

Performance Major (BFA)

Students interested in studying Performance can major in [Interdisciplinary Studies](#) with a concentration in Performance, pursue a [Performance minor](#), or take Performance [courses](#).

Course Listings

PAR100

Wisdom of the Body (3.0)

This course is a beginning performance studies class exploring movement, voice, and creativity. What is the feeling of being "embodied"? How do we synchronize the body and mind? The embodied approach to performance grows out of a non-dualistic experience of the body/mind. Through gentle and precise physical exercises and improvisation, we will look at performance presence, precision, and impulse. We will enter the world of improvisational delight to integrate and explore the creative edges of the "unknown." This course provides an opportunity for students with no previous dance or theater experience to explore a range of creative and contemplative processes that serve as gateways to further training in performance. The development of individual presence and awareness of the dynamics of ensemble is emphasized throughout the semester. This course serves as a prerequisite to PAR dance and theater courses, (a BFA gateway course), and is for students interested in embodied creative process and performance skills.

PAR101

Experiential Anatomy (3.0)

This course provides a framework to study the skeletal, organ, muscular, and nervous systems from a Western, scientific, and experiential/personal perspective. Through a combination of anatomical information, guided imagery, improvisation, and movement, the body can become a creative source for artistic response, increased sensory awareness, and body-mind synchronization. Based on the pioneering work of somatic educator, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, the originator of Body-Mind Centering(TM), this work is primarily a course in somatic (the study of the soma, or body) techniques of embodiment.

PAR160

Contact Improvisation (3.0)

Contact Improvisation is the spontaneous dance of two or more people moving together while maintaining a physical connection and releasing into the flow of natural movement. The class follows a general progression of Contact Improvisation skills, such as rolling, falling, taking and giving weight, playing with momentum and gravity, discovering ledges and levels, and exploring different depths and textures of touch. Skills in individual, partner, and group dances are developed. Both beginners and more experienced contact improvisers are welcome.

PAR210

Acting Studio I (3.0)

This course, the first in a two-part sequence, is designed to introduce and develop basic skills of the actor within an interdisciplinary

context. Drawing from both traditional and contemporary acting techniques and including contemplative approaches to performance developed within the Naropa University Performance program, the student actor will develop a personal discipline that brings together physical expressiveness with clarity of inner psychological/emotional states and processes. Within ensemble, skills such as sensory awareness, presence, empathy, stillness, rhythm, intention, and creative imagination will be honed. Students will also be exposed to various lineages of contemporary performance.

PAR220

Dance Lab: Contemporary Dance (3.0)

An entry-/intermediate level technical training in both classical and postmodern contemporary dance technique and aesthetic. With a focus on strength through alignment and efficiency in movement, we work to tune the body with awareness and ease, allowing for individual expression in choreographed and improvised dance material. Students are introduced to both classical dance vocabulary and exercises, as well as less conventional techniques for preparatory and extended dance training. Strong attention is given to strength, body placement, space, shape, relaxed precision rhythm, sequence memory, and the ongoing interplay between self and other.

PAR222

Dance of Africa (3.0)

This class teaches dance and rhythm of one or more cultural traditions of Africa. Students learn to hold respect for cultural traditions, including the role dance plays in community, the relationship between student and teacher, and the joys of dance. Students are required to maintain a practice regimen and attend community-sponsored traditional African dance concerts. Students dance hard, have fun, and are required to participate in a performance weekend at the end of the semester. Students are expected to wear traditional dance costumes for public performances and for class. Materials fee.

PAR230

Preparing the Voice: Breathing Is Meaning (3.0)

This course concentrates on liberating the breath for proper vocal support and healthy voice production. By means of Fitzmaurice Voicework, students bring together the dynamics between body, breath, and voice, the imagination, and language. The work consists of two phases+Deconstructing: Through "Tremorwork" (a series of exercises developed by Catherine Fitzmaurice based on the work of Wilhelm Reich) the body re-learns to breathe in the most physiologically efficient way. Students reconcile biology with biography, reducing excess bodily tension and promoting spontaneous free breathing; and Restructuring: This second phase focuses on supporting a vibrant voice that communicates intention and feeling without excess effort.

PAR231**Articulating Sound: Voice and Speech (3.0)**

This course builds upon the Fitzmaurice Voicework done in PAR230. Applying the acquired skills in voice production and care, we now focus more intently on resonance, muscularity of articulation, the speaker, and the text and voice as action. Through class work and individual coaching in Fitzmaurice Voicework, actors gain a stronger sense of focus, intention, functionality, and structure in voice production and text interpretation. The course concentrates on assimilating the concept of voice as action, acquiring resonance and a deeper somatic awareness in voice production, and strengthens the relationship of the actor and the text.

PAR240**Rethinking the History of Performance: From Antiquity to the 1700s (3.0)**

This course is a survey of the history of theater and performance from early oral and written traditions up to the 1700s. It goes beyond the boundaries of Euro-American perspectives and examines performance in world terms through the lens of theater anthropology. Viewing performance as a natural instinct of humans, this course introduces students to the basics of critical theory. Prerequisite: COR110.

PAR241**Art Movements of the Twentieth Century: Movers, Shakers, and Rule Breakers (3.0)**

This course is an experiential research laboratory that aims to familiarize students with significant movements in the arts in the Twentieth century. This course provides a framework for understanding the historical, contextual, and practical bases for contemporary art movements and art makers. Through research and practical application, relevant historical, social, and cultural perspectives that have shaped our current culture and contemporary art world are examined. Prerequisites: COR110 and PAR210 or PAR220.

PAR301**Acting Ensemble (3.0)**

Students participate in the preparation, rehearsal, technical production, and performance of a departmental theatrical production. Students must commit to all performance dates; no absences are allowed for any performances scheduled, which will differ from the regularly scheduled class meeting times. Prerequisites: Two 200-level PAR courses, or audition, or instructor approval. Materials fee.

PAR302**Dance Ensemble (3.0)**

Students participate in the preparation, rehearsal, technical production, and performance of a departmental dance production. Students must commit to all performance dates; no absences are allowed for any performances scheduled, which will differ from the regular class meeting times. Prerequisites: Two 200-level PAR courses, or by audition, or instructor approval. Materials fee.

PAR310**Acting Studio II (3.0)**

Building on the foundational skills acquired in Acting Studio I, students deepen them into dependable performance tools. The training focus is on techniques designed to enable students to create performances that are intelligently conceived, emotionally engaging, and physically precise: action-based script analysis; character creation; emotional crafting; scene study; composition; and devised work techniques. Students explore more fully the lineage of performance, including a deeper exploration of Naropa's fusion of contemplative traditions. The semester culminates in performances for the larger Naropa University audience. Prerequisite: PAR210 or permission of the instructor.

PAR320**Dance Studio II: Contemporary Dance II (3.0)**

A continuation of PAR220 at an intermediate/advanced level, this course focuses on the application and structure of a dance work, and at times, the spontaneous exploration of space, time, shape, sound, scenario, motion, and expenditure of energy to the end of attracting and holding the attention of the audience. Students expand dance vocabulary and exercises as well as less conventional techniques for preparatory and extended dance training. Prerequisite: PAR220 or permission of the instructor.

PAR330**Verse Interpretation (3.0)**

This course provides ongoing training in oral interpretation, with special attention to communicating in verse and poetic forms, integrating body, mind, and sound. Through expressive exercises, monologues, and scene work, students develop skills in the areas of articulation, focus, concentration, visualization, and the voice as action. Students learn how to take risks, vocalize, and communicate intention in verse forms, and how to make informed interpretive choices.

PAR331**Prose Interpretation (3.0)**

This course provides ongoing training in verbal interpretation, with special attention to communicating in prose, integrating body, mind, and sound. Through expressive exercises, monologues, and scene work, students develop skills in the areas of articulation, focus, concentration, visualization, and the voice as action. Students learn how to take risks, vocalize, and communicate intention in prose form, and how to make informed interpretive choices.

PAR340**Performance Studies: Contemporary Practices (3.0)**

The class focuses on using the lens of "performance" to identify ways in which all aspects of human behavior and cultures are performances. Students explore the interstices of practice and theory in performance. Students develop an embodied and performative response to performance theory, and acquire the skills to apply theoretical vocabulary to actual performance. Prerequisite: PAR240, PAR241, or instructor approval.

PAR360**Body/Mind Improvisation: Contemplative Dance Practices (3.0)**

Using the four classical postures of mindfulness (lying down, sitting, standing, walking) as themes for endless variations into elegant dancing improvisation, this class explores creating spontaneous composition in the dancing lab. Surrounded by silence, music, and language, alone and together, with breath, posture, slow motion, and unexplained suddenness, we invite many delights! Dancing improvisation is full of opportunities for body-mind integration, "deep play," and artful incursions. We will practice solos, duets, trios, herds, flocks, and mobs. Prerequisites: any two PAR 200-level courses. Cross-listed with PAR560.

PAR400**Building a Career in the Arts for the Twenty-first Century (3.0)**

This course prepares artists to promote, market, and fund their own work and artistic skills effectively. Students learn the basics of project budgeting, promotional materials design, copy and press release writing, grant-writing, event planning, social media integration, the creation of promotional material using a variety of media, donor relations, and working as a teaching artist. Students articulate their mission and goals as an artist, create curriculum vitae outlining their artistic experience, and create press kits/portfolios geared toward their specialized field. In these ways, students learn how to effectively generate interest in their work, providing them with tools to earn a living in an arts field in the twenty-first century.

PAR401**Interarts Performance Practicum (3.0)**

This course brings together intermediate and advanced students for performative inquiry and theoretical dialogue in an experimental lab setting. Initially designed for upper-division BFA students in performance, it is now open to students in visual arts, music, writing, and art therapy. In a process grounded in awareness and presence practices, students collaborate across their disciplines to generate new works for live performance, installation, electronic presentation, as well as other forms. Prerequisites: senior-level Arts students or permission of instructor.

PAR460**Improvisation/Composition: Performing It Like It Is (3.0)**

A continuation of PAR360, this class sharpens skills and instructions from inside and out, to create performances for one another and for communities near and far. Working with the Naropa tradition of "young-warrior-artist-in-training," students discuss confidence in the path of the artist today. The Red Square practice opens the door of intuitive, imaginative, and daring ventures with many partners to collaborate with, including props, costumes, music, noise, and language of all sorts. Focus moves to site-specific events throughout the Naropa campuses. A long accumulation phrase of gestures, etc., are created over the semester as an investigation in both devised choreography and memory. Performances collage together solos, duets, trios, and quintets, also herds and flocks and mobs. Prerequisite: PAR360 or permission of instructor.

PAR490**Special Topics in Performance (3.0)**

The door opens on new, experimental, and demanding performance art created with diverse teacher-artists from the Naropa community and nationally. Taking students into unfamiliar and demanding territories that invite them to use everything they have learned, these projects welcome depth of creative process and also those unexpected surprises that come our way! Prerequisite: Any two PAR 200-level courses or by permission of the instructor.

PAR499**Independent Study: Performing Arts (0.5-4.0)**

This course offering is an opportunity for students to engage in in-depth, concentrated study with a particular faculty member for a semester. The design of study and course work are decided upon by the student and faculty member. Independent Studies will count for a standard 3 credits. If a variable credit (0.5-4 credits) Independent Study is desired, a student must receive additional approval. See the Independent Study Application for further details.