

The logo for the ACES ECA Dance Department is set against a dark teal background with a faint image of a dance studio. The text 'aces ECA' is in a large, white, lowercase sans-serif font. Below it, 'Educational Center for the Arts' is in a smaller, white, uppercase sans-serif font. At the bottom, 'DANCE DEPARTMENT' is in a large, white, uppercase sans-serif font.

aces ECA

Educational Center for the Arts

DANCE DEPARTMENT

Course Descriptions

Modern Technique

Modern technique draws from classical and post-modern dance techniques. With a focus on breath and proper skeletal alignment, students explore momentum, using the floor as a tool and moving dynamically through space with clarity, strength and intention. The class moves through a floor warm-up, standing exercises, across the floor combinations and culminates in longer choreographic phrases. Emphasis is placed on increasing the students' physical awareness, core strength, flexibility, balance, coordination and phrasing. A strong focus is placed on the unique artistic and physical expression of each student as well as the individuals' responsibility to the group dynamic.

Advanced Modern Technique

In this advanced modern dance technique class, students will explore the specifics of space, time, and energy. At the same time, they will work with fundamental modern dance vocabulary to become versatile and technically sound dancers. Additionally, we will look at the history of the form and students will expand their knowledge of historical and current examples of the development of modern dance technique. Students will explore partnering work, improvisational scores, compositional assignments, and set phrase material. Class work will emphasize anatomical awareness and articulation, connection to the floor, strength and flexibility, musicality, and clarity of movement. We will focus on making choices with intention; on using technique as a tool for communication; and on finding our own individual styles as compelling and magnetic performers.



aces ECA


Educational Center for the Arts
DANCE DEPARTMENT

Ballet Technique

In Ballet, students explore beginning/intermediate techniques of classical ballet. These techniques include basic barre and center exercises designed to develop strength and articulation of the whole body. Barre exercises are designed to progressively warm up muscles. They include plié (small and large leg bends); tendu, degagé and frappé (leg gestures of various speed, accent and leg height); rond de jambe, développé and adagio (fluid, sweeping leg gestures designed to increase strength, flexibility and fluidity of movement). During center exercises students connect dance steps into various phrases. Types of phrases include allegro (quick and intricate stationary or traveling jumps like glissade, jeté and assemblé); balancé and pirouette practice (waltz steps and turns); and grand allegro (sweeping steps, jumps, and turns which travel across the floor). In Ballet, students are expected to work independently at their own level, continually trying to develop their overall ballet technique and master appropriate ballet vocabulary.

Advanced Ballet Technique

In Advanced Ballet, students explore the technique of classical ballet on an advanced level. Students begin at the barre with a focus on breath, proper skeletal alignment, core strength, flexibility and coordination. Emphasis is placed on deepening a muscular awareness to achieve proper alignment, turnout and an overall clarity in the execution of the classical ballet technique. Center work focuses on moving dynamically through space with musicality, clarity, strength and intent. Attention is paid to increasing the students' physical awareness, core strength, flexibility, balance, coordination and phrasing. A strong focus is placed on the proper extension of the legs and shape of the feet, the retention of developing movement sequences, expressive arms and balances.

The logo for the ACES ECA Dance Department is set against a dark teal background with a faint image of a dance studio. The text 'aces ECA' is in a large, white, lowercase sans-serif font. Below it, 'Educational Center for the Arts' is in a smaller, white, uppercase sans-serif font. At the bottom, 'DANCE DEPARTMENT' is in a large, white, uppercase sans-serif font.

aces ECA

Educational Center for the Arts

DANCE DEPARTMENT

Choreography I


In Choreography I, students will explore ways to improvise movement; invent, manipulate and organize movement phrases; and create solo, duet and small group studies. Students will work with partners and in small groups, examining ways to 'borrow' the movement ideas of others, as a springboard, in the creation of their own movement, both improvised and choreographed. Students will explore ways to successfully give objective and specific feedback. Students will discuss and examine the various choreographic and improvisatory ideas of contemporary choreographers.

Choreography II

Choreography II focuses on strategies to create and analyze the process of making a dance. In this class, we develop collaborative group work. Exploring initially in small groupings, duets and trios, students begin by generating movement phrases through classical and improvisational techniques. Movement studies are built upon class by class throughout the quarter. These studies introduce and reinforce elements of effort, shape, theme and variation, repetition, and reordering. As we expand from small to larger groupings, students explore the use of space. In addition to spatial relationship studies, students investigate ideas of direction, dimension with plane, floor pattern and stage space. We also experiment with different ways of drawing focus and the effect of time and tempo on our investigations. The primary goal of this class is for each student to develop collaborative skills while refining their individual creative process.

Choreography III

Students will create work and expand their potential as choreographers through their use of individual movement investigation, improvisation, and compositional forms. Presented with an array of choreographic problems to solve, they will not only experiment with their compositional tool kit, but they will invent their own systems of rules for their work. We will use a variety of approaches to creating - scores, improvisational, and task based - among others. Through movement laboratories and experiments, students will practice inventing, manipulating, directing, and organizing choreographic material.



aces ECA

Educational Center for the Arts

DANCE DEPARTMENT

Choreography IV


Students in Choreography IV focus on working independently in the studio to create new dance material. The emphasis is on a clear, physical realization of their ideas in dance movement. They often collaborate with other art forms such as music, poetry, or visual arts. The choreographic problems given to the students are less structured and require a large measure of initiative and independent decision-making

Dance for the Camera

In this course, students will learn how to effectively utilize digital video technologies to create dance for the camera. We will study video production and choreography as an artistic tool as well as the equipment and skills required to communicate a unique artistic vision. Students will learn to implement the various aspects of production; Pre-Production, Video Production and Post-Production, integrated with choreography to create a successful dance. We will discuss the involvement of the choreographer in a collaboration with composer, cinematographer, editor, and director. As the class progresses, students will explore fundamental camera operations, movement, and composition. This will include the rule of thirds, head room, lead room, establishing shots, close ups, medium, medium wide, wide, extreme wide, and depth of field as it relates to camera composition/framing. Choreographic studies will introduce and reinforce elements of effort, shape, theme and variation, repetition, and reordering. We will discuss the use of lighting as it impacts the choreography. Students will learn to describe and apply the fundamental principles that relate to both field and studio production safety.

Contact Improvisation

Through the physical principles of touch, momentum, and weight sharing, this dance practice explores the skills of falling, rolling, counterbalance, lifting using minimal effort, use of breath while being lifted, centering and breathing techniques, a spontaneous kinesthetic response, an awareness of partners and surroundings and the development of safe partnering practices.



aces ECA

Educational Center for the Arts

DANCE DEPARTMENT

Jazz History

Afro-Caribbean and American Vernacular Jazz Dance is designed to introduce students to the origins of jazz dance in America. Study emphasizes African and Caribbean, as well as “street” and “ballroom” influences. Basic skills of jazz movement, jazz music, and rhythmic awareness are included.

Jazz Technique

Jazz Class students will learn the basic principles of Jazz technique and apply it to different task throughout the duration of class. Students will expand their knowledge of classical jazz while simultaneously opening up to a more contemporary approach to jazz. We will explore our bodies through jazz forms and exercises.

Dance History

What are the fundamental principles of movement? What is dance for? What is it about? The new 20th century art form known as Modern Dance was born out of the continued investigation of these questions. In this course students explore the answers that the pioneers of Modern Dance, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey Charles Weidman, Hanya Holm, Lester Horton, have left the world. Students will study their choreographic themes, practice some of the movement techniques they developed, and explore their uses of stage, space, and costumes. Students will discuss what made each of these dancers so radical for their times. Modern Dance didn't end with the founders; each influenced a new generation of dance creators (like Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey, and Anna Sokolow). Who did they influence and what answers did the new generation develop? Finally, what is the connection between dance practices at ECA and earlier generations? Through texts, video, discussion and movement exploration, students will examine their own ideas about dance and choreography.



aces ECA

Educational Center for the Arts
DANCE DEPARTMENT

West African Dance Technique

This course explores the traditional rhythms and dances of Guinea, West Africa, and how the two interact and reinforce each other. Students explore techniques, terminology, and history common to traditional West African Dances. Developmental exercises will condition the body and refine the ear for the rhythmic requirements of this dance form. Technical exercises will emphasize grounded stance and appropriate use of alignment. This is an oral tradition, and the students are required to learn the material without written or digital aids. It is a collaboration and involves learning to listen so to hear how it all fits together.

Dance in Guinea occurs collectively in a community setting. It expresses the life of the community more than the mood of an individual or a couple. In villages throughout the country, the sound and the rhythm of the drum express the mood of the people. The drum is the sign of life; its beat is the heartbeat of the community. Such is the power of the drum to evoke emotions, to touch the souls of those who hear its rhythms. In a Guinean community, coming together in response to the beating of the drum is an opportunity to give one another a sense of belonging and of solidarity. It is a time to connect with each other, to be part of that collective rhythm of life in which young and old, rich and poor, men and women are all invited to contribute to the society.

Movement Lab

Movement Lab is a course developed to help dancers investigate and develop their technique, alignment, physical strength, movement awareness and reduce asymmetries in the body. Links conditioning skills, movement therapies, and neuromuscular patterning through the process of building strength, alignment, and awareness in essential musculature needed for foundational work in ballet and other forms of dance. Dancers are introduced to mat Pilates, Balance ball exercises, Yoga, and movement terminologies. Dancers are taught to assess one's movement, rehabilitate, and prevent physical injuries.



aces ECA

Educational Center for the Arts

DANCE DEPARTMENT

Faculty Repertory

In this course, faculty creates new dances for the student dancers. Each year, after an audition, every student is placed in a faculty repertory cast. The faculty choreographs a new dance for the students using a variety of rehearsal techniques and methods to generate material and to structure the dances. Each year the faculty decides on a different broad, generalized theme within which to work. Examples of repertory projects have included – Use of spoken text as part of the score – Development of a commissioned musical score in conjunction with the choreography – Collaboration with ECA music ensembles requiring choreography with set musical scores – Use of poetry, sculpture, or painting of major artists as source ideas – Use of political and social theory or current news events as source ideas.

Improvisation

In this course, students experience different approaches and theories of dance improvisation. Students participate and observe improvisation, exploring improvisation first in small groupings and eventually larger groups. Each class begins and ends with a group discussion. Students analyze, evaluate and reflect on artistic processes. Students gain a greater awareness of the basic movement elements, such as time, space, energy, shape and dynamics. They are encouraged to explore open-ended questions about each lesson. Through journaling and group discussion, students analyze, evaluate, and reflect on artistic processes. Guided improvisations provide opportunities for students to experiment with a newfound movement vocabulary.



aces ECA

Educational Center for the Arts
DANCE DEPARTMENT

Site Specific

Site-specific dance can be defined as a dance performance created and performed in response location. Furthermore, the fixed identity of the site, building, or location becomes disrupted and problematized through the introduction of performance work that may celebrate, contest, or contradict the function of the site. The students will transform, challenge their perceptions of familiar places by moving them into a direction of consciousness through play, engagement, and interaction. Site-specific creates community engagement and relationship to its viewers.

1. How do choreographers make site-specific dance performances?
2. What occurs when a moving, dancing body engages with the site, place, and environment?
3. How might we interpret, analyze, and evaluate this type of dance practice?
4. How can this type of practice inform wider discussions of site, space, place, and environment? What does it reveal?

Senior Seminar: College Application & Studio Exploration

This course is a laboratory in which students rigorously practice the various operations involved in making dance works: inventing, manipulating and organizing choreographic material. Students work collaboratively – discussing ideas, developing projects, and developing a studio plan, both individually and as a group. Students examine various multimedia themes, determine which to explore in class. They practice various ways to teach improvisations and ways to manipulate and expand movement phrases in preparation for senior project rehearsals. Each class consists of experimentation, individual and group studio research, presentation and discussion. In Senior Seminar, students will participate in master classes including lighting and costume design and Garage Band. NOTE: At the beginning of this course, seniors will have the opportunity for college preparation – lab time to complete essays and the Common App, special seminars, and studio time to develop college audition solos.



aces ECA

Educational Center for the Arts
DANCE DEPARTMENT

Senior Seminar: Teaching, Partnering, Production Techniques

This course is a laboratory in which students rigorously practice the various operations involved in making dance works: inventing, manipulating and organizing choreographic material. They will explore various teaching strategies in preparation for teaching their choreography to peers. They will examine and practice effective ways to teach partnering. They will complete a Senior Project Survey detailing their choreographic ideas for their senior project, share their ideas and brainstorm ways to expand their movement ideas into viable choreographic material. They will practice various ways to teach improvisations and ways to manipulate and expand movement phrases in preparation for senior project rehearsals. They will examine the aspects of producing dance works – discovering that initial choreographic spark, transforming that idea into movement, developing choreography, exploring ways to organize and manage rehearsals, conducting music searches, managing technical rehearsals, etc. Students will keep a movement journal – an essential learning tool for recording the ongoing artistic discovery process.

Senior Choreography Project

This course is for all students in the dance department. The purpose of the Senior Choreography Project is for senior dance students to develop and implement an original piece of choreography and for dancers to have the unique opportunity to examine the choreographic process. Dancers will explore improvisatory exercises, learn and manipulate movement phrases, and will be an integral part of the final piece of choreography. With seniors as their guides, dancers will explore choreographic devices such as spatial design, timing variations and dynamic range. This kind of exploration will require dancers to work with patience and a generous spirit so that the seniors can take risks, make mistakes and work through choreographic challenges. The dancers should be focused, enthusiastic and also willing to take risks. Dancers will keep journals throughout the project and respond to reflection questions regarding the rehearsal and choreographic process.