

Movement Practices Curriculum - Foundation, Goals and Benefits

The Dance Department is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in behavior, policy and curriculum. The Movement Practices Curriculum has developed in response to changes in the field of dance, building upon several years of EDI training, faculty/staff meetings, and student town halls. Its aim is to provide students with excellent education in diverse approaches to dance training, dance scholarship and dance-making. We take this step to offer our students increased access to a broad range of careers in the field of dance and to open our program to incoming students with diverse proficiencies in dance. In addition, this shift in curriculum forwards our stated goals:

The Mason Gross Dance Department will....

... implement a comprehensive initiative to re-envision the curricula to better meet the needs of our student population and more accurately reflect the diversity of peoples and practices in the field, preparing students to be innovators in the field in diverse embodied practices.

... address inequities related to representation and access within dance as a creative and intellectual profession.

... engage one another in dialogues that productively analyze and critique the ways in which European-derived dance forms and historical/cultural perspectives are privileged within higher education to better understand the implicit bias underpinning such privilege.

... work to dismantle systems of oppression by pursuing instructional and research practices that are informed by social justice pedagogies and inclusion philosophies.

The Movement Practices Curriculum provides rigorous education and training in the following core areas:

- **African Diasporic Movement Practices:** Dance forms derived from or informed by the Black African Diaspora. Sample forms include: West-African, Afro-Fusion, Afro-Latinx Fusion, Hip-Hop, Jazz, Street Dance.
- **Classical/Traditional Movement Practices:** Dance forms centered in codified movement vocabularies, emerging from global temporal and cultural contexts. Sample forms include: Ballet, Modern (based in Cunningham, Graham, Horton, Limon, Taylor, etc.), Hula, Bharatanatyam, Flamenco, Chinese classical dance.
- **Contemporary Fusion Movement Practices:** Dance forms drawing from and synthesizing multiple styles, sources, and aesthetics. Sample forms include: Release techniques, Yorchha, contemporary ballet, any form that draws from 2 or more practices.
- **Somatic Movement Practices:** Movement practices that emphasize wellness, functional efficiency and injury prevention through embodied experience and integration of body/mind/spirit. Sample practices include: Alexander Technique, Bartenieff Fundamentals, Feldenkrais Method, Franklin Method, Functional Movement Training, Klein Technique, Pilates, and Yoga.

Movement Practices: Progression (BFA)

- **Years 1 & 2:** Two classes per week in each of the four Movement Practices
- **Year 3:** Intensive study in two of the Movement Practices
- **Year 4:** Advanced study in one or two Movement Practices

Movement Practices: Goals

Five Goals are presented across the Movement Practice course syllabi:

- **PHYSICAL:** investigate, research, and embody a particular movement practice.
- **THEORETICAL:** contextualize the form(s)/fused practice through historical, social, and cultural lenses.
- **VALUES:** examine the distinctive physical and cultural values of the form(s)/fused practice and its parts.
- **SELF:** develop individual artistry through self-reflection, self-analysis, and integration of movement experiences and feedback.
- **COMMUNITY:** develop skills necessary to participate in the community of the classroom as guided by the sociocultural implications of the form.

We invite all of our Mason Gross Dance constituencies to join us in this most important work, drawing on your greatest strengths—your individual experiences, skills, intelligence, empathy, and creativity—as we expand our existing programs by aligning them with the spectrum of practice in the field of dance.