

## **DANCE CAPSTONE GUIDELINES, DEPARTMENT OF THEATER AND DANCE**

The Dance major has a variety of options for completing the capstone project. Like all thesis and capstone experience, that is a culmination of intensive study in Dance. The expectation is that this capstone will demonstrate that you have developed the skills to can synthesize your growing expertise in the field, and in the case of a thesis, can apply that complex understanding of context and protocols to a final culminating project.

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

### **OPTIONS:**

**Portfolio Capstone: 11 credits** for double majors – includes no W3 thesis credit

**Written Research Thesis: 11 credits** with written thesis

**Performance Thesis: 12 credits** including 253 and one other course in consultation with advisor

**Choreographic Thesis: 12 credits** including 351 or 360 before thesis semester

### **Capstone Portfolio** (no W3 - for double majors only)

This capstone option is a reflection on the cumulative outcomes of your full education in Dance at Bates without centering your demonstration of learning on a single thesis object or project. The requirements to arrive here include studies in all of the areas of the curriculum, Cultural Context, Creative Process, Physical Practice, and some experience in production. The final presentation of your capstone portfolio is a web based non-credit bearing. Capstone Portfolio is non-credit bearing and can be completed any time in your senior year. The Portfolio is in a web-based format of your choosing. You will undertake this with advisement with a full time faculty in Dance.

### **1. CAPSTONE PORTFOLIO**

- 1) Personal Statement essay (8-10 pages) A comprehensive synthesis of the culmination of your Bates dance education and how that experience relates to other studies or to life philosophy and skills beyond the field of dance.
- 2) Dance CV
- 3) Dance reel including 3-5 performance events
- 4) Discuss how you encountered and attended to questions of race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, and privilege in the practices and pedagogies of your studies
- 5) List of all classes related to studies in dance (including courses from across the curriculum) with annotation of how those classes contribute to knowledge and understanding of dance.
- 6) Bibliography of dance and related works read, seen and participated in
- 7) All of these items in your portfolio are delivered in a personal website (which can be rudimentary for these purposes but get you started on having a professional web presence.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THESIS OPTIONS**

**PROPOSAL PROCESS FOR ALL THESIS OPTIONS:** 3-4 page proposal due Spring of Junior Year: Proposals should include a heading (name, year, thesis type), and take the form of 5 sections, noted below:

1. **WHAT & WHEN** In one-two sentences, note whether you are proposing a **portfolio, written research, choreographic, or performance**; and when (Fall or Winter). **Skip to 5 for Portfolio Capstone Option.**
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 where you hope to present if doing creative research and why this venue, if proposing an alternative space/venue. For a written thesis, include any other proposed methodologies for 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 using queer and feminist creation and rehearsal practices, to be performed in the Spring Dance Concert;"

"I hope to make a mediated performance solo installation in blackbox. Thematic material still unknown"

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"My written thesis will explore the influence of west African dances on modern dance performance forms in the U.S. I will make a small piece to be shown in Plavin Studio in conjunction with research."

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

3. **NARRATIVE** This 2-3 page essay is the body of your proposal.

- 1) 2-3 substantive creative/scholarly research questions;
- 2) Methodology: how do you plan to research your topic? Identify the methods you will use in your scholarly or creative research; your projected approach to the rehearsal process and performance;
- 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 such we cast size, technical theatre and design, interviews, research materials, grant writing, anticipated workshops, travel, etc.;

4. **CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT** and advisor interaction, including proposed visits to rehearsals, writing, schedule, and your proposed method for advisor response to progress in both the studio and written work.

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

### **Written Research 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** (see guidelines above)

**2. ACADEMIC PAPER:** This paper should have the following components:

- 1) Title (and standard thesis title page materials)
- 2) Introduction. States the research question in its context and how it is approached.
- 3) Methodology. States how the research question is framed.
- 4) How your research interrogates and attends to questions of race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, and privilege in the field, how your learning influences your own practices moving forward.
- 5) 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.
- 6) Conclusion. Draws together ideas and makes suggestions for further development of the research.
- 7) Bibliography of all works cited.

### **3. PORTFOLIO DEMONSTRATING CREATIVE EXPERIENCE**

To add praxis contest to the Capstone, submit a resume of creative activity and research during your 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 and other relevant additions such as photos, interviews, reflections on creative process. Accompanying this resume is a 1-2 page artist/scholar statement contextualizing your creative work and work as a dance scholar.

#### **Guidelines for Assessment**

Specific assessment rubric for your written work will be in consultation with your thesis advisor. Below is a broad outline to use as a starting place. Weights and criteria should all be adjusted and agreed up with advisor at beginning of process and reconfirmed at the half way point if needed.

**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

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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 suggested to be 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/revise in consultation with your thesis advisor.

<b>Written package</b>	
<b>Package presentation- Format/ Bibliography/Final Package Submission</b>	
<b>Supporting Documentation of work</b>	
<b>Methodology and process reflection</b>	
<b>Introduction/Conclusion, Clear and well-supported arguments</b>	
<b>Attention to race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, privilege in topic</b>	
<b>Body of the research topic</b>	
<b>Made and kept deadlines</b>	

**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.

### **Performance Project and Paper**

The Performance Project option allows students to delve deeply into the creative process of performance. Required coursework: participation in two Full Rep experiences (DANC 253) during your Freshman-Junior years; or, participation in five faculty/guest artist works during your Freshman-Junior years. There are three recommended options for the performance track: 1. Take Full Rep, Fall semester, using this platform to explore your research topic/questions with participation in multiple pieces with guest artists; 2. Take Rep lite, participation in one work with a guest artist, plus an additional, student designed performance research experience with another artist in a solo/duet work; 3. A substantive performance research project that rests outside of the Fall Repertory course, with performance in either Fall or Spring. Options 2 and 3 might include grant writing for college funds to support the research and commission a work to be performed. For option 3---engaging in an alternate project that rests outside of the Full Rep course, it is expected that the student will register for the Fall Repertory Styles to engage with visiting artists in the classroom during their senior year and support their research. Supporting this core performance experience, the thesis also includes a substantive paper examining contemporary theories in performance, culture, history, and reflections on the embodied research as a performer.

#### **1. PROPOSAL** (see guidelines above)

#### **2. PERFORMANCE**

During Fall and/or Spring of Senior Year you will participate in a substantive performance experience (in consultation with your advisor). This is the core content of the thesis. Video documentation services will be provided by the department, however thesis students are responsible for processing video into the appropriate format for submission in final thesis document. Discussion of venue and format of the performance will be decided in collaboration with the department according to the shifting demands on the department technical support resources. There will be \$300 for each

thesis project. Requests for additional department funds will need a proposal to the department. Kerry O'Brien in the Dean of Faculty office also has information on other thesis research grants.

### **3. WRITTEN PAPER**

In conjunction with your performance research, your paper should be a fully developed academic explanation of how you addressed your research questions through embodied and literature-based research. It should be written for a reader who has not seen the piece, so it should include detailed description where appropriate. It must include a detailed description of your process as a performer, including research into the sources of those methods, the relationship of those methods to your research questions, and an honest evaluation of the outcomes of those methods. Your paper should also situate your research in the field of performance research: engaging in discussion about your performance project in relation to contemporary discourse in performance. The paper should have the following components in MLA style:

- Title (and standard thesis title page)
- Artists' statement. A short declaration of your aesthetic values, influences, and directions.
- Introduction. State your research questions and briefly situate your performance and literature-based research in aesthetic and historical contexts.
- Academic context. A display of knowledge and understanding of the situation of your work with the field using standard academic writing practices to provide evidence.
  - i. Survey of relevant dance literature. This section should explore how your research questions and methods related to the field of Dance at large. In addition to any major discussions of your topic in dance literature, you must research at least two to three artists/schools who are working in the field of performance research in Dance.
  - ii. If your research questions are cross-disciplinary, this section should include discussions of relevant literature from outside the field of dance.
- Methodology. Discuss how you explored your research questions. What did you do in the studio to make your piece?
  - i. How did you spend your time in the studio, and how did this relate to your research questions?
  - ii. How did you prepare for studio time, and how did this relate to your research questions including creative stimuli?
  - iii. How did you/others attend to race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, privilege in rehearsal practices, pedagogies and community culture?
  - iv. How did you approach answering your cross-disciplinary or theoretical questions, if you had them?
- Creative Process Reflection. In well supported academic language, give an honest self-evaluation of your creative process in performance.
  - i. This section might include a description of the piece, however descriptions might also be distributed throughout the paper where appropriate.
  - ii. Critical evaluation of your rehearsal and performance process, including collaborative aspects of the creative process.
  - iii. Critical evaluation of how the process as a whole attended to race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, privilege in rehearsal practices, pedagogies and community culture.
  - iv. Critical evaluation of your performance product.
  - v. Context of your piece in terms of performance intentions, audience relationship
  - vi. Responses of dancers and audience members, if appropriate.
  - vii. What would you change or develop if you could do it over again, and why?
- Conclusion. Draw together ideas and make suggestions for further research.
- Bibliography of all works cited including videos and performances

### **Guidelines for Performance Thesis Assessment**

Thesis student and advisor will decide together the weight of the three parts (Process, Performance, Paper) and how these two parts will unfold through the semester.

**Research Process 30%-40%** This can take many forms depending on the project but articulates the process of creating/learning/understanding the performance with choreographers and other collaborators. Below is a suggested rubric for assessment of your work in performance, to be adjusted/revised in consultation with your advisor.

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<b>Research Process</b>	<b>X % to be agreed upon</b>
<b>Understand and articulate approaches to performance investigation</b>	
<b>Made good use of performance research time alone</b>	
<b>Worked effectively with choreographers and other collaborators</b>	
<b>Attention to race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, privilege in process</b>	
<b>Made good use of advising</b>	

**Performance final product 30%-40%** A substantial engagement in performance in one or multiple works, as determined by the scope of your performance research. Below is a suggested rubric for assessment of your work in performance, to be adjusted/ revised in consultation with your advisor.

<b>Performance Product</b>	
<b>Movement and Performance vocabularies, styles, and skill explored and developed</b>	
<b>Growth as a practitioner</b>	
<b>Growth as a performer</b>	

**Written/package 20%- 40%** A substantial academic paper of approximately 30 - 50 pages depending on the form that your writing takes in relation to your research, assessing process and final product. Suggested rubric below, to be adjusted/ revised in consultation with your advisor.

<b>Written package</b>	
<b>Package presentation- Format, bibliography, final package submission</b>	
<b>Artist Statement, and supporting documentation of work</b>	
<b>Introduction and conclusion, clear and well-supported arguments</b>	
<b>Attention to race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, privilege in topic</b>	
<b>Context and situating your work in the field</b>	
<b>Methodology and Creative Process/Product Reflection</b>	
<b>Made and kept deadlines</b>	

## **Choreographic Project and Paper**

This option requires 1 additional creative process credits including completing DANC 351 or equivalent before thesis semester begins. The Choreographic Project option allows students to delve deeply into creative research in the field of choreography by creating a substantive, original dance work to be performed in either the Fall or Spring Dance concerts, or an alternate venue agreed upon by advisor and department. Required coursework: 4 Creative Process courses, including DANC 351 (or an approved Study Abroad or Independent Study to fulfill the DANC 351 requirement). Choreographic Research is understood to have both a creative and scholarly component, with presentation of a final work and a substantive paper examining the theoretical basis, contextual implications, and the process and product of the creative research. Suggested lengths: 12-30 minutes of original choreography, with a 20-40 page academic paper. This thesis should have the following components:

### **1. PROPOSAL** (see guidelines above)

**2. CHOREOGRAPHIC OUTCOME:** During Fall and/or Spring of Senior Year you will to create and present a substantial piece of original choreography the parameters of which are developed in conversation with your adviser. This is core content of the thesis. Video documentation services will be provided by the department, however thesis students are responsible for processing video into the appropriate format for submission in final thesis document. Discussion of venue and format of the performance will be decided in collaboration with the department according to the shifting demands on the department technical support resources. There will be \$300 for each thesis project. Requests for additional department funds will need a proposal to the department. Kerry O'Brien in the Dean of Faculty office also has information on other thesis research grants. Piece lengths can vary but any piece longer than 20 minutes requires continued discussion of presentation format if in a shared concert.

**3. ACCOMPANYING ACADEMIC PAPER:** In conjunction with your choreographic research, your paper should be a fully developed academic explanation of how you addressed your research questions through choreographic and literature-based research. It should be written for a reader who has not seen the piece, so it should include detailed description where appropriate. It must include a detailed description of your choreographic methods including research into the sources of those methods, the relationship of those methods to your research questions, and an honest evaluation of the outcomes of those methods. It must demonstrate knowledge of the place of your work in the field of choreography and in the context of the ongoing discourse about the art form within its cultural context. The paper should have the following components in MLA style (or mutually agreed upon format). **15-30 pages** recommended plus appendices:

1. Title (and standard thesis title page)
2. Artists' statement. A short declaration of your aesthetic values, influences, and directions.
3. Introduction. State your research questions and briefly situate your choreographic and literature-based research in aesthetic and historical context.
4. Academic context. A display of knowledge and understanding of the situation of your work with the field using standard academic writing practices to provide evidence.
  - i. Survey of relevant dance literature. This section should explore how your research questions and methods relate to the field of dance at large. In addition to any major discussions of your topic in dance literature, you must research at least two to three artists working in a similar vein to yours.
  - ii. If your research questions are cross-disciplinary, this section should include discussions of relevant literature from outside the field of dance.
5. Methodology. Discuss how you explored your research questions and what practices you employed in the studio and out to generate your movement, shape your piece in relation to your central research questions.
  - i. How did you spend your time in the studio, and how did this relate to your research questions?
  - ii. Relationship with cast and how much agency they had in developing material.
  - iii. How did you/others attend to race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, privilege in rehearsal practices, pedagogies and community culture?
  - iv. How did you prepare for studio time, and how did this relate to your research questions including creative stimuli?
  - v. How did you approach answering your cross-disciplinary or theoretical questions, if you had them?
6. Creative Process Reflection. In well supported academic language, give an honest self-evaluation of your creative process.
  - i. This section might include a brief description of the piece, however descriptions might also be distributed throughout the paper where appropriate.

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- ii. Critical self evaluation of your choreographic process, including collaborative aspects of the creative process.
- iii. Critical evaluation of how the process as a whole attended to race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, privilege in rehearsal practices, pedagogies and community culture.
- iv. Critical self evaluation of your choreographic product.
  - v. Context of your piece in terms of performance intentions, audience relationship
  - vi. Responses of dancers and audience members, if appropriate.
  - vii. What would you change or develop if you could do it over again, and why?
7. Conclusion. Draw together ideas and makes suggestions for further research.
8. Bibliography of all works cited including videos and performances

**4. A FINAL PACKAGE:** Documentation of the performance and written paper formally presented as a single document following all protocols of thesis presentation. Video documentation of the performance and the printed program must be included in the final thesis document. Choreographic research notes, photographs and other visual material add a lot to this document. Creating a simple website is an excellent way to feature your visual work that is at the heart of your project.

### Guidelines for Choreographic Thesis Assessment

Thesis student and advisor will decide together the weight of the three parts (Research Process, Choreographic Outcome, Paper) and how these two parts will unfold through the research.

**Research Process 30%-40%** This can take many forms depending on the project but interrogates and articulates the process of creating/learning/understanding the performance with choreographers and other collaborators. Below is a suggested rubric for assessment of the research process, to be adjusted/revised in consultation with your advisor.

Rehearsal Process	X % to be agreed upon
Made good use of studio time with dancers	
Made good use of performance research time alone	
Attention to race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, privilege in process	
Made good use of advising	

**Performance final outcome 30%-40%** A substantial piece of choreography. Approximate length: 12-30 minutes; however, length is not to be decided by the arbitrary measure of minutes, but rather the quality and complexity of thinking in process and final product presentation. Below is a suggested rubric for assessment of the choreographic work, to be adjusted/revised in consultation with your advisor.

Performance Product	X % to be agreed upon
Invention in vocabulary and choreographic methodology	
Growth as a choreographer	
Congruence between conceptual goals & final piece	

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**Written/package 20%-40%** A substantial academic paper of approximately **15-30** pages depending on the form that your writing takes in relation to your research and your own piece, assessing process and final product. Suggested rubric below, to be adjusted, revised and weighted in consultation with your advisor.

<b>Written package</b>	
<b>Package presentation- Format, bibliography, final package submission</b>	
<b>Artist Statement/Supporting Documentation of Work</b>	
<b>Introduction and conclusion, clear and well- supported arguments</b>	
<b>Attention to race, white supremacy, colonialism, power, privilege as content</b>	
<b>Context and situating your work in the field</b>	
<b>Methodology and Creative Process/Product Reflection</b>	
<b>Made and kept deadlines</b>	