

Emory Department of Theater and Dance Dance Program Honors Project

INTRODUCTION

Students who are invited by the dance faculty to work on an honors project are being recognized as a dance major who is gifted, hard working, and passionate about the field. Whatever the research area – performance, choreography, history, or movement theory – students must be committed to the depth of the process involved in investigating dance. Completing a project requires an intense time and energy commitment.

An honors candidate:

- Demonstrates full participation in Dance Program events.
- Shows consistent development as a dance major.
- Produces exemplary work in all dance course work.

DANCE RESEARCH TRACKS

A. Choreographic Research – culminating in a concert with support paper (no WR), or written thesis (WR)

Students completing honors in this track create a substantial body of original work investigating a singular concept or theme, which might include or focus on choreographic elements and or approaches, form and structure, movement vocabulary, or content/context.

B. Performance Research – culminating in a concert with support paper (no WR) or written thesis (WR)

Students completing honors in this track perform work(s) that exhibit(s) a range of dynamics, character, style, or form. Students in this track should be proficient in at least the Level 3 technique course level.

C. Choreographic/Performance Research, with support paper (not WR) or a written thesis (WR)

Students completing honors in this track create a program of original work defined by the previous singular tracks, performing in at least two works.

D. Historical or Theoretical Research – culminating in a written thesis (WR)

ELIGIBILITY

Students with a 3.7 or higher GPA will be notified by the Dance Program Honors Coordinator of their eligibility for honors in their junior year. If invited by the coordinator (with dance faculty input) students submit a project proposal in April of the junior year.

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE FOR HONORS IN DANCE

Determine track

In the spring of junior year, the student should determine the research track of interest and meet with the Dance Honors Coordinator, or dance major adviser to discuss ideas. The student may also opt to choose a project adviser at this time. The faculty member offers guidance and possibilities for the project in its formative state.

The proposal

Under that guidance of the faculty adviser or honors coordinator, the student writes and submits a proposal, which is then shared with a committee of full-time dance faculty. The proposal consists of a 1-2 page abstract that describes the project's intent and singular focus. The proposal is due on or near April 15. Specific date is provided by the coordinator.

Committee approval

The committee will approve, deny, or request that the student reshape the project. Faculty approval of the honors proposal will be based on the student's eligibility, the merit of the proposal, and the assessment of the student's work up to that point. Projects are approved or denied by the end of April.

Timeline for project work

Upon approval of the dance faculty committee, it is expected that the student begin researching and exploring the topic broadly through readings and viewings, and/or studio work over the summer. Substantial work on the project begins fall semester of senior year.

In the spring of senior year, the student will select a committee of at least three faculty members, two or three from the Department of Theater and Dance, and one from another department, to serve as the honors project committee for final evaluation. Students may opt to have more than three committee members. The committee roster is due in the college honors office at the beginning of spring semester of the senior year. The college Honors office provides the exact date.

COURSE WORK

It is recommended that students complete the following courses before beginning honors in dance

20 hours of the dance major including:

DANC 250 Choreography I

DANC 220 History of Western Concert Dance
DANC 240 Dance Literacy
DANC 350 Choreography II (recommended for students in the choreography track)
DANC 207R Emory Dance Company or DANC 307R Emory Dance on Tour
(performance credits)

An honors student in dance enrolls in:

DANC 495A (4 credit hours) Fall semester of the senior year. No WR permitted.

DANC 495B (4 credit hours) Spring semester of senior year. This can be with or without the WR.

These courses are individualized seminars that will be structured around the specific track, research topic chosen, and needs of the student. The student/s and adviser will set up a seminar schedule that requires weekly or bi-monthly meetings, and may include rehearsal viewings. Suggested readings and viewings, or a reading/media packet that supports the research will be provided by the faculty adviser. As part of the course work (Tracks A-C) the student will submit a written paper documenting the choreographic or performance research. The length and content of the paper differs depending on the WR status. (See section on Writing a Thesis or Support Paper for details.) Students completing research in the areas of theory or history will submit a written thesis (WR).

Additional dance course enrollment:

Students completing work in **Performance Research** (Track B), or **Choreographic/Performance Research** (Track C) are required to enroll in contemporary modern technique (3 days per week). Technical study 5 days per week is highly recommended.

Students in **Historical or Theoretical Research** (Track D) are required to have completed History of Western Concert Dance (DANC 220). The written thesis in this track fulfills the writing requirement (WR). Extensive reading and re-writes of the paper are required.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES FOR TRACKS A-C (Choreography and Performance)

1. The project concert or showing should be scheduled and budgeted through the honors coordinator and director of the Dance Program in the junior year.
2. The student should schedule at least 2 showings of the work-in-progress over the course of each semester to obtain feedback and discuss the work. Spring semester students can also present work for commentary in the Monday night Choreography Lab (DANC 360R). Candidates are also invited to participate in Fieldwork, a workshop with Atlanta artists.

3. Any performers cast in honors thesis projects must be participating in a technique class. Those who are not participating in a technique class cannot be cast in a work.
4. All performers participating in an honors performance must be informed of technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and performance dates at the onset of the project. Participants who cannot attend rehearsals should not be cast in the work.
5. ALL committee members must be available to attend a performance (DRESS REHEARSALS ARE NOT AN OPTION.)
6. A draft of the support paper or written thesis must be submitted to all committee members in the semester preceding graduation. General guidelines: include abstract, formal analysis, and subjective information about the process and findings.

WRITING A SUPPORT OR THESIS PAPER: GENERAL GUIDELINES

A developed project poses questions, articulates a particular point of view, and is an act of moving into the unknown, discovering ideas and thoughts that can be articulated in written form. The investigation that partners creative work includes readings, preparation for rehearsals, interviews or conversations with the commissioned artist (if applicable) and viewing of performances. The support paper or thesis accompanying performance or choreography tracks provides the committee with an integrated synthesis of the process. It is a reflection of the creative process. Readings, activity in the studio, discussions and reflection should reveal thoughts about the artist, the process and the outcome. Additionally, the paper should comprehensively apply and integrate information attained from course work in the program's curriculum (history, choreography, laban analysis, performance.)

The support paper that is not fulfilling the writing requirement should be a minimum of 15-20 pages as stipulated by the adviser. Papers should, of course, conform to the highest standards of correctness in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage.

Thesis or support paper (WR)

The goal of writing-intensive courses is to improve writing skills through writing regularly in a context where mentors in the various communities of discourse encourage, guide, and communicate to students high standards of writing through instruction and example. The goals within the honors project may be fulfilled by a combination of assignments, a gradual progression of a longer research paper, revisions, journals, and written exercises – all designed to achieve higher standards of writing. A writing intensive course should combine the following two components in ways appropriate to the discipline:

- Frequent writing assignments or drafts (which may be un-graded.)
- At least one rigorous writing project carried out over the course of the semester under the guidance and supervision of the instructor.

Papers should, of course, conform to the highest standards of correctness in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage. Strategies for improving writing will vary with the instructor. But at least once during the semester a writing intensive class must involve students revising their work for writing assignment in response to the instructor's written and/or oral comments (in individual conferences) on an earlier draft.

A thesis paper fulfilling the writing requirement should be a minimum of 20 pages of polished writing.

THE DEFENSE

An oral examination of the honors project will be presented at the end of the senior year at which all committee members are present. Defending an honors thesis is a formal procedure and comprehensive in nature. The format consists of committee members asking the candidate questions that pertain to the process, methodology, results, and context of the project. Committee members may also ask questions in connection with any course work or readings that have been assigned. Committee members may offer suggestions for rewrites, and a final copy of the thesis or support paper is submitted to the College Honors Committee.

The student schedules the thesis defense, finding a time that is suitable for all committee members. A space commonly used for the defense is the Arts Common Room – Schwartz 208. Students should allow for a two-hour times slot when scheduling the defense. All committee members must be present at the defense.

Recap of Specific Procedures and Deadlines for Projects

1. The thesis proposal is due to the faculty adviser or Honors Coordinator near April 15 (exact date will be specified) of the junior year.
2. The approved thesis proposal is submitted to the Honors Coordinator by the end of April.
3. The thesis must be submitted to all committee members with ample time for reading before the oral defense.
4. The oral defense must take place with all committee members present (allow two hours.)
5. A final copy of the thesis or support paper must be bound and submitted to the adviser for the Dance Program archives.

AWARDING HONORS IN DANCE

Tracks A, B, C

The committee will recommend the degree of honors to the College Honors Committee as follows:

Honors (cum laude): Satisfactory completion of the honors program.

High Honors (magna cum laude): Outstanding completion of the program. Performance or choreographic work is of the quality comparable to a masters thesis, sufficient for public presentation. Thesis shall be of publishable quality.

Highest Honors (summa cum laude): Exceptional completion of the program. Performance or choreographic work is of a quality comparable to a masters thesis. Thesis shall be of publishable quality. Production of work shall be at a professional level.

Track D

Honors (cum laude) represents satisfactory completion of the program, with an overall average of 3.50

High Honors (magna cum laude) represents completion of the program with outstanding performance including an overall average of 3.50 and a thesis of quality sufficient for oral presentation to scholars in the candidate's field.

Highest Honors (summa cum laude) represents completion of the program with exceptional performance, including an overall average of 3.50 and a thesis of a quality suitable for publication.

GRANTS

Honors candidates are encouraged to apply for funding for projects. The Dance Program office manager must have copies of all grants (SIRE, CCA, or others.)

DOCUMENTATION

DVD and Write-Up

Students participating in Tracks A, B, or C must have performances professionally recorded. The Dance Program will provide this service. The Dance Program requires a hard copy of the final thesis write-up and a DVD for archival purposes. Because these are also housed in the Woodruff Library online, a DVD may not always be able to accompany that write-up, depending on copyright issues surrounding music and choreography. Therefore, it is suggested that some photographs be included as part of the thesis.

Other support documentation

Materials used to announce performances such as electronic announcements, flyers, press release copy, and also programs must be approved by the adviser before publicly distributed. Students are encouraged to include these materials and other materials pertinent to the process, such as rehearsal schedules, grant proposals, etc. as part of their project write-up. Students must submit fifteen copies of performance programs to the Dance Program office manager for the program's archives.

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