

DANCE THESIS GUIDELINES, DEPARTMENT OF THEATER AND DANCE

"The traditional senior thesis involves one or two semesters of original research and writing, culminating in a substantial paper on a research topic of the student's design. Such an effort requires that the student possess an excellent understanding of the *subject area, its theoretical underpinnings, and its research methodology*. The student must also be able to think critically and comprehensively about the topic, and must be able to advance a well-formulated argument. Conducting a senior thesis not only draws on a student's past academic experience, it also requires considerable independent thinking and creativity, self-discipline, and effective time management." "Some departments and programs offer or require thesis work that includes theatrical or musical performance, video production, curriculum development, or studio art work and exhibition."

<http://www.bates.edu/academics/programs-resources/senior-thesis/>

Dance Thesis Option 1. Choreographic Project and supporting academic paper.

Dance Thesis Option 2. Written thesis of theoretical, historical, or contextual research and an accompanying portfolio of creative experience.

Dance Thesis Option 3. Performance Project and supporting academic paper.

Dance Thesis Option 2: Written Thesis

The written thesis option is for the student who wishes to concentrate more on a historical or theoretical research project involving original scholarly research, culminating in a substantial written paper with no choreographic/performance component. There will be \$300 for each thesis project, which can be used for research materials and/or workshops to support your work. Also required is a portfolio that demonstrates evidence of previous creative accomplishments during the four years of Bates study, and a working knowledge of the protocols for making and performing dance. This thesis should include the following components.

1. **PROPOSAL:** 3-4 page proposal due Spring of Junior Year: 1.5 spacing, 12 point standard font. Proposals should include a heading (name, year, thesis type), and take the form of 4 sections, noted below:

1. **WHAT & WHEN** In one-two sentences, note whether you are proposing a choreographic, performance, or written thesis; and when (1 or 2 semester thesis; Fall or Winter).

2. **WHAT, HOW, WHERE** In one to two sentences, provide a brief description that explains what you hope to explore in your research, your research methodology (how), and what form you hope to present this research in and where: a formal paper to fulfill the thesis, conference presentation, etc. Include any other elements of your research that are pertinent to your work. (eg surveys/interviews, informal showings or workshops, embodied research). For a choreographic or performance thesis, please include preliminary details of the work or process. One-two sentence examples:

"I hope to choreograph a small group work that explores first, second, and third wave feminism to be performed in the Fall Dance Concert;"

"I hope to make a mediated performance solo installation in blackbox. I don't know what it will be about yet;"

"I hope to do a written thesis exploring the influence of west African dances on western modern dance techniques and performance in the U.S."

"I propose a performance thesis that explores the intersection of improvisation and set material. I hope to work with a professional artist in this research and plan to perform the work in the Fall dance concert."

3. **NARRATIVE** This section is the body of your proposal and should be 2-3 pages in length, written in an essay format that includes all components noted below.

1. 1-3 creative/scholarly research questions;

2. Methodology: how do you plan to research your topic? Identify the methods you will use in your scholarly/embodied research;

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3. Explain the historical and contextual context for your research. This might include supporting lines of inquiry, interdisciplinary threads to explore, other artists and scholars, embodied research, etc.;
4. Outline the timeline of your proposed research and any resources needed. Resources might include: cast size, technical theatre and design, interviews, research materials, grant writing, anticipated workshops, travel, etc.;
5. Suggested criteria for assessment and advisor interaction, including proposed writing meetings schedule, your proposed method for advisor response to progress in both research and the written work.

4. **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY** 5 sources minimum, MLA format.

2. WRITTEN PAPER: The paper should have the following components in MLA style:

- 1) Title (and standard thesis title page)
- 2) Introduction. States the research question in theoretical and historical context.
- 3) Methodology. States how the research question will be explored.
- 4) Body. Develops themes introduced in the introduction and methods section, provides original ideas and observations in the field in the context of existing evidence of the current scholarship in the field.
- 5) Conclusion. Draws together ideas and makes suggestions for further development of the research.
- 6) Bibliography of all works cited.

3. PORTFOLIO OF CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

Students must also submit a resume of creative activity and research during their time at Bates, including any relevant professional experience outside of Bates. The dance artist/researcher resume should include URL/links to Bates archives and any on-line links to view work. Accompanying this resume is a 1-2 page artist/scholar statement contextualizing their creative work and work as a dance scholar.

Guidelines for Written Thesis Assessment

Specific assessment rubric for your written work will be in consultation with your thesis advisor. Below is a broad outline.

Written/package 90%: The written thesis in Dance engages in a substantial piece of scholarly writing/research that explores a line of inquiry through any number of lenses: 1. Historical inquiry; 2. Aesthetic, Social, and Cultural Contexts; 3. Embodied Research and Experience. The written work should pose a question, develop an argument, and posit new ideas and action to add to the current discourse of the topic. The written thesis will be graded on 100-point scale and is worth 90% of the overall grade. While there is no specified length, written Theses in Dance typically fall within the range of 40-60 pages. A suggested assessment rubric is provided below, to be adjusted/revised in consultation with your thesis advisor.

Deadlines/Meetings (5%) – Periodic submission of work in progress enables the student to receive feedback from the advisor and demonstrates the student's working process. This portion includes your observance of writing deadlines as well as attending regular advising meeting agreed upon with your advisor.

Format/Bibliography (10%) – 12-point standard font, double-spaced throughout, MLA (table of contents, title page, body text, margins, headers, bibliographic format and in-text citations); as well as adherence to thesis guidelines noted on the Library website.

Introduction/Conclusion (10%) – fully developed introduction and conclusion that charts the trajectory of the research process, research questions, and articulates your findings and plans for future research.

Methodology (15%) – The methodology should exist as a specific section in the written thesis (ex. 1-2 paragraphs in your introduction), clearly articulating the employed modalities of this research; and should also be demonstrated in the body of the text, in form and content.

Content: Argument (40%) – the development of your argument via scholarly and embodied research, threading research questions throughout and arriving upon conclusions, with evidence.

Context (20%) – exploring the topic in Historical/Cultural/Artistic/Embodied contexts. This portion includes the situation of your research in the field of Dance research, threaded throughout your written work.

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Portfolio of Creative Experience 10%: To be included in the final written thesis document as an appendix. Suggested form: a resume of your creative activity and research over the past four years at Bates and in the public sector, with links to video documentation of works if available. Additionally, an artist/research statement (1-2 pages in length), detailing your current research interests, methodology, and future plans as a researcher/scholar in Dance Studies.