The Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance

Residence Requirements
The four year Bachelor of Fine Arts and Certificate of Fine Arts programs and the Master of Fine Arts and Advanced Certificate of Fine Arts programs require a minimum of two years full–time study with the final semester being in residence.

I. Bachelor of Fine Arts

Curriculum Requirements
The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree is conferred when a student successfully completes a minimum of 120 units and fulfills all curriculum, performance, choreographic, and production requirements of The Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance, and those of the School of Critical Studies. Certificate of Fine Arts candidates do not complete Critical Studies requirements; the remainder of their program is identical to that of BFA candidates. Critical Studies requirements are detailed and course descriptions are provided in the Critical Studies section of this Course Catalog. All judgments about eligibility for a degree or certificate are made by the entire faculty of The Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance.

The curriculum is designed to ensure that all students gain mastery in four primary areas: technique/performance, composition/choreography, dance production, and contextual studies. Every student is required to enroll in Contemporary Technique, Ballet Technique, and Composition or Choreography each semester. All choreographic work to be performed at CalArts must be shown to the faculty and student body for critique and guidance during the regularly scheduled Choreo/Performance Lab prior to performance. The School of Dance maintains an active production schedule and students are consistently involved in rehearsal processes leading to performance. Concerts throughout the year present work by students, faculty, and guest artists. Auditions are held regularly and all students in good standing are eligible to audition throughout the school year. The BFA experience culminates in participation in the Next Dance Company in the spring semester of the fourth year. All BFA IV students participate as performers. Each year work for the Next Dance Company is commissioned from faculty, guest artists, graduate, and undergraduate students.

Each undergraduate student is required to complete a year–long course in the fundamental skills of theatrical production, such as basic principles of lighting design, sound design, costume construction, and makeup. Students are also required to take advanced courses in concepts of lighting and dance for the camera. In addition to the required coursework in design and technology, each student must complete at least two crewing positions each year.

Within the métier, all dance students take courses in dance history, cultural studies and anatomy of movement. Additionally, students take courses within the School of Critical Studies and other métiers in a broad range of courses designed to provide breadth of exposure, critical thinking skills, and interdisciplinary collaborations.

Beyond required courses, students’ select elective courses in Jazz, Balinese, African dance techniques, dance improvisation, pointe, partnering, Pilates (Mat and Reformer), interdisciplinary collaborations, and contemporary dance criticism. Students may also elect to design independent projects with faculty supervision at any time during the four years of graduate study.

Students accepted as transfer students are evaluated at the time of acceptance to ensure appropriate placement in the program. All decisions regarding leaves of absence must be approved by the full faculty. Each student works closely with his or her mentor who provides individualized support and guidance in maximizing the opportunities for personal and professional development through the four years of study. All students participate in annual reviews with the full faculty. Students must successfully pass the mid–residency review in the spring of the BFA II year to continue within the program. Students must successfully pass the graduation review in the final semester to be eligible for conference of the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts.

Learning Outcomes
Over the course of study, the Bachelor of Fine Arts candidate will acquire:
• A strong, dexterous, versatile facility in contemporary dance techniques.
• Knowledge of the choreographic process and a broad view of dance as an art form relevant to today’s art practices.
• Practical experience and understanding of all aspects of dance concert production.
• Skill sets for creative problem solving including initiating collaborative dialogue with other artists and art forms.
• Preparation to enter the dance world with a variety of professional tools and the ability to create options for career advancement, including skills to communicate their own artistic vision and needs through spoken and written word.

Course Requirements – Bachelor of Fine Arts and Certificate of Fine Arts
The following courses are required but do not constitute a student’s entire program.

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II. Master of Fine Arts

Curriculum Requirements

The MFA Program in Dance is a conservatory–style program with an emphasis on contemporary choreography and aesthetics. This intensive two–year course of study is designed for experienced dance artists who wish to pursue professional careers as choreographers and educators. To obtain the MFA degree, students must complete at least 60 semester units, all course requirements and successfully present a graduate thesis concert during the second year of residency.

The MFA curriculum enables each graduate student to develop and refine his or her own personal aesthetic. It includes seminars dealing with topics in professional dance—from organizing concepts in choreography to meeting the practical demands of producing concerts to identifying larger artistic and career goals. The curriculum also features classes in technique, composition, dance theory, costume design, dance production, dance for the camera, and digital media and editing.

Students are required to create and present three original works in the first year of residency. In consultation with the school’s dean, MFA candidates identify a progression of these pieces for presentation as part of the school’s various concerts. These works are first presented more informally for feedback during Choreo/Performance Lab, a weekly forum that involves all faculty and students.

The thesis concert is produced in the second semester of the second year. An advisory committee consisting of the dean and at least three faculty members is assigned to each MFA candidate at the outset of the second year. As part of the preparations for the thesis concert, students are required to submit a written proposal, which must be approved by faculty before any thesis work is begun. Each MFA student receives a generous stipend for the thesis project and has the opportunity to collaborate with artists from other CalArts schools—including composers, musicians, multimedia artists, and set, costume and lighting designers. Each MFA candidate must hold open auditions for his or her thesis concert.

Learning Outcomes

Over the course of study, the Master of Fine Art candidate will:

• Continue to hone choreographic craft in service of her or his artistic vision.
• Produce a thesis concert in the second year of residency that reflects her or his personal aesthetic incorporating collaborations with other artists in the Institute.
• Acquire knowledge and practical experience necessary to provide leadership in all areas of dance production and promotion.
• Build a skill set to effectively represent their choreography for career advancement.
• Acquire knowledge of contemporary art practices in the field of dance, locating her or his own artistic interests within the aesthetic landscape of contemporary dance.

Course Requirements – Master of Fine Arts and Advanced Certificate of Fine Arts

The following courses are required but do not constitute a student’s entire program.

First Year

D 030A&B Contemporary Dance Technique
D 038A&B Choreo/Performance Lab
Course Descriptions

D 001A&B Institute Dance I
1 unit / Semester I, II
This course, taught by Graduate Teaching Assistants, provides an experiential introduction to techniques of Contemporary Dance. No prior experience in dance is required. Students will have the opportunity to explore the art of dance in which the body is the primary means of expression.
- Open to the Institute.
- May be repeated for credit.

D 002A&B Institute Dance II
1 unit / Semester I, II
This course, taught by Graduate Teaching Assistants, provides an experiential introduction to techniques of Contemporary Dance. No prior experience in dance is required. Students will have the opportunity to explore the art of dance in which the moving body is the primary means of expression.
- Open to the Institute.
- May be repeated for credit.

D 005A&B Institute Dance Composition
1 unit / Semester I, II
This course, taught by Graduate Teaching Assistants, provides an introduction to the art of dance composition. Through movement explorations and creative problem solving, students will investigate core concepts of dance composition. Students will also participate in informal critique and discussion of composition studies.
- Open to the Institute.
- May be repeated for credit.

D 027A&B Contemporary Jazz
1 unit / Semester I, II
Contemporary Jazz approaches movement through a jazz vernacular that is stylistically specific in its execution and delivery. An emphasis on refining articulations of the body, alignment, risk taking and critical thinking will supplement instruction. The course infuses syncopated, rhythmic and lyrical jazz dance exercises and movements that encompass strengthening and cardio–vascular properties. In addition, a focus on coordination, flexibility, phrasing, timing and presentation will help synthesize these acquired jazz dance elements. Contemporary Jazz will stylistically enhance one's expressions in the Jazz idiom.
- May be repeated for credit
D 043A&B Ballet Men’s Class
1 unit / Semester I, II
Advanced ballet technique for men, with an emphasis on jumps, turns, beats and other skills associated with classical male roles.
• Permission of Instructor Required.
• May be repeated for credit.

D 044A&B Pointe
1 unit / Semester I, II
Advanced ballet technique.
• Permission of Instructor Required.
• May be repeated for credit.

D 045A&B Pilates Reformer I
1 unit / Semester I, II
Basic Pilates mat work translated on to the universal reformer.
• Open to Dance students who have completed the Body Conditioning Mat Class
  • By permission of the instructor.
• May be repeated for credit.

D 046 Pilates Reformer II
1 unit / Semester I, II
A Pilates advanced exercise course using the Pilates equipment, specifically the Universal Reformer and the Trapeze Table.
• Open to Dance students who have completed the Mat Class and the Basic Reformer work.
  • By permission of the instructor.
• May be repeated for credit.

D 050 Functional Strength and Conditioning for Dancers
1 unit / Semester I, II
This course is designed to help dancers apply the principles of basic anatomy and kinesiology in order to assess weaknesses in their kinetic chains and correct them. Programs will be developed using functional strength training exercises combined with targeted active stretching geared toward correcting muscle imbalance, increasing range of motion, and cultivating joint stability. Training will progress to increase strength and develop explosive power, moving the dancer from low ground based movement into the air without any lapse in the kinetic chain.

D 105A&B Music For Dancers
1.5 unit / Semester I, II
D 105A Music for Dancers A
1.5 unit / Semester II
This course offers an introduction to the fundamentals of music and their relationship to the dancer/choreographer. Music for Dancers I focuses on audio editing, processing, and recording techniques for use in dance performance. Areas studied will include stereo and multi-track editing, basic mastering techniques, digital manipulation of sound files, and recording of acoustic sources. Course will additionally include listening–based activities for comprehension and identification of standard music genres, as well as rhythm skill development through study of meter and specific rhythmic units.
• Required of all BFA students.
D 105B Music for Dancers B  
1.5 unit / Semester I  
This course is a continuation of Music for Dancers I. Students will be engaged in listening–based activities and readings investigating a broad music repertoire, with particular emphasis upon intersections in the aesthetics of contemporary music and current choreographic practices. Course will additionally include advanced rhythm skill development through study of meter and specific rhythmic units.  
• Required of all BFA II students  

D 120 Dance Improvisation  
1 unit / Semester II  
This course is designed as an introduction to the creative process. Improvisation is used by artists of all disciplines both as an art form and as a tool in the choreographic process. In this class we will focus on improvisation as a tool for discovering unique vocabulary and as a means of encouraging development of one's creative voice. We will look at dance as "play", as ephemeral art, and as philosophy. Students will be asked to keep a journal of their experiences throughout the quarter, and the class will culminate in final performance projects to be presented at the end of the semester.  
• Required of all BFA I students.  

D 113A&B Composition I  
2 units / Semester I, II  
A two–semester course consisting of a series of activities, exercises, and assignments. Designed to stimulate the discovery and development of the creative impulse in movement in the individual student. A significant component of the course is dedicated to the peer review and critique, and the founding of a solid communication base within the peer group.  
• Laboratory hours are required.  
• Required of all BFA I Dance students.  

D 126 Pilates Mat I  
1 unit / Semester I  
Intensive weekly sessions in Pilates Mat Technique.  
• Required of all BFA I Dance students.  

D 207A&B Production Technology For Dance  
1 unit / Semester I, II  
Introduction to the basics of dance costuming, management, lighting, sound, stage management, and other areas related to dance production.  
• Laboratory hours are required.  
• Required of all BFA I students.  

D 223A&B Composition II  
2 units / Semester I, II  
This course, through assignments, observation, discussion and constructive critical assessment, will continue the exploration of movement vocabulary and finding one's own choreographic voice. The ongoing exploration of quality and essence of movement will be investigated as we manipulate space, time dynamics and energy. How do we use these tools to make different statements and produce abstract movement studies? Sound – both music and voice – will be introduced to produce accompaniment and to enhance these differing qualities. Exploring the role of choreographer by transferring one's own movement vocabulary to others will take precedent second semester. We will investigate small group forms and the design possibilities that entails by working in both duets and trios.  
• Laboratory hours are required.  
• Required of all BFA II students.  

D 226 Pilates Mat II  
1 unit / Semester II  
Weekly intensive sessions in Intermediate and Advanced Pilates Mat Technique.  

D 230 Contact Improvisation  
1 unit / Semester I, II  
Through explorations into sensation of weight and space, transference of weight, and the body's abilities to support weight, students will develop skills with which to improvise in safe and playful partner dance. Specific skills of awareness, kinetic efficiency, and directed effort are practiced in order to allow the mind to step out of the way of the body and into exciting and spontaneous expression. Little rides, effortless falls, and surprising support result as students find their way into this game of improvisational dancing.  
• May be repeated for credit.  

D 330 Advanced Improvisation  
1 unit / Semester II  
This course is designed for students who have taken both Dance Improvisation and Contact Improvisation. We will begin with a review of basic skills of contact and ensemble dancing and continue to build from this base. More advanced contact skills will include jumping and catching, low and high flying, safe falling, deepening of sensory awareness and listening skills, as well as moving in and out of contact. Advanced ensemble skills will include the solo/ensemble structures, max–two foci structures and deepening awareness of how and when to support the dance of another or take the spotlight. Specific attention will be placed on the development of the 'score' as a tool for creating focused, yet spontaneous ensemble performances.  
• May be repeated for credit.  

D 333A&B Choreography I  
2 units / Semester I, II  
This course is centered on the expressivity of movement, and challenges the student to make it visible. One focus is on skills: building the abilities to manipulate movement, work fruitfully with others, to use sound and music effectively, and create form that is content. The other, and equally important, focus is on uncovering and developing each student's individual taste.  
• Laboratory hours are required.  
• Required of all BFA III students.  

D 405 Concepts In Lighting Design For Dance  
1.5 unit / Semester II  
This course examines development of concepts for lighting dance performances, including interpretation of choreography, mood and music. Students will gain experience in collaborating with choreographers in the rehearsal process.  
• Required of BFA II and MFA1 Dance students.  

D 415 Choreographer/Composer Seminar  
2 units / Semester I  
This seminar focuses on investigating the possibilities in collaborative relationships between dance makers and music/sound makers. Dance students will experiment with how sound and movement interact, and with collaborating in different ways. Working with a range of composing students, they will have the opportunity to expand communication skills. In
developing ways of supporting and challenging each others’ creative processes, students will be able to develop the clarity, range and responsiveness of their own artistic voices.

- Required of all MFA 1 students.

D 433 A&B Choreography II
2 units / Semester I, II
Choreography II provides the opportunity for students to delve deeply into the choreographic process. The first semester emphasizes an advanced tool-based approach to generating movement material for choreographic development. The second semester addresses in-depth investigations of form, narrative and content. Topics include: William Forsythe Improvisational Technologies, Movement/Video Journals, Music Visualization, Use of Text, Site-Specific approaches among others. Over all emphasis is on dance making with an emphasis on developing each student’s individual and unique voice and style. Attendance at LA area dance events and critical writing are also required.

- Laboratory hours are required.
- Required of all BFA IV students.

D 435 Company Repertory
1 unit / Semester II
Company Repertory provides BFA IV students the opportunity to participate in a rehearsal process of contemporary repertory that culminates in a concert performance.

- Required of all BFA IV students.

D 450 NEXT! Preparing for My Future in Dance
2 units / Semester II
A seminar course to help you prepare for your future after graduation addressing such subjects as: how you continue to progress as a young artist, defining your directions and objectives, how to research possibilities, what are your options, how to survive financially, building contacts and support systems, presenting yourself effectively, honest self-assessment, and setting useful goals.

- Required of all BFA IV students.

D 459 A&B Dance for Camera
2 units / Semester I, II
When dance is filmed, it can explode off the stage and reach vast new audiences, going out to the spectator instead of demanding that the spectator come to it. But maintaining the special "aliveness" of dance as it is translated into a two-dimensional medium requires a new way of thinking. This class is a laboratory for investigating these challenges. The course will be divided into two semester-long sections. Francesca Penzani's section emphasizes dance-video as a visually-based, abstract form. Robbie Shaw’s section emphasizes the use of narrative and story structure. Class participants will explore film grammar, experimental narrative, and contemporary/historical context through hands-on creative work, classroom viewings and discussion, and readings. Participants will learn camera use, storyboarding, basic Final Cut Pro editing, and will work towards producing dance-videos that will receive a public screening.

- Required of all BFA III students.

D 474 Contemporary Dance Artists
1 unit / Semester II
This course provides the opportunity to investigate the diversity of contemporary choreography as it is currently being produced by artists in America and around the world. Recognizing that the 20th century tradition of Modern Dance has given rise to a wide array of dance practices and approaches to choreography, this course will examine individual artists and trends characteristic of the early years of the 21st century. Emphasis is on choreographers creating for live performance.

- Open to BFA III, IV and MFA students.

D 550 A&B MFA1 Project
4 units / Semester I, II
Rehearsal, critique, and concert preparation for MFA1 choreography. Includes individual rehearsal and choreographic studio work as well as group critique of discussion.

- Required of MFA 1 students.

D 552 A&B MFA Seminar
1 unit / Semester I, II
This course involves lectures and discussions focusing on career preparation and transition. Writing assignments that support future grant writing (how to write a project description, artistic statement), resume/vita creation and design, press releases and choreographic contract negotiation are among the topics covered. A student’s own graduate thesis work is often the basis from which writing assignments are based. Strategies involving how to get produced, future self-production and issues around management, in addition to self-marketing both in print and on the web (viral) are covered. Peer to peer critiques of MFA2 thesis concerts are addressed, as are current production issues stemming from each thesis concert.

- Required of all MFA Students

D 605 A&B MFA Music Seminar
1 unit / Semester I, II
The advanced study of music as related to dance performance and choreography. Curricular areas will include: rhythmic and metrical comprehension, a historical survey of musical aesthetics, and study of common types of structural organization in music. Particular emphasis will be placed upon listening comprehension. Analytical papers and performance demonstration activities will also be required.

- Required of MFA 1 students.

D 610 A&B MFA Theory, Practice, And Thesis Workshop
1 unit / Semester I, II
This course involves lectures and discussions focusing on career preparation and transition. Writing assignments that support future grant writing (how to write a project description, artistic statement), resume/vita creation and design, press releases and choreographic contract negotiation are among the topics covered. A student’s own graduate thesis work is often the basis from which writing assignments are based. Strategies involving how to get produced, future self-production and issues around management, in addition to self-marketing both in print and on the web (viral) are covered. Peer to peer critiques of MFA2 thesis concerts are addressed, as are current production issues stemming from each thesis concert.

- Required of all MFA Students

D 650 A&B MFA–2 Thesis Project
4 units / Semester I, II
Preparation and presentation of required thesis concert.

- Required of all MFA II students.
D 659A&B Final Cut Pro Editing
2 units / Semester I, II
Dancers and choreographers who want their work to be seen and/or preserved (i.e. everyone) will benefit from knowing how to edit video. This class will teach Apple’s Final Cut Pro—how to edit video and audio, color correct, apply titles, fix sound, and output. Basic DVD Studio Pro will also be taught so that students can author their own DVDs.
  • Required of all MFA I students.

D 660A&B Digital Portfolio
1 unit / Semester I, II
This course will emphasize creating graphics and manipulating photographs for use on a personal web page, providing online presence for the graduating student. This webpage will be posted on alum.calarts.edu and will include a resume, portfolio, and artist statement. Basic html and basic skills in Adobe Photoshop are learned and used and video clips are frequently incorporated into the design.
  • Required of all MFA II students.

D 669 Advanced Final Cut Pro Editing
1 unit / Semester I
This class expands on the work of the Final Cut Pro Editing course. It is a project–based class in which students make more ambitious dance–film work, bringing material to class throughout the semester for a deeper level of discussion. Additionally, other software tools are explored including PhotoShop and LiveType, as well as compositing and rotoscoping.
  • Required of all MFA II students.

D 800 Independent Project: Dance
2 units / Semester I, II
Independent Project: Dance is an individual program of supervised study, where students present a proposal of intended work for personal development related to artistic goals to their Project Advisor (Mentor). The Project Supervisor, Assistant Dean, Andre Tyson, must approve an Independent Project. Through subsequent meeting with follow–up sessions a plan of study is developed and completed with their Project Advisor (Mentor). Report to the School of Dance office for the Independent Project/Private Directed Study Contract and corresponding syllabus.
  • May be repeated for credit.
  • Independent Project: Dance is an elective and not a replacement for School of Dance curricular requirements.

CS174A&B Dance And World Cultures
2 units / Semester I, II
This course examines the various roles that dance plays in human culture. Through video viewing, readings, writings and discussions, students will gain a critical perspective on dance within religious, social and theatrical contexts. Examples are drawn from American culture as well as from selected countries around the world to provide a greater appreciation for the creative diversity of human expressivity through dance. Dance and World Cultures is a year–long course, though students may register for each semester independently. The first semester establishes a theoretical framework for dance observation within a cross–cultural context and then proceeds to examine examples of dance within religious contexts. The second semester examines examples of social dance and dance as art and entertainment.
  • Required of all BFA I students.

CS273A&B Modern Dance History
2 units / Semester I, II
This course will provide students with a unique opportunity to analyze dances from the 20th Century modern dance repertory. Within a broad historical perspective, modern dance artists will be examined. Through video viewing, readings, writings and discussion, students will gain a critical perspective on the aesthetic and philosophical contributions of the primary artists within this tradition. Attention to movement vocabulary, style and artistic interests and trends will provide perspective on the artistic landscape in which we as contemporary artists are working. This is a year–long course, though students may register for each semester independently. The fall semester focuses on the emergence of modern dance from ballet, through the 1940s. The spring semester begins with the primary choreographers of the 1950s and continues to the present.
  • Required of all BFA II students.

CS361A&B The Anatomy Of Movement
2 units / Semester I, II
CS361A (Semester I)
This course is an introductory discourse on the human body and how it achieves both stability and mobility. The class concentrates on the identification and cooperation of the structures and functions of the skeletal and muscular systems. We will refer to the interests of the class to add context, relevance, and theory to our foundational information. Students will be exposed to anatomical terminology, the principles of Kinesiology, and the laws of mobility as they pertain to the lower body: pelvis, legs, lower limbs and feet.
  • Required of all BFA II students.

CS361B (Semester II)
This course is an introductory discourse on the human body and how it achieves both stability and mobility. The class concentrates on the identification and cooperation of the structures and functions of the skeletal and muscular systems. We will refer to the interests of the class to add context, relevance and theory to our foundational information. Students will be exposed to anatomical terminology, the principles of Kinesiology, and the laws of mobility as they pertain to the upper body: spine, torso, arms, and hands. There is no prerequisite for this course.
  • Required of all BFA II students.