permission of instructor or department chair to register. May be repeated for credit, max 12 credits.

DANC 2373. World Dance: Exploring Cultures. 3 Hours.

Students experience dances from different world regions. Although comparisons between cultures will become evident, the primary objective is to identify and study cultural characteristics.

DANC 2376. Choreography I. 3 Hours. [TCCN: DANC 1301]

Students learn to analyze the various components of design and to create basic dance studies that demonstrate understanding of dance as a craft and as an art.

Prerequisite: A minimum of intermediate standing in ballet or modern dance, or permission of the instructor is required to register for this course.

DANC 3301. Pilates Teaching Methods I. 3 Hours.

Students become familiar with the foundational principles and concepts behind the Pilates Method of body conditioning in preparation for teaching its matwork component. Course work will address breath, core activation, neutral spine, and lumbo-pelvic stability as they apply to the proper execution of beginning to intermediate-level exercises. An essential aspect of the course is observation of professional Pilates teachers in practice, with both individual clients and in a group instruction setting. Course requirements include regular class meetings, a minimum of 15 documented hours of teacher observation, a journal of observations, and written and practical evaluation.

Prerequisite: DANC 1201, DANC 2331, and either DANC 3374 or BIOL 2401.

DANC 3333. Ballet Dance Technique III. 3 Hours.

This is an intermediate level ballet technique class that presumes substantial ballet training. Open by audition only. May be repeated for credit, max of 12 credits.

DANC 3334. Modern Dance Technique III. 3 Hours.

This is an intermediate level modern dance technique class that presumes substantial modern dance training. Open by audition only. May be repeated for credit, max of 12 credits.

DANC 3335. Jazz Dance Technique III. 3 Hours.

This course is designed for the dancer with sound foundations in jazz technique. The course focus is on developing technical skills, increasing strength and flexibility, and developing performance quality in jazz dance. May be repeated for credit, max of 9 credits. Open by audition only.

DANC 3336. Improvisation & Partnering. 3 Hours.

Through the study of improvisational and partnering techniques, students explore a wide range of movement and develop spontaneous problem-solving skills. Additionally, students learn proper body mechanics that will assist them in various partnering techniques.

DANC 3372. Dance History. 3 Hours.

A chronological survey is made of the history of dance from the 1700's to the modern period. Special emphasis is placed on the philosophic relationship of dance to the various cultural epochs. Course Equivalents: DANC 2372.

DANC 3374. Principles Of Dance Technique. 3 Hours.

Students are provided the student with an overview of the movement system emphasizing the subjective control experience in dance. Methods of tuning the system, including body therapies, conditioning regimes, body awareness techniques, and dance training. These methods are practiced, reviewed, and compared.

DANC 3376. Choreography II. 3 Hours.

This course builds on skills developed in DANC 2376, Choreography I. Students develop duet and small group compositional studies.

Prerequisite: DANC 2376 and/or permission of the instructor.

DANC 4092. Special Topic. 1-3 Hours.

Opportunities are offered for thorough study of a variety of topics which students may choose in dance. Such topics as Historical Period Dance, Ethno-cultural Studies, Choreographic Projects, et cetera are illustrative. Course Equivalents: DANC 4392 .

DANC 4093. Independent Study. 1-3 Hours.

Opportunities are offered for individual study of an approved problem in dance. May be repeated for credit. Credit 1-3. Course Equivalents: DANC 4393 .

DANC 4301. Pilates Teaching Methods II. 3 Hours.

Students gain a greater level of expertise in the Pilates Method of body conditioning as they prepare to teach its mat work component. Using the foundational concepts and principles learned in DANC 3301, they will further explore the integration of the musculo-skeletal system in movement by way of the Advanced and Super-Advanced exercises. In addition, they will address the conduct of a group instruction setting over a period of time to become familiar with the process of bringing students to a more advanced level in their individual practice. An important aspect of the course is the actual teaching of both private lessons and group classes to gain practical experience as teachers. Course requirements include regular class meetings, a minimum of 35 documented hours of student teaching, and written and practical evaluation.

Prerequisite: DANC 1201, DANC 2331, DANC 3301, and either DANC 3374 or BIOL 2401.

DANC 4330. Repertory. 3 Hours.

The student is involved in rehearsals in which dance works by faculty and guest artists, as well as the great masters of choreography, are staged or reconstructed in preparation for major dance program performances. Students are provided experience in the rehearsal process, culminating in performance. Students cast in productions experience the rehearsal and creation process of dance repertory, culminating in performance in a formal dance concert.

DANC 4333. Ballet Dance Technique IV. 3 Hours.

This is a pre-professional level of ballet technique in which dancers develop a high degree of technical ability and expressive range. Open by audition only. May be repeated for credit, max of 12 credits.

Prerequisite: DANC 3333 or permission of the instructor.

DANC 4334. Modern Dance Technique IV. 3 Hours.

This is a pre-professional level of modern dance technique in which dancers develop a high degree of technical ability and expressive range in the modern dance idiom. Open by audition only. May be repeated for credit, max of 12 credits.

Prerequisite: DANC 3334 or permission of the instructor.

DANC 4335. Jazz Dance Technique IV. 3 Hours.

This is a pre-professional level of jazz dance technique in which dancers develop a high degree of technical ability and expressive range. Open by audition only. May be taken for repeat credit, max of 9 credits.

DANC 4372. Dance Criticism & Analysis. 3 Hours.

Students develop critical skills, applying multiple lenses, and approaches that are needed for the analysis of choreography and choreographers. Exploring the political and social contexts that inform the work broaden students' understandings of external influences on creative expression. Emphasis is on writing informed, insightful analyses of the form, content, context, and effectiveness of choreographic works.

DANC 4376. Choreography III. 3 Hours.

This course is designed to help the student develop extended solo, duet, and ensemble works for performance, expanding on compositional tools from DANC 2376, Choreography I, and DANC 3376, Choreography II.

Prerequisite: DANC 3376 and/or permission of the instructor.

DANC 4377. Senior Studio. 3 Hours.

In this capstone choreography course, students develop skills needed to create and produce dance. These skills include conducting an audition, coordinating a rehearsal schedule, directing and managing dancers through the creative process, and communicating effectively with costumers and lighting designers. The culminating efforts of this class result in a fully-produced dance concert in which each student completes and presents the choreography developed during the course.

Prerequisite: DANC 3376.

DANC 4384. Dance Pedagogy. 3 Hours.

This course acquaints students in dance with methods for teaching ballet and modern dance technique. Students gain theoretical and practical experience, focusing on the use of anatomically-correct and systematic approaches to developing dance skills. Class structure, design of exercises, effective communication with students, and selection of appropriate musical accompaniment are examined. Course Equivalents: DANC 4374 .

DANC 4388. Dance and Technology. 3 Hours.

This course is a continuation of the choreography series and enables students to effectively pursue technology in their creative endeavors. Students are introduced to methods of integrating media technologies into the dancer's experience in the areas of dance graphics, sound design for dance, and dance video. 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.

Prerequisite: DANC 2376 and DANC 3376.

DANC 4389. Career Resources in Dance. 3 Hours.

This course is designed for the graduating dance student who is preparing to enter the job market. Emphasis is placed on resume building, the job search, and the audition process. Students create and package a portfolio that includes a resume, letter of application, video resume, an audition solo, and an artistic statement.

Director/Chair: **Jennifer Karen Pontius**

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