

THE FIELD

The UMass dance program is committed to educating the contemporary dance major through physical, creative, and theoretical scholarship. Our bachelor of fine arts (BFA) and bachelor of arts (BA) degrees create an environment that embraces inquiry, rigor, and risk. The program provides a robust and relevant curriculum; engages the wider, diverse regional community; and supports a faculty that brings to the classroom/studio the benefits of national and international creative and scholarly research. Students who major in dance will develop the skills, values, and perspectives necessary to achieve sustainable careers as artists, educators, and scholars. As ambassadors of dance, students will learn to advance and advocate for the discipline through practice, inquiry, and research.

Admission to the BFA major is by audition only. Admission to the BA major does not require an audition.

There is no minor available in dance.

THE MAJOR

The dance program is intended to prepare students in both the technical and theoretical aspects of dance for either performance careers or graduate study in dance. Our goal is to provide majors with a comprehensive academic and technical course of study that will facilitate their work as artists in the field. Other goals include providing opportunities for diverse performance and choreography, exploring connections to disciplines outside the field of dance, and developing the skills that can help support the career of a professional dance artist.

The dance major, leading to either the BFA or BA degree, includes study in ballet, modern dance, jazz, and contemporary techniques, as well as courses in dance theory. Additional dance courses are offered through the Five College Dance consortium. The curriculum is supplemented with special events, guest choreographers, and master classes with dance professionals. Three major concerts are produced each year.

FIVE COLLEGE DANCE

Five College Dance combines the programs of Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith colleges, and UMass Amherst. The faculty operates as a consortium, coordinating curricula, performances, and services. The Five College Dance Department supports a variety of philosophical approaches to dance and provides an opportunity for students to experience a wide spectrum of performance styles and techniques. Course offerings are coordinated among the campuses to facilitate registration, interchange, and student travel. Students may take a dance course on any of the five campuses and receive credit at the home institution.

The educational and artistic mission of the Five College Dance consortium is to champion the imaginative, expressive powers of human movement. The curriculum emphasizes in-depth study of a broad spectrum of dance as an art form, including technical, creative, historical, cultural, and scientific perspectives. Students are encouraged to balance performance and creative studies with a comprehensive understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of different dance traditions. They may shape their major studies in either traditional or interdisciplinary ways—reflecting the wide range of career options and new directions of the contemporary field.

HONORS

Students may pursue honors opportunities within the major. Contact the honors coordinator, Prof. Thomas Vacanti (413-545-4078, tvacanti@dance.umass.edu), for more information.

STUDY ABROAD

Dance majors may choose to study abroad if it supports their academic and career goals. Students should contact the International Programs Office (413-545-2710, umass.edu/ipo) and work closely with a dance program study abroad advisor to choose the appropriate program and courses.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The BFA is a professional degree program that prepares students to seek performance and choreography careers. BFA students will learn the creative and technical skills necessary for sustainable careers as performing artists and choreographers presenting dance in the 21st century. The BA degree program provides a liberal arts background, allowing students to combine studies in dance with other fields of interest. Through practice, inquiry, and research, students will gain a substantial knowledge of dance theory and its application to various aspects and issues in the field of dance. Students will develop as artist scholars, learning to advance and advocate for dance studies through their gained knowledge of dance theory, history, performance, cultural, and cross disciplinary studies. Both programs prepare students to seek entrance into graduate school. Graduate school is required for those wishing careers in dance education, dance therapy, dance science, dance history/aesthetics, dance criticism, dance journalism, and those wishing to teach at a college or university. UMass dance majors have gone on to successful careers in the commercial and concert dance fields and have been accepted into prestigious master's programs.

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS

The humanities focus on human creativity, endeavor, and culture. The imaginative and creative arts—literary and performing—derive from life and teach about human behavior and constructs of social reality. The history of social, political, and economic systems illuminates and shapes the present and future. Students in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts are expected to broaden their perspectives on individual and cultural expression within their own and other societies, to understand the development and evolution of the discipline of study in relation to the culture from which it emanates, and to learn the methods by which knowledge in the discipline is gained.

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