DANCE, MFA

for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Dance

The MFA Curriculum is designed to promote a candidate’s progress through our stated objectives: Choreographing, Communicating, Moving, Teaching, Community Building, and Career Planning.

Included in these are courses in dance studies, somatics, pedagogy, and two semesters devoted to an innovative lab team taught by our faculty and designed in collaboration with students. The final year of study is devoted to synthesizing the above objectives evidenced by the production of the candidate’s choreography, their written thesis document, oral presentation, and plans for propelling the student’s career into the professional sphere.

The Department of Dance offers a graduate program leading to the Master of Fine Arts degree. The mission of the MFA Program is to foster substantive choreographic research that posits dance as a force in contemporary culture. The program embraces a wide spectrum of individual movement research and embodied practice to create a dynamic learning atmosphere for critical engagement with choreographic process.

The Dance Department expects MFA candidates to conduct a creative inquiry that leads to the development of a sophisticated sense of self-definition. Individual research and analysis should culminate in the development of a personal artistic process and mission and should be evident in the following contexts:

- **Choreographing:** Candidates will develop a distinctive choreographic research methodology and demonstrate its skillful application in a performative context. This ideology must establish solid foundation for ongoing research and engagement that contributes to the global dialogue about dance and contemporary culture.

- **Communicating:** Candidates will develop the ability to express their choreographic vision and process in verbal and written language that is clear, cogent, and convincing and demonstrates clear analytic skill, critical thinking, awareness of historical context, and knowledge of contemporary culture.

- **Moving:** Candidates will demonstrate a commitment to movement investigation and practice that defines, advances, and sustains their choreographic vision.

- **Teaching:** Candidates will apply their research vision in clear pedagogic principles while fostering a stimulating teaching/learning environment.

- **Career Planning:** Candidates are assessed on their ability to develop innovative career strategies in order to advance their artistic mission in the field and demonstrates the capacity to implement these plans with professionalism in all the above contexts.

- **Community Building:** Candidates commit to sharing research, collectively solving problems, opening ourselves to new perspectives, offering well considered feedback to our peers, exploring collaborative teaching opportunities, engaging in vigorous debate, and bringing our full selves to the experience.

Admission Requirements
Prerequisites for admission to the MFA program are:

1. An undergraduate degree and significant experience in dance is required.
2. Demonstrated choreographic achievement and potential to make innovative contributions to the field.
3. Demonstrated potential to engage in critical thinking and writing.
4. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4 point scale, computed from the last 60 hours of undergraduate work and any graduate work completed.

International students must be eligible for full status admission. International students who receive a TOEFL score greater than 103 on the internet-based test, 257 on the computer-based test, or 613 on the paper test are eligible for full status admission. Students with these scores are exempt from the English as a Second Language Placement Test. The GRE is not required.

Faculty Research Interests
An extraordinary faculty of artists, researchers and scholars has gathered at Illinois, who are creating new paradigms for interactions between the professional arena and the academic training ground. Our group of professional artists includes Sara Hook, Betsy Brandt, Roxane D’Orleans Juste, Paige Cunningham Caldarella, Jennifer Monson, C. Kemal Nance Ph.D., Rebecca Netti-Fiol, Tere O’Connor, Cynthia Oliver Ph.D., Alexandra Barbier, Rachel Rizzuto, Serouj Aprahamian Ph.D., and John Toenjes, all of whom share a commitment to teaching and preparing students for leadership roles in the field of dance.

Financial Aid
Two forms of financial aid are offered to graduate students by the Department of Dance:

- Teaching and administration assistantships are available to graduate students. Assistantships of 25% or greater qualify the student for a tuition waiver. All students are required to apply for Federal Work Study.

- A variety of Fellowships are available through The Graduate College each year, including: (A full listing of Fellowships (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/faa/dance-mfa/www.grad.illinois.edu/ fellowships/) is available online.)

  - The Creative and Performing Arts Fellowship, which may include stipends up to a maximum of $6,000 for a student demonstrating outstanding choreographic and performance talent.

  - The Graduate College Fellowship for Underrepresented Students provides fellowships in the amount of $8,000 and are available to outstanding minority students.

Prospective MFA candidates are encouraged to apply for financial assistance through the Office of Student Financial Aid, 420 Student Services Bldg., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL 61820. (217) 333-0100.

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Degree Requirements
The Department of Dance expects MFA candidates to conduct in-depth creative inquiries that culminate in the development of a personal artistic process and mission that are evident in the following contexts:

1. **Choreographing:** Candidates will develop a distinctive choreographic research methodology and demonstrate skillful application in a performative context. This ideology must establish solid foundation for ongoing research and engagement that contributes to the global dialogue about dance and contemporary culture.

2. **Communicating:** Candidates will develop the ability to express their choreographic vision and process in verbal and written language that is clear, cogent, and convincing and demonstrates analytical skill, critical thinking, awareness of historical context, and knowledge of contemporary culture.

3. **Moving:** Candidates will demonstrate a commitment to movement investigation and practice that defines, advances, and sustains their choreographic vision.

4. **Teaching:** Candidates will apply their research vision in clear pedagogic principles while fostering a stimulating teaching/learning environment.

5. **Career Planning and Professionalism:** Candidates are assessed on their ability to develop innovative career strategies to advance their artistic mission in the field and demonstrate the capacity to implement these plans with professionalism in all the above contexts. Community problem solving and conflict resolution is an invaluable leadership skill and is essential for success in a career in dance. Students will demonstrate a willingness to engage in community problem solving and transparent communication and be responsive to the power dynamics inherent in the fields of dance and academia.

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**Graduate Degree Programs in Dance**

**Dance, MFA**

Graduate Minor in Dance (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/faa/minor/dance/)

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**Department of Dance**

Department Head: Sara Hook
Director of the MFA program: Roxane D’Orleans Juste
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907 1/2 West Nevada Street, Urbana, IL 61801
(217) 333-1010
Dance email (dance@illinois.edu)

**College of Fine & Applied Arts**

College of Fine & Applied Arts website (https://faa.illinois.edu/)

**Admissions**

Graduate College Admissions & Requirements (https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/)

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Information listed in this catalog is current as of 10/2023