



SPA

**Contra Costa School of
Performing Arts**

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Department Philosophy

- Dance is a contemplative, academic, and imaginative practice that requires an open mind, patience, and a generous time commitment to the training process.
- Dance is a daily act of bravery. Vulnerability, doubt, and the unknown are a part of the process.
- Dance careers can take many different forms and trajectories. Here at SPA we believe that no matter one's pathway, a young dancer's formative training is key to their growth and personal sense of achievement as a professional dancer, arts-related professional, and/or creative thinker.
- Mastery-level training in dance can provide the skills necessary for a successful career in any field.
- We consider it our duty to uphold the history and tradition of the art form while also pushing boundaries and incorporating new, innovative ways of viewing movement and dance education.

Expectations

A SPA Dance Major will:

- Maintain **consistent attendance and full participation in classes**. Barring any extreme injuries or illnesses, if a student is at school, an instructor will take this to mean they are reasonably well enough to participate in their dance classes and rehearsals.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of dance classroom etiquette (be punctual, enter quietly, properly warm up, refrain from talking, keep the studio and dressing room clean).
- Adhere to the dress code (listed below and posted in the dance studio).
- Show respect for oneself, classmates, the instructor, and the art form.
- Demonstrate a strong work ethic and a commitment to improving one's technique and artistry.
- Participate in our annual *Fall Works* program (November). Additionally, all high school dance majors and select middle school students are included in our *Spring Showcase* (May) and should plan to be available for these performance dates and times (see website calendar). Rehearsals take place both in class and after school. **Please see rehearsal and performance policies below.**

Rehearsal and Performance Policies

The Dance department has two main performances during the year, Fall works (November) and the Spring Showcase (May). Additionally, select students are involved in our Open Studio (March/April) and several in-class demonstrations throughout the year. Students in any of these productions are expected to commit to the following policies:

- Students need to be available for ALL performance dates and times
- Students need to be available for ALL rehearsals during tech week including final dress rehearsals.
- Students may only miss **two rehearsals** (not including tech week) and these conflicts need to be given to Ms. Orloff in September (for Fall Works) and January (for Spring Showcase).
- Students must maintain consistent attendance and full participation in their regular technique classes.
- Failure to meet these expectations may result in removal from a performance program.

Attendance and Sitting Out

Students are expected to maintain consistent attendance and full participation in classes. Barring any extreme injuries or illnesses, **if a student is at school an instructor will take this to mean they are reasonably well enough to participate in their dance classes and rehearsals.** Students may sit out of class **3 times a semester** at their own discretion. Beyond this, a doctor's note and/or an email from a parent/guardian must be provided to explain why a student cannot participate in class. Whether excused or unexcused, a student must sign out and remain mentally alert and engaged on the sidelines. A student may be given an alternative assignment such as a written class observation for every sit out. This is at the discretion of each instructor.

Excessive absences or sitting out will result in a meeting with faculty and/or parent/guardians to address the issue and discuss a student's continued participation in the Dance Department.

Grading Policy

All SPA dance majors will be graded using the following categories and rubric. Students receive a quarterly progress report and a final grade in June. Students also have a one-on-one conference during the year with faculty to discuss progress and goals.

Work Ethic/Learning Skills:

1. Consistency in Effort
2. Focus and Concentration
3. Application of Corrections
4. Choreography Retention

Technical Progression:

1. Placement and Alignment
2. Strength
3. Flexibility
4. Coordination/Movement Clarity

Professionalism:

1. Dress Code
2. Punctuality
3. Classroom Etiquette
4. Communication

Artistry

1. Musicality
2. Physical Intention/Choice-Making
3. Presence/Self-Expression

Rubric:

5 (100%) - Exemplary. Student demonstrates exceptional work in a given category.

4 (90%) - Mature. Student demonstrates above average work in a given area.

3 (80%) - Progressing. Student demonstrates good work, but needs improvement in a given area.

2 (70%) - Basic. Student needs significant improvement in a given area.

1 (60%) - Below Basic. Student demonstrates below standard levels in classroom work and is not meeting the expectations of a given area.

Dress Code:

Ladies/Female Presenting:

- Any style/color leotard or solid-colored, fitted top that covers the navel
- Pink, black, or flesh-colored tights, fitted leggings or shorts
- Pink or flesh-colored ballet shoes must be worn for all ballet classes. Students may be asked to wear jazz shoes, socks, or go barefoot for certain technique classes or rehearsals. Ladies may take certain ballet classes en pointe upon instructor approval.

Gentlemen/Male Presenting:

- Fitted black, white, or grey shirt
- Black, white, or grey tights, fitted leggings or shorts
- Black, white or flesh-colored ballet shoes must be worn for all ballet classes. Students may be asked to wear jazz shoes, socks, or go barefoot for certain technique classes or rehearsals.

No baggy or loose-fitting clothing. Hair must always be neatly secured, completely off the face and neck. **No Ponytails.** Only small, discreet jewelry may be worn. Dancewear may be purchased at Contra Costa Dancewear (Ygnacio Valley Road) or online: discountdance.com, dancewearsolutions.com, allaboutdance.com.

Elemental Body Alignment System

In addition to their technique courses, SPA dance majors practice the *Elemental Body Alignment System*®, a somatic movement therapy developed by Mr. Scott Putman, Associate Professor of Dance at Virginia Commonwealth University. Known as EBAS, this practice is designed for structural integrity, supported range of motion, and deepens one's understanding of where movement comes from. More information at www.doebas.com. During the year students may practice other somatic and conditioning modalities, such as Pilates or yoga, depending upon instructor availability.

National Dance Education Organization

SPA's Dance Department is a member of the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), with chapters for both Middle and High school dance majors. The National Honor Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA) is a program of the NDEO created to recognize outstanding merit, leadership, and academic achievement in students studying dance. Induction into the NHSDA is based on three criteria: participation points, demonstration of character, and GPA. Students may apply to be inducted into the NHSDA twice a year (December and May) and induction is a lifetime recognition (privileges may be revoked if GPA falls below the minimum requirement or if concerns arise about student conduct or behavior that jeopardizes the integrity of the NHSDA).

Juniors and Seniors who have been inducted into the NHSDA may apply for the NDEO Artistic Merit, Leadership, and Academic Achievement Award, the highest student dance award in the nation. The National Winner of the Award will receive up to a \$1,000 scholarship and a certificate. The 2020 application is open **October 28, 2019** and the deadline to apply is **January 31, 2020**.

Students interested in the NHSDA should speak with Ms. Orloff.

Community Partners

Since its inception, the SPA Dance Department has partnered with community organizations such as the Diablo Ballet and UCSF Sports Medicine Center for Young Athletes to expand our dancers' educational experiences. The Diablo Ballet generously invites our dancers to open rehearsals and offers them discounted tickets to performances throughout the year, allowing students to see the professional dancer's process from studio to stage. We are also fortunate to have the UCSF Center for Young Athletes right around the corner from our campus. Physical therapists from their office visit our dancers twice a year to provide classes on injury prevention, proper alignment, and stretching and strengthening.