

# **Master of Fine Arts in Dance Student Handbook**



Department of Dance  
COLLEGE OF ARTS & MEDIA  
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

**Updated 2021**

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## Introduction

### Department of Dance

The Department of Dance is one of five departments in the College of Fine Arts and Mass Communications at Sam Houston State University. The Department of Dance offers one master's level degree, Master of Fine Arts in Dance, a bachelor's level degree, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance, and a Minor in Dance.

The SHSU Department of Dance is located in the James and Nancy Gaertner Performing Arts Center at 815 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Huntsville, TX 77340. Our outstanding facilities include:

- State-of-the-art Dance Theater
- Four Dance Studios
- Dance Technology Lab
- Dance Costume Shop
- Conditioning Studio

### Our Mission

The mission of the Department of Dance at Sam Houston State University is to deliver a dynamic, holistic, challenging experience that integrates creativity, performance and scholarly pursuits designed to prepare each student for a 21<sup>st</sup> century career in dance.

### Contact Information

#### Department of Dance

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Neal Petz	Technical Coordinator	936-294-2321	<a href="mailto:crm009@shsu.edu">crm009@shsu.edu</a>
Barry Doss	Costume Design Specialist	936-294-2684	<a href="mailto:nwp003@shsu.edu">nwp003@shsu.edu</a>
Craig Brossman	PAC Facilities Manager	936-294-3343	<a href="mailto:bwd006@shsu.edu">bwd006@shsu.edu</a>
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		936-294-2340	<a href="mailto:acm047@shsu.edu">acm047@shsu.edu</a>

## Sources of Information

### Majors Meetings

Periodic meetings of the dance majors, faculty, and staff is an essential tool for sharing information and maintaining the community spirit essential to our department. The first Wednesday of each semester and the first Wednesday of every month are reserved for Majors Meetings. Meetings are at 1:00 pm in the Dance Theater. Attendance will be taken and recorded every meeting. Absences for majors meetings count towards the total absences in the dance technique course. In the case that a student has a conflict, it is the student's responsibility to inform the chair through email, specifying the nature of the conflict; the student will be responsible for all information shared at the meeting.

Students are asked to keep their schedules open and available every Wednesday 1:00pm-2:00pm. As this is the only time we can reliably coordinate all faculty and students, it is a time we may use for other meetings, such as production meetings, or for guest speakers.

### Sam Email

Each student on campus is provided with a Microsoft Exchange e-mail account. The e-mail address for each person is his or her *username@shsu.edu*. The username and password combination to check your email is the same as the SHSU computer account username and password. E-mail can be checked either by using an e-mail application such as Microsoft Outlook or by using a browser such as Internet Explorer, Safari, or Mozilla Firefox to access the SHSU website and select the E-mail link from the Campus Tools drop-down box at the top of the screen.

Check your SHSU email regularly as this is the only email Dance, and other university entities, will use to contact you and send out important information.

### Website

Department of Dance's website [Department of Dance](#) is updated regularly with department information, contact information, performance updates and scholarship information.

## The MFA Program in Dance

### Admission Requirements

Admission to the MFA in Dance program is two-fold and includes an application process and audition process. To apply to the MFA in Dance degree program, the following application materials need to be submitted directly to the SHSU Self Service Center:

- 1 Letter of Inquiry (stating dance background and interest in MFA program)  
[Graduate Studies Online Application](#) with the Application Fee (Once this is received you may upload your supplemental materials online at the [SHSU Self Service Center](#).)
- 2 Resume/Curriculum Vita
- 3 Video Portfolio of Performance and Choreography
- 4 Three Letters of Recommendation
- 5 Transcripts of all Previous College Work
- 6 Confirmation of Degree Conferral

In addition, applicants must also attend an onsite audition that will include:

- 1 Submission of a Writing Sample
- 2 Interview with Dance Faculty
- 3 Technique Audition in Ballet and Modern Dance
- 4 Presentation of a solo performance of a choreographic work composed by the applicant

Admission is competitive and based upon an aggregated evaluation of all application components. The department limits total enrollment in the MFA program. Our auditions are held once a semester and take place during a full day of activities. Auditions are usually scheduled in conjunction with a Graduate Dance Concert and the candidates are invited to attend the concert series that evening. Candidates receive correspondence within two weeks regarding their acceptance. Students can begin the program in a Fall or Spring semester (students accepted into the program do not have to wait for the following academic year to begin the curriculum).

\*A long-distance audition including a virtual interview and video submission of technique and choreography can be arranged if the applicant is not able to make it to campus for on-site audition.

*Please note that international applicants must submit additional information. For International Admissions requirements, please [visit shsu.edu/international](http://shsu.edu/international).*

Students leaving the department for one semester or longer must petition for re-admission, and may be required to re-audition.

TRANSFER CREDIT. Up to 18 hours of graduate credit may be transferred toward the Master of Fine Arts in Dance degree. However, the graduate dance faculty reserves the right to refuse graduate credit from another institution or from another Sam Houston State University graduate

program for any courses that do not meet the standards or specifications set by the graduate dance faculty.

### **Advisement**

The graduate advisor advises the graduate students upon their entry into the program to guide them in their course of study. Students also have the opportunity to meet with the faculty as a whole once a semester to report on their experience and discuss their progress in the program. If a student holds a graduate/teaching assistantship, this is a time to mentor them in their assistantship responsibilities. Prior to these meetings, assessment of the student's grades, commitment to program activities, and progress towards thesis is discussed among the faculty. If any red flags arise for a particular student, the end of the semester meeting provides a forum for discussion of these issues with the student.

In their fourth semester, students will form a thesis committee and appoint a chair for the committee. The graduate advisor and department chair approve this selection (to even workload amongst faculty). Once the candidate has identified a committee, the chair of the committee becomes their advisor for the remainder of their time in the program.

### **The MFA in Dance Curriculum**

PERIOD OF STUDY REQUIRED. The Master of Fine Arts degree requires a minimum of 60 semester credit hours. A grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained in all graduate coursework attempted. Requirements of the degree must be completed within a period of six years.

Current course offerings are:

5333	Advanced Skills in Dance (12 – 18 hours)
5360	Seminar in Dance Production
5371	Theory of Dance
5373	Laban Movement Analysis
5376	Dance Composition I
5378	Dance Composition II
5380	Dance Composition III
5384	Dance Pedagogy in Higher Ed
5385	Research Methods in Dance
5388	Dance and Integrated Technologies
5389	Professional Issues in Dance
5092	Special Topics in Dance (3-6 hours)
5093	Independent Study in Dance (3-6 hours)
6098	Thesis I
6099	Thesis II

### **Model Graduate Curriculum**

## Fall Start – Odd Year

<u>Year 1</u> <u>Semester 1 (Fall – 2021)</u> <i>12 credits</i> 5333 Advanced Skills in Dance 5371 Theory of Dance 5389 Professional Issues in Dance 5378 Dance Composition	<u>Semester 2 (Spring - 2022)</u> <i>12 credits</i> 5333 Advanced Skills in Dance 5092 Special Topics in Dance 5388 Dance and Integrated Technologies 5380 Dance Composition
<u>Year 2</u> <u>Semester 3 (Fall– 2022)</u> <i>9 credits</i> 5373 Laban Movement Analysis I 5385 Research Methods in Dance 5376 Dance Composition	<u>Semester 4 (Spring – 2023)</u> <i>9 credits</i> 5333 Advanced Skills in Dance 5384 Dance Pedagogy in Higher Ed 5360 Production Methods
<u>Year 3</u> <u>Semester 5 (Fall – 2023)</u> <i>9 credits</i> 5333 Advanced Skills in Dance 5093 Independent Study 6398 Thesis I	<u>Semester 6 (Spring – 2024)</u> <i>9 credits</i> 5333 Advanced Skills in Dance 6399 Thesis II 5093 Independent Study

The curriculum for the MFA program is completed over a three-year period. Candidates with extensive experience in the field may receive “returning professional” status, making it possible to complete the degree in 4-5 semesters. Returning Professionals may propose an alternative degree program that meets the goals and objectives they bring into graduate study. The proposal will be assessed and negotiated with the graduate dance faculty.

The graduate dance faculty will entertain petitions from the candidate to take courses from other disciplines pending appropriate justification within the overall course of study designed by the candidate in consultation with the graduate advisor.

### **Comprehensive Exams and Thesis Process**

*Refer to the SHSU Graduate and Professional Catalog to access university policy information regarding Comprehensive Exams and Thesis Process.*

A thesis is required of all MFA candidates. The thesis will be a formal concert or alternative creative project of the student's work, accompanied by a supporting thesis portfolio. A Defense of Thesis is conducted following the conclusion of thesis study. The student must also pass an oral examination testing general knowledge of dance concepts, philosophy, and traditions as they relate to his/her thesis work. The oral examination will be conducted by the candidate's graduate committee and selected members of the division faculty. After the oral examination has been passed and the thesis performance and supporting thesis portfolio have been approved by the graduate committee, the candidate is recommended for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Dance. A record of the thesis will be supplied by the candidate to be retained permanently by the



university.

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS.** As per university standards, candidates in the MFA in Dance program complete an oral comprehensive exam in their graduating semester and must be enrolled in DANC 6099 during the semester taking the exam. Traditionally, this exam is scheduled immediately following the student's thesis defense proceedings. Students must successfully pass the comprehensive exam to graduate. Two weeks prior to the scheduled oral comprehensive exam, students receive an extensive list of questions submitted by faculty from the courses the student has taken. They have two weeks to review the questions and prepare responses. The student's thesis committee, as well as any other faculty who have instructed that student, conduct the exam. The exams are closed to outside observers. During the exam, students field questions from the list for approximately 45 minutes. If the student passes the exam a form is signed by the student's thesis committee and is submitted to the Registrar's Office so that the student's records can be released for graduation.

**THESIS PROCESS.** Students register for two semesters of thesis study, DANC 6098 & DANC 6099. Students must be enrolled in DANC 6099 during the semester of their defense of thesis. They must remain continually enrolled in DANC 6099 until the passing of their defense and oral examination. They must enroll in 3 credit hours of DANC 6099 the first time they take the course, but can enroll in 1 credit hour thereafter if they need more time to complete the thesis requirements of the degree. Once a student enrolls in a thesis or dissertation course, the student must continuously enroll in such a course until the signed thesis/dissertation route sheet is received by the Registrar's Office. Students must be enrolled in at least one course (one credit hour or more) in the semester of graduation. Completing a course for which a grade of IP was given in a previous semester does not constitute enrollment.

The thesis process can be broken down into three periods of action.

1. Preparing for Thesis Study - In order to register for DANC 6098, students must complete the following:
  - a. Choose three thesis committee members and appoint a chair of the committee. The department chair and graduate advisor must approve the committee.
  - b. Narrow down a research topic and receive approval from thesis committee.
  - c. Compose a prospectus of the proposed project supported by background research.
  - d. Have the proposal passed by the thesis committee, department chair, and dean of the college.
2. Requirements of DANC 6098 – In Thesis I, students perform research in support of a creative thesis project designed by the candidate that expands the student's area of interest. Students complete a review of literature of their chosen topic and develop creative work influenced by the research. A thesis committee of three, one chair and two supporting members, offer direction and support of the project. Multiple showings of the work-in-progress are arranged for feedback regarding the creative process. The student's thesis concert may be scheduled near the end of their Thesis I semester or at the top of their Thesis II semester. This concert is scheduled by faculty/technical staff based on the

departmental calendar and is often shared with another MFA candidate. The candidate must receive permission in the final showing to proceed with production.

3. Requirements of DANC 6099 – In Thesis II, students continue with the creative research project initiated in Thesis I. Students present their creative project (if it was not presented at the end of Thesis I), compose a post-production reflection paper, and create a public presentation of their creative research. Thesis II culminates with a formal defense of thesis and submission of a thesis portfolio. The thesis portfolio will be placed in the department’s library archive and includes the following:
  - a. Thesis Prospectus and signature page
  - b. Literature Review
  - c. Reflection Paper
  - d. Video documentation of creative research and public presentation
  - e. Curriculum Vitae

### **Scholastic Expectations**

For the MFA Dance program, a minimum grade point average of 3.0, on a 4.0 scale, is required in all coursework taken for graduate credit. All grades earned in courses taken for graduate credit will be utilized in computing the grade point average. If a course is repeated, the highest earned grade will be used for computing the grade point average. A grade earned at another institution may not be used to remove a grade deficiency earned in residence at Sam Houston State University. Semester hours of credit earned at another institution are not utilized in computing the student’s Sam Houston State University overall grade point average. Only those transferred courses from accredited institutions in which a grade of “A” or “B” was earned and which are accepted toward an official degree program may be applied toward a degree.

### **Academic Probation and Suspension**

*Refer to the SHSU Graduate and Professional Catalog to access university policy information regarding Probation, Suspension, and Resignations.*

In order to achieve and remain in **academic good standing** at Sam Houston State University, a graduate student must maintain an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 on all graduate coursework attempted.

A 3.0 overall grade point average is the absolute minimum required for graduation. A graduate student who falls below a 3.0 overall grade point average at the close of any semester during which one or more semester credit hours are attempted will be placed on probation. If an enrolled student on probation fails to achieve a minimum 3.0 overall grade point average at the close of the next semester following the starting of the probation, the student will be terminated.

A student who earns a grade of "C" in any course (repeated or distinct course) within the academic program may have their graduate status reviewed by a committee comprised of the department or college's graduate faculty. The committee will recommend an appropriate remediation for the student. A student who earns two grades of "C" in distinct or repeated courses within their academic program will be terminated from graduate studies. A graduate

student who earns a grade of "F" in any graduate course will be terminated from graduate studies. The grade of "NC" is treated as a grade of "C" for the purpose of determining Academic Standing, but is considered an insufficient grade to meet degree course requirements. Those students who earn a second or subsequent grade of "C" or "NC" or a grade of "F" in any combination of courses within their academic program during the semester of their anticipated graduation will be terminated from graduate studies and will not be eligible to graduate in that term. The appropriate academic dean may place on probation, retain on probation, or terminate any student deficient in grade points without regard to the regulations previously stated.

### **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 of .50 FTE. Assignments are determined based on department needs. Once Graduate Assistants have completed 18 hours of course work, they may be listed as the instructor of record for courses and assigned classes to teach as part of their load.

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, the candidate 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.

### **Technique Component: Placement and Proficiency**

Students maintain participation in two majors' technique classes for five semester (unless an alternate course of action has been arranged due to professional performance credit). Faculty will place students in the appropriate level based on audition performance and placement classes held in the first week of the semester during scheduled technique time. Students are expected to continue study in designated courses at their level of technique until they are ready to advance. Earning an A or B in a technique course does not mean that a student will automatically advance to the next level of technique. At the beginning of each semester, placement classes will determine the student's appropriate technique level.

### **Performance Opportunities**

The department produces a full schedule of concerts. Casting is determined through auditions. Scholarship students are required to audition for Dance Spectrum and accept casting offered. All majors are encouraged to audition.

*Dance Spectrum:* This concert forum presents choreography created by faculty and guest artists. Usually about 8 new works are created through the semester within a schedule posted

after casting has been determined. Rehearsals are typically in the afternoons following the second majors' technique course. See a typical schedule below. The *Dance Spectrum* concert is presented near the end of the fall and spring semesters. Auditions are held on the first Wednesday of classes each semester from 2:00-6:00 pm. Casting is posted by the first Friday, and rehearsals begin the following week.

Typical Rehearsal Schedule for Dance Spectrum

Group A choreographers Monday/Friday 4:00-6:00  
Wednesday 2:00-4:00

Group B choreographers Tuesday/Thursday 4:00-6:00  
Wednesday 4:00-6:00

*Senior Studio:* As part of the senior capstone experience, BFA candidates produce a concert featuring each students' work in their final year. Auditions are held at the beginning of the semester. Most years, this concert series occurs in either the fall or spring semester.

*MOD: Graduate Dance Concert:* Graduate students produce a concert featuring graduate students' work. This concert forum is presented most fall and spring semesters. Involvement in this concert series is voluntary.

*MFA Thesis Concerts:* As the capstone of the graduate thesis process, each MFA candidate presents their creative work in a fully produced concert or alternative creative project. These concerts are scheduled throughout the fall and spring semesters.

*Dances@8:* Dances @ 8 is produced by the Dance Honor Society Chi Tau Epsilon. The student-produced show features choreography by SHSU undergraduate students. This concert forum is presented most fall and spring semesters.

Graduate Students may audition for any performance opportunity offered by Faculty, Guest Artists, Graduate Students or Undergraduate Students. Graduate students are held to the same standards expected of undergraduate students performing in SHSU dance concerts.

## **Dance Student Organization**

### *Masters of Dance: Graduate Student Organization*

Masters of Dance is the resident SHSU Department of Dance graduate student organization. Their purpose is to unify a community of dance artists interested in producing dance work at a professional level. Members must currently be pursuing their Masters of Fine Arts in Dance at SHSU. The organization is designed to create a platform for exploring, discussing, and presenting one's artistic vision. The organization participates in a number of outreach activities throughout the year and was awarded Outstanding Overall Student Organization and Outstanding Academic/Honorary Organization recognitions in the campus wide *The Sammy's* award

ceremony in 2018. Learn more about MoD at: <https://www.shsu.edu/academics/dance/current-students/masters-of-dance>.

## **Financial Aid for MFA Dance Students**

### **Scholarships4Kats**

Dance majors can apply for dance and non-dance scholarship through Scholarships4Kats. Scholarships4Kats is SHSU streamlined scholarship application. This application simplifies the process for students by importing key information from their student data record and allowing them to be automatically considered for all relevant scholarships. You can find Scholarships4Kats through MySam under the Students tab. For more information on Scholarships4Kats please visit [Financial Aids Scholarship page](#).

### **Performance Scholarships**

Limited scholarship aid is offered. Performance scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis to those students who demonstrate exceptional and promising ability in dance. The audition for MFA program admission is also used for determination of these performance scholarship awards. Awards are made for one academic year. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA, fulfill performance responsibilities, and audition each year for consideration of scholarship renewal. Students must remain enrolled as full-time students pursuing the MFA curriculum in Dance. A [Scholarships4Kats](#) general application must also be submitted as part of the application.

### **Endowed Scholarships**

The dance faculty determines recipients of the Mary Ella Montague Endowed Scholarship; the Jonathan Charles Endowed Scholarship; and the Kelley Barber Endowed Scholarship. Other endowed scholarships may be applied for. All endowed scholarships require completion of the [Scholarships4Kats](#) general application.

#### **Nancy Gaertner Performing Arts Scholarship**

The Nancy Gaertner Performing Arts Scholarships are expressly intended to be available to students majoring in programs in the Department of Theatre & Musical Theatre, Department of Dance, or the School of Music. Recipients will be selected by a committee to include the administrative heads of the three performing arts areas as well as a representative of the Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication. The following criteria will be applied to selection: Recipients must; (1) be full-time Sam Houston State University in good standing (3.0 overall GPA or higher); and (2) be a student majoring in any program with the Department of Theatre & Musical Theatre, Department of Dance, or the School of Music. Financial need may be considered in the award process, but will not be a determining factor. The scholarship is a one-year award. A recipient may receive this scholarship in subsequent years, but must reapply each year and be selected as the best candidate.

### **Mary Ella Montague Endowed Scholarship**

This scholarship was established in honor of Dr. Mary Ella Montague, founder of the dance program and Professor Emeritus in Dance. During her tenure at Sam Houston State University she served as Program Coordinator in Dance, as chair of the Department of Dance, Drama, Radio/Television, Film and Speech, and as Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Scholarship is awarded each year to the outstanding returning dance major in the department. The recipient of this award demonstrates exceptional artistic, technical and academic achievement and is an exemplary citizen of the department.

### **The Kelley Barber Endowed Dance Performance Scholarship**

This scholarship was established in the year 2002 by Kelley Barber to recognize an outstanding student performer in the Department of Dance. Recipient must be a full-time undergraduate student majoring in Dance. GPA requirement is 2.5.

### **The Sophia Victoria Mendez Performing Arts Scholarship**

The Sophia Victoria Mendez Performing Arts Scholarship is available to students majoring in any discipline within the performing arts. A scholarship committee within the College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication will select one or more award recipients each year. The following criteria will be used in the selection process: (1) a full-time undergraduate student in good standing enrolled at Sam Houston State University; (2) major in any discipline within the performing arts; (3) demonstrated financial need; (4) demonstrated a high skill level in their major; and (5) minimum overall GPA of 3.0.

### **The Mary S. & G. Scott McCarley Performing Arts Endowed Scholarship**

The Mary S. & G. Scott McCarley Performing Arts Endowed Scholarship is available to students majoring in any discipline within the performing arts. A scholarship committee within the College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication will select one or more award recipients each year. The following criteria will be used in the selection process: (1) a full-time undergraduate student in good standing enrolled at Sam Houston State University; major in dance, music, music therapy, theater, or musical theater; minimum overall GPA of 2.50.

### **Dance and Theatre Endowment Scholarship**

Scholarships are awarded by a scholarship selection committee consisting of members of the faculty of the Department of Theatre & Musical Theatre and Department of Dance, with screening and advice from the donors. The guidelines specify that the recipient must be a student with significant need, as well as outstanding talent and/or accomplishment.

## **Work Study**

Graduate Students are eligible to apply for work-study through [The Office of Financial Aid](#). The Department hires eligible students for work in the front office, the media library, the

Pilates studio, the costume shop, and to support operations in the dance theater. Additional opportunities may be available. Interested students should inquire at the department offices and apply through [Jobs for Kats](#).

## **Department Policies and Procedures**

### **Performance Eligibility**

To be eligible for casting in departmental productions, dance majors must maintain good standing in these areas in the preceding semester:

1. Earn a B or higher in all dance classes (graduate students only).
2. Have satisfactory attendance in majors meetings, production meetings, dress rehearsals and other departmental activities.
3. Demonstrate professional attitude and citizenship.

### **Enrollment**

All students must be officially enrolled through the University in all classes they are participating in.

If a student has completed the required technique hours, they may petition to audit additional technique courses. Audits must be processed through the Bursar's Office. An audit will be recorded on the official transcript with no grade assigned and no bearing on the GPA.

### **Attendance**

Due to the participatory nature of the majority of dance courses, attendance is a major factor in the student's progression. In accordance with SHSU policies, students are permitted one hour of absence per hour of weekly instruction in a course without adverse effect to the grade. For a 3 credit course meeting three hours per week, 3 hours of absence during the semester are allowed.

Dance majors' technique courses meet for six hours per week. Attendance will be taken each and every class period. Each absence in excess of six class periods will lower the student's course grade by 5 percentage points. No make-up classes will be allowed.

Absences for official university functions may be excused provided that the student requests this accommodation well in advance and presents official documentation. Professional opportunities will be assessed at half an absence, provided appropriate documentation is presented in advance. All other absences count toward the total of six.

Students are responsible for classwork missed due to absences, including meeting the due dates for tests, presentations of projects, and submissions of papers. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the instructor, preferably in advance of the absence; it is the instructor's prerogative to determine whether possible makeup opportunities will be offered.

Students will not be allowed to be tardy to class. Please be aware that failure to be in class on

time will result in an absence. A student who has a conflict that results in not being able to arrive on time for class on a regular basis should discuss the problem with the affected instructor. It is the instructor's prerogative to determine how the conflict may be handled. The department chair may be brought into the discussion as needed.

Class activity begins and ends as scheduled. Promptness in arriving for class is expected. If you have a problem arriving in time, please let your instructor know what your issue is. It is the instructor's prerogative to determine how the tardiness will be assessed. Faculty are to end classes at the scheduled time. If classes running past time is a habitual and problematic issue, please inform the chair.

### **Attire/Dress Code**

For movement courses, there is no set dress code across the curriculum. Individual teachers will specify expectations for appropriate attire for their dance courses in their syllabus.

For auditions, juries, and master classes, students are expected to adhere to a professional standard. Form fitting dance clothes in solid colors, hair secured away from the face, footwear as is customary for the given dance activity (barefooted for traditional modern dance; ballet slippers for ballet class; socks for contemporary modern if requested; etc.) Proper undergarments are required for men and women. In cold conditions, form fitting overdress may be worn, but should be removed as the dancer gets warmed up. *Personal body parts should be well covered.* Do not wear dangling jewelry such as long earrings, necklaces, and bangle bracelets.

When in doubt about the appropriate attire, ask well enough in advance so that you are prepared with the proper attire for a given event.

### **Excused Absences**

The following are considered excused absences with proper and timely submission of documentation:

- Religious holiday (of your religion)
- Illness
- Death in the immediate family
- Trips in which you are an official representative of the department or university

If a student misses an excessive number of classes, they may be advised to drop a class in order to avoid a failing grade.

### **Professional Development**

The Dance Department supports and encourages students' professional opportunities when such activities do not adversely affect the student's progress towards graduation. Examples of such activities include auditions or job interviews, performance opportunities, presentations at conferences, or other creative opportunities. Students wishing to be excused from classes to pursue such professional opportunities must submit a request and receive approval from the instructor of each affected course, as well as from rehearsal directors. Professional opportunities



will be assessed at half an absence. Request for Excused Absence form is available in the basket outside the Assistant to the Chair's office or online at [Request for Excused Absence For Professional Development Opportunity](#)

## **Syllabi and Written Objectives**

SHSU policy states that faculty will provide students with a syllabus stating objectives and criteria for grading within the first full week of classes. It is the student's responsibility to read the syllabus and adhere to its guidelines.

## **Liability Waiver**

Each student participating in activities in the department will be asked to sign a liability waiver every semester. This statement acknowledges the student's assumption of responsibility for all risks involved with participation.

## **Evaluation of Faculty**

Each semester, students will have the opportunity to evaluate the instructors for each course. These evaluations will be anonymous. Faculty may not be present while the evaluations are completed. A student proctor appointed by the instructor will distribute the forms and return them in a closed envelope to the department office. Faculty will receive a composite report after the final grades have posted. They will also receive the individual forms with students' comments.

## **Examinations**

SHSU determines the schedule for [final examinations](#). Any variation on this schedule must be approved by the chair.

## **Drop/Add Procedures**

Students can add and drop courses through MySam until the 6<sup>th</sup> class day. After the 6<sup>th</sup> class day the online Add/Drop form must be completed. The Add/Drop form can be found on the [Registrar's website](#). The online form will automatically be routed to the Department Chair. After the 12<sup>th</sup> class day additional approval from the College Dean will also be required. After the 12<sup>th</sup> class day, student do not receive a refund for dropped classes, added classes require same-day payment, and adding and dropping a course will incur additional tuition and fees which must be paid the same day.

## **Q Drops**

Students will be allowed to drop (Q-drop) no more than five classes during their academic career at Sam Houston State University. Classes dropped prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> class day will not be included in the calculation of the accumulated five Q-drop count. Students who have met their limit of five Q drops will need to petition the University Registrar for permission to drop any additional classes. If the Registrar denies the request to drop a class above the five Q-drop limit, the student will be required to remain in the class for the remainder of the term. Please click [here](#) for more information.

## **Incomplete Grades (“X” Grades)**

A student who has not completed all the requirements for a course may petition for an incomplete grade. The student must initiate the request. The instructor has the right to either grant or deny the request. All incomplete grades must be made up by the end of the following term. Summer sessions are considered to be a term, so incomplete grades from a spring term must be completed by the end of the summer term. If not completed by the end of the next term, all X grades automatically roll over into F grades.

## **Facilities**

The dance department is housed in the James and Nancy Gaertner Performing Arts Center. Facilities include four dance studios, a theater dedicated to the dance department activities, a conditioning studio equipped with Pilates equipment, a smart classroom, a costume shop, dressing rooms and an 18 station Mac computer library.

## **Reservation Procedure**

All performance, rehearsal, classroom spaces are highly sought after from many departments, faculty, and staff. Any space must be reserved at least one week prior to the desired reservation time. All reservations are subject to change/cancellation in accordance to the priority list stated below and under Title I, Section 1 of the GPAC Handbook, with notice for faculty and staff.

Student reservations of any space, is under the discretion of the supervising personnel of the facility or individual department and is subject to change/cancellation without notice.

To reserve a space the Studio Reservation form must be filled out at least one week in advance. The form can be found at the Department of Dance’s [website](#).

Priorities for reserving spaces are in the following order:

The GPAC priority order:

1. Office of the President
2. College of Arts & Media
3. Departments within CAM
4. Guest of CAM & Departments within CAM

The priority usage internally within the Department of Dance:

1. Department classes, as officially scheduled
2. Guest artist of Department of Dance
3. Faculty of Department of Dance
4. Rehearsals for Senior Studio and MFA Thesis
5. Faculty choreography not associated with the department
6. Graduate students of Department of Dance
7. Undergraduate students of Department of Dance

8. Non-Major Organizations (Reviewed case by case & approval needed by Department Chair) Dance Department Venues: Rules & Regulation

## **General Rules**

### ***Use of Spaces***

Respect and diligence for the rules of the individual spaces is key to the ongoing use of the spaces. Anyone found not following the terms of reservation and use of the spaces within the GPAC, will be asked to leave and will be denied future use of any space within the GPAC. Reinstatement of the privilege to use the space will be at the discretion of the individual department chair, and the Facilities Manager.

### ***Equipment Use***

ALL equipment on university grounds is the property of the university and the State of Texas. Any misuse, theft, or disruption of ANY equipment in the GPAC will be reported to the University Police and will not be tolerated. Any violation of the equipment use policy MUST also be reported to the Facilities Manager.

### ***Food & Drink***

Food & drink is prohibited in all performance venues and rehearsal spaces within the GPAC.

### ***Use of Fire***

The use of ANY ignition device, matches, candles, smoking and pyrotechnics, is strictly prohibited in the GPAC. Any request for use of fire for SPECIFIC performance related use MUST be requested to the Facilities Manager with a minimum of 60 days notice. The Facilities Manager has the FINAL authority on any fire FX request within the GPAC in conjunction with State Office of Risk Management.

### ***Glitter/ Confetti***

The use of glitter or confetti is strictly prohibited in any space. Any persons or department will be responsible for the cost of custodial services, if found in violation.

### ***Special FX***

The use of special FX (i.e. smoke/ haze machines), need to be reported to the Facilities Manager in the event of an accidental fire alarm. The use of any prop firearms must be cleared through the Facilities Manager and specific protocol must be followed.

### ***Access Control***

The individual departments are responsible for their approved space, to grant access and to lock the individual space, when not in use.

## **Dance Theater Rules & Regulations**

The Dance Theater is a multi-purpose venue with specific design and supported by specific

materials and equipment to be a dancer enhanced performance venue. Not all events may be suitable for this space. Use of the space will be prioritized in accordance with Dance Faculty and Staff.

The Dance Theatre seats 157 with 4 wheelchair accessible spaces.

All patrons must have a seat once an event is underway. No sitting or standing in the aisles or surrounding areas is allowed, except by official GPAC staff, emergency personnel and/or ushers.

All seating for the Dance Theatre, ticketed and non-ticketed, for any performance, gathering, or presentation, other than for classroom use, is handled through the GPAC Box Office Manager.

Any seating for non-ticketed events will be a first come-first served basis.

Any request for reserved seating must be made through the GPAC Box Office Manager, with 24 hour notice.

All events in the Dance Theatre must have ushers present. The box office staff may provide ushering; however it is incumbent on the users of the venue to supplement ushers to the Box Office Manager with advance information provided of the names and contacts of the ushers being supplemented.

All events require front-of-house support and will be provided by COFAMC and the GPAC Box Office staff.

The technology and equipment is supported and maintained by COFAMC, the Dance Technical Coordinator. All use of the technology and equipment must have oversight of the Dance Technical Coordinator in conjunction with COFAMC & IT@Sam.

Any event needing technical support, must submit that information to the Dance Technical Coordinator with, at least 30 days notice.

Any event needing special FX, such as haze or smoke, must be cleared through the GPAC Facilities Manager's office, with at least 30 days notice.

No food or drink is allowed in the Dance Theatre.

Any disruption by any patron that is deemed detrimental to the integrity of the event will be asked to leave, without refund, by the GPAC Box Officer Manager or GPAC Facilities Manager. Any refusal of removal will be reported and handled through the University Police and will be treated in accordance to UPD policy and procedures.

## **Dance Theater: Backstage, Dressing Room, Greenroom – Rules & Regulations**

### ***Dance Theater Control Booth (PAC 272)***

ONLY AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL are allowed in this space.

All use of the Dance Theatre Control Booth, outside of the Department of Dance or IT@Sam, must be cleared through the Dance Technical Coordinator in conjunction with the Facilities Manager.

ALL equipment is the property of the university and the State of Texas. Any misuse, theft, or disruption to the normal operation of the equipment will be reported through the Facilities Manager's Office and the University Police.

No food or drink is allowed in the control booth, at any time.

### ***Dance Theatre Tech Room***

ONLY AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL are allowed in the Dance Theatre Tech Room.

### ***Catwalks / Machinery***

Any student use of any catwalk within the GPAC, must be under the supervision of the Technical Coordinator for the given performance venue.

Any student use of heavy machinery and or equipment within the GPAC, must be under the supervision of the Technical Coordinator for the given performance venue.

This includes, but not limited to: Clancey (automated line sets), Genie Lift, power tools, and any type of electrical wiring and or installation of any kind.

### ***Dressing Rooms & Greenroom***

These spaces are for performers, entertainers or special guests in preparation of an event in the Dance Theatre.

Women reserve the women's dressing room for use. Men reserve the men's dressing room for use.

Lockers are provided for use by dance majors. Assignments and locker combinations will be emailed to students' Sam email

Greenroom is assigned to Room 180

It will be available for each performance and final dress rehearsal at the designated call time till the rehearsal or performance is over each night.

There will be a live video and audio feed of the Dance performance stage with a paging system operated and called by the Stage Manager

All performers are to remain in the greenroom once paged down until you are

then page to the performance stage by your Stage Manager.

## **Dance Studios/ Faculty Warm Up Studio**

### ***Studios (250, 254, 258, 260)***

NO street shoes are allowed on the marley floor.

NO food or drink is allowed in any of the Dance Studios.

Reservation of the studio spaces must be made through Dance Department.

All equipment must stay in the designated studio.

### ***Faculty Warm Up Studio***

The faculty warm-up studio is reserved for faculty use only except under special circumstances.

### ***Costume Shop***

Rules for the Costume Shop are set by the Costume Shop Manager. Students must abide by these rules to use the resources and tools available in this space

### ***PAC 240 (Smart Classroom)***

A formal submittal of class use, from each department within COFAMC, must be made through the Facilities Manager six months in advance of a coming academic semester.

The computer in the smart cart, MUST be properly logged-in and off by the user, only during the direct occupation of the space. Once the space is left, if the computer is logged-in, it subject to being restarted.

All classroom furniture must stay within the classroom at all times. There is a default layout of the furniture posted in the classroom. If the furniture is rearranged, you must restore to the default position, before you leave.

The piano located in PAC 240 is for that space only. Do not remove.

### ***The Body Conditioning Studio***

Rules for the Body Conditioning Studio are set by Betty Nicolay. Students must abide by these rules to use the resources and tools available in this space.

### ***The Computer Lab – 255***

These computer labs are specific for use by the Department of Dance. Outside use must be approved by the Department Chair of Dance or appointed designee, and with notice given to the Facilities Manager.

### ***The Media Library***

[The Media Library](#) specific use is for the Department of Dance to archive all performing dance events and supporting career resources for enrolled students and guest artist.

Video orders are available of every performance that is listed on the Department Calendar. This includes Thesis concerts, Dances @ 8, Majors and Non-majors Workshops, Graduate Concert (ROYGBIV), Senior Studio, Alumni Reunion Concerts, and Spectrum.

Media may only be requested for work that you either choreographed or performed in.

- You may order DVD's of past performances as well as pre-order upcoming performances.
- Order forms can be picked up in 160 (media library) or 150 (main dance office).
- Orders will be completed in the order in which they are received. Some exceptions can be made due to circumstances, just ask us and we will try and help you.
- The Cost of Orders is \$5 per disc. If your order must be mailed to you for whatever reason there will be a small shipping charge that is dependent on the size of your order. Orders must be paid for before they will be filled.
- Note: Do not wait until your last semester to fill out one order for all of your performances! At the end of the semester, it is difficult to fill orders quickly.
- The dance library video archive is also here for your use. Any student may make an appointment with us to meet in the dance library and view any tapes or DVD's on hand. There is no charge for this and it is a useful tool for anyone who is wanting to improve by watching themselves or other dancers.

### ***Dance Office Suite***

The department office suite is a work area. Students are welcome to come to the reception area as needed to speak with a faculty member, staff, or graduate student. When possible, appointments should be made in advance. Undergraduate students should not hang out in the graduate students' office.

Office material, machines and supplies, such as printer, copier and stapler, are only to be used by Dance faculty and staff.

### ***Main Lobby & Upstairs Lobby Area***

The main lobby and upstairs lobby of the GPAC serves as the egress of the large quantity of patrons in all performance venues. It must remain clear of obstructions other than under the supervision or direct approval of the GPAC Facilities Manager.

Any use of the lobby spaces for classroom purposes, must have faculty present.

Any use of the lobby spaces for any special events or after 5pm use, must be submitted through the GPAC Facilities Manager's office.

Any use of the lobby for any reception involving food and drink, must be cleared through the Facilities Manager's office and also submitted to the Senior Catering

Director of Aramark Catering Services.

Shifting or removal of lobby furniture is not allowed without approval of the Facilities Manager.

Any loud, disruptive or unusual activity must be cleared through the Facilities Manager. Any persons not adhering to the GPAC Lobby Use Policy will be asked to leave the facility. Any refusal of removal will be reported and handled through the University Police and will be treated in accordance to UPD policy and procedures.

### ***Outside Patio Deck***

The use of the GPAC outside patio deck must be reserved through the Facilities Manager's office.

Any use of the GPAC outside patio deck for any reception involving food and drink, must be cleared through the Facilities Manager's office and also submitted to the Senior Catering Director of Aramark Catering Services.

## **Safety and Security**

### **University Approved Emergency Policy and Procedures**

#### ***Introduction***

The following safety rules and procedures are intended to ensure a safe working environment in compliance with University Safety Policies. These safety rules are not meant to be all-inclusive, for rules cannot be written to cover every condition recognized as unsafe. For this reason, the rules of common sense must be applied in all situations.

#### ***Responsibilities of Faculty and Staff***

All faculty and staff members shall follow and enforce the safety rules and safe practices of the University. All faculty and staff members shall familiarize themselves with the "In case of Emergency" section of the safety policy and be prepared to take necessary action in that case. All work related injuries, no matter how slight, or any accident which cause damage to property, shall be reported IMMEDIATELY to the appropriate department chair and to the Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication.

#### ***Responsibilities of Students***

Students are expected to follow all University Safety Rules and safe practices as posted. Students shall not use equipment in which they have not been properly trained to operate. All injuries, no matter how slight, or any accident which causes damage to property shall be reported immediately to the faculty or staff member supervising the activity or present when the injury or accident occur, to the appropriate department chair, and to the Dean of Fine Arts & Mass



Communication.

***In Case of Severe Accidents or Injury***

1. Don't panic.
2. Call 4-1000 from the nearest telephone, giving the location and nature of the problem.
3. Provide any assistance possible. In the event of a possible spinal injury, do not move the injured person.
4. Wait for help to arrive.
5. Notify the appropriate Department Chair, Dean of COFAMC, or the GPAC Facilities Manager, immediately.

***In Case of Minor Injury***

1. If medical assistance is needed, go to the [Student Health Center](#) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.; otherwise, seek help at an off-campus emergency room.
2. Report injury to supervising faculty or staff member.

***Follow-Up***

Accidents/ injuries in which occur in the GPAC, must be reported to the Facilities Manager. Forms are obtained from the appropriate Department Secretary and must be filled out and signed by both the supervising faculty or staff member and the injured party and returned within 48 hours.

***Injuries Involving Bleeding***

Only designated supervisors who have received blood borne pathogen training shall administer first aid, assist, or transport an injured person who is bleeding. Blood and bodily fluids of all people should be handled as if they are infectious and could contain blood borne pathogens such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis B Virus (HBV). Universal precautions must be followed.

***Other Emergencies***

In Case of an Emergency such as rape, assault, robbery, or severe damage to a building:

1. Don't panic
2. Call 4-1000 from the nearest phone, giving the location and nature of the problem.
3. Wait for help to arrive.
4. Notify the appropriate Department Chair, Dean of COFAMC, or GPAC Facilities Manager. See Contact information on page 4.

***Late Hours & Student Building Use***

The University recognizes that, by its nature, the performing arts requires after- hours work in rehearsals, the scene and costume shops, or on shows and class projects. If a student needs to be in the GPAC until late hours or on the weekends, arrangements MUST be made with the appropriate department or facility personnel. STUDENTS LEAVING THE BUILDING AT NIGHT ARE URGED TO TRAVEL TOGETHER.

On the weekend, only certain exterior doors will be unlocked for normal access. Sensitive areas (i.e. offices, shops, booths, trap room, fly rail) will remain locked at ALL times. If you remain in the building after set hours without supervision, you are considered trespassing and the UPD will be called. NEVER leave an exterior door propped open. Any and all issues with malfunctioning doors or door locks must be reported to the GPAC Facilities Manager. All of this is to maintain safety and security of the students, staff & faculty that use this facility.

## **Health and Wellness**

The Dance faculty are concerned about the physical and psychological health of all the students in the department. We strive to create an atmosphere of support and communication around issues of wellness. Please feel free to talk to any of us if you feel comfortable with us knowing, your concerns will remain confidential. There are many resources available on campus, many of which are free to students enrolled at SHSU. We may refer you to the appropriately qualified professional. Many of these offices are listed below.

The office maintains a confidential file of health and contact information submitted by the students. At the beginning of each semester, students will be asked

Campus Security and Services to support students

Campus police 936-294-1000

Campus Health Center 936-294-1805 Student

Counseling center 936-294-1720 The Writing  
Center 936-294-3680

Legal 936-294-1717

Financial Aid 936-294-1774

### ***Disabilities Statement***

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the [Services for Students with Disabilities Office](#) (SSD) will be appropriately accommodated. Instructors should be given the relevant information at the beginning of the semester. Documented disabilities may be registered with the SSD Office. They are located in the Lee Drain North Annex on campus and can be contacted through phone 936-294-3512 or email [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu).