Department of Dance Performance and Choreography

Faculty
➢ Veta Goler, Associate Professor
➢ Julie B. Johnson, Lecturer
➢ Omelika Kuumba, Instructor
➢ T. Lang, Chair and Associate Professor
➢ Kathleen Wessel, Lecturer
➢ Victor Rojas, Lecturer
➢ Christen Weimer, Instructor

Department Location
West End Dance Lab
1392 Ralph David Abernathy

Special Entry Requirements
None

Placement Requirements
None

Mission
Dance at Spelman is a critical and creative thinking laboratory that nurtures women of the African Diaspora. Students investigate intersections of experimental creative practices, cultural discourse, and technology. The curriculum centers on the choreographic process through the lens of black feminist theories, contemporary dance techniques, and interdisciplinary collaborative practice. Students engage with an exciting roster of visiting artists who explore and push boundaries through the Spelman College Dance Artist Incubation Residency (A.I.R.). Department faculty includes globally recognized working artists who mentor and guide students through scholarship, artistic production, and entrepreneurial strategies. The department cultivates freethinkers and intelligent movers interested in becoming creators, innovators, writers, historians, and scholars within the evolving field of dance.

Objectives
After completing the major, students will be able to

KNOWLEDGE & CRITICAL THINKING
1. Engage in dance as a mode of inquiry, knowledge production, and critical thinking through embodied creative process, theoretical research, literature, and performance.

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES
2. Articulate — orally, in written form, and through embodied practice — historical and contemporary sociocultural contexts of dance practice.

CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS
3. Demonstrate high level choreographic skills to investigate, engage in, and develop creative processes.

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION PRACTICE
4. Demonstrate ability to self-generate professional opportunities and creative spaces, and maneuver within various concert, commercial, and social communities locally, regionally, and internationally.

General Core Requirements
Fine Arts
The following courses fulfill the Fine Arts division requirement for non-majors:
DAN 105 Dance Perspectives and Process
DAN 241 Black Dance in American Dance

Major Requirements
The Dance Performance and Choreography major consists of 48 semester credits. The major is divided into four areas: Technique, Theory, Composition, Performance. Students majoring in Dance Performance and Choreography are required to take all of the courses offered in the core (40 credit hours) and three electives (8 credit hours).

Dance Performance and Choreography Core

Technique 7 credits
➢ African Dance Forms [1]
➢ *Principle of Jazz [1]
➢ Jazz Funk [1]
➢ Commercial Hip Hop [1]
➢ Improvisation [1]
➢ *Beginning Contemporary Modern Dance [1]
➢ Intermediate Contemporary African [1]
➢ Advance Contemporary Modern Dance [1]
➢ *Beginning Ballet through the Lens of Kinesiology [1]
➢ Intermediate Advanced Ballet through the Lens of Kinesiology [1]

Theory 17 credits
➢ Dance Perspectives and Process [3]
➢ Black Presence in Dance History [4]
➢ Critical Writing for Dance [4]
➢ Teaching and Leading through Dance [4]
➢ Dance Seminar [2]

Composition 14 credits
➢ Choreographic Process I - Solo/Womanist Theories with lab [4]
➢ Choreographic Process II - Group/Art as Activism with lab [4]

Performance 2 credits

The electives must be in technology, theory or design
Electives 8 credits
➢ Dance for Camera [4]
➢ Women in Dance [4]

Other Requirements
Department Productions
All majors must audition for Spelman Dance Theatre, the department's performance company beginning their 2nd year and participate in the company for 4 consecutive semesters in performance, production, or administrative.

Entrance and Exit Interview/ Exam
Majors are required to participate in an interview/exam when they begin the major and as graduating seniors.

Auditions
The audition for Spelman Dance Theatre, the departments dance company, will be held at the beginning of each academic year. Spelman Dance Theatre performs original works by dance faculty and graduating seniors presented in the fall and spring semester. The company also provides platforms for students to create and present their own original works mentored by faculty. Non- Majors are welcomed to audition for Spelman Dance Theatre.

Audition Process:
- Performance Audition: Students attend a two-hour audition process led by dance faculty. Students will learn contemporary movement phrases and perform phrases in small groups. Students will also perform structured improvisation phrases. Auditions are evaluated by faculty. Open to all classes and majors.
- Choreography Audition: Students attend a two-hour process led by dance faculty. Students will participate in an improvisation class followed by presenting their 2 minute choreography. Students are required to submit a work description of their proposed choreographed project that details their content, inspiration/resource material, sound score, description of casting and an outline of rehearsal strategy.

Internships
Majors are encouraged to participate in at least one internship during their time in the department. While internships will earn students credit toward graduation, they will not count as a core credit.

Departmental Honors
The qualifications for departmental honors include:
1. A grade point average of 3.5 or above
2. Completion of a senior choreographed self-produced evening length dance concert
3. No grade lower than a “B” in Choreographic Process courses
4. Participate in Spelman Dance Theatre performances for 4 semesters
5. Participate in an international dance intensive study abroad
6. No withdrawals from major courses unless for reasons of serious illness or other extenuating circumstances
7. All required courses must be taken in the Spelman College Dance Department

Dance Performance and Choreography
Minor Requirements
A completion of 22 credit hours
➢ Dance Technique - Improvisation
  pre req for choreographic process
➢ Spelman Dance Theatre for 1 year
➢ Choreographic Process I pre req
➢ Choreographic Process II
➢ Creative and Critical Writing for Dance
➢ Teaching and Leading through Dance
➢ Black Presence in American Dance

General Electives
The Department of Dance Performance and Choreography offers the following courses for the college community as general electives.
➢ All dance technique classes

Dance Performance and Choreography:
Theory course descriptions
DAN105 Dance Perspectives & Process
➢ Explore dance as a creative practice where individual and collective embodiment serves as a research method to examine how dance shapes and is shaped by social identity, political discourse, and community building.
DAN241 Black Presence in American Dance
➢ Chronological study of the function and structure of dance, principal events, developments and personalities from late Renaissance to the present.

Emphasis on the dance created and performed by African American artists. Offered every spring.

DAN 251 Dance Seminar
➢ Learn effective tools to take your discipline into the professional dance world as practitioners, dance makers, and scholars.

DAN 203 Critical Writing for Dance pre req for Teaching and Leading through Dance
➢ Engage in thoughtful dance and contemporary art criticism as well as self-promotion through individual artist statements and short-form social media content.

DAN 300 Teaching & Leading Through Dance
➢ Engage in an experiential multimodal process to discover how the interrelated-yet-distinct modes of creating, educating, and leading intertwine within the practice of dance.

Dance Performance and Choreography:
Composition course descriptions
DAN 201 Choreographic Process I pre req for Choreographic Process II
➢ Examines choreographic devices for the creation of solo works through the writings of bell hooks with a focus on embodied analysis of space/time/energy relationships.

Choreographic Process I rehearsal LAB
DAN301 Choreographic Process II pre req for Choreographic Process III
➢ Generate distinct movement vocabularies for the creation of group works. Examine art as activism as well as Audre Lorde’s writings on the dynamics of power. The course is designed to connect a student’s craft to social commentary and discourse that impacts her community.

Choreographic Process III rehearsal LAB
GRN pending Choreographic Process III one year
➢ Capstone course - Design an interdisciplinary dance work with collaborators from another discipline.
Students learn effective methods to produce an original, self-produced dance work for an annual show while employing black performance theories and innovative technologies for performance.

Choreographic Process III rehearsal LAB

Dance Performance and Choreography:

**Technique course descriptions**

DAN101 Improvisation Dance pre req for Choreographic Process I
➢ Introductory course to the choreographic process structure - Explore movement generating devices with embodied writing and other creative research tasks that investigate creating authentic movements.

DAN161 Principles of Jazz I
➢ Introductory dance technique course that examines pioneers of the jazz aesthetic and their distinct styles while embodying fundamental dance techniques

DAN131 Contemporary Modern level I
➢ Introductory dance technique course that examines spatial awareness and body connections such as weight, breath, and alignment to provide efficiency in movement.

DAN121 African dance technique
➢ Introduction and practice of movements from various West African countries

DAN111 Beginning Ballet through the Lens of Kinesiology
➢ An introduction to ballet and the skeletal systems for safety alignment of the body

DAN215 Intermediate Ballet through the Lens of Kinesiology.
➢ Continued development of technique, skeletal and muscular systems of the body.

DAN 202 Jazz|Funk dance technique level II
➢ Study of jazz dance at the intermediate level while exploring classic choreography from the 80s to present.

DAN233 Intermediate Contemporary Modern
➢ Continued training in modern dance while focusing on merging Africanist aesthetic in technique.

DAN333 Advanced Contemporary Modern
➢ Focus on complex movement sequences and experimentation with technology for dance performance.

DAN252 Commercial Hip Hop dance technique level III
➢ Investigate the evolution of the Hip Hop movement aesthetic in conjunction with history, music, performance, and the commercial dance industry.

Dance Performance and Choreography:

**Performance course descriptions**

DAN200 Spelman Dance Theatre
➢ For students who have dance skills beyond the elementary level of accomplishment in contemporary modern, jazz and African and who wish to continue their development in performance techniques through Spelman Dance Theatre. Concentration will be on performance techniques, creative process, clean execution and the high disciplinary standards expected of professional performers. This course produces a four dance concerts in the academic year. This is a one year credited course. Admission to course by audition.

Dance Performance and Choreography:

**Major Electives course descriptions**

DAN 262 *Major Elective **Dance for Camera
➢ Explore nuances and trends in the art of capturing movement through and performing for the camera's lens.

*Major Elective **Art & Technology
DAN377 *Major Elective **Women in Dance
➢ Examine women's history in dance by investigating gender dynamics in the art form -- including relationships between gender and power, body, race, class, and sexuality -- within the context of concert dance history