The Department of Performance Studies is the first program in the world to focus on performance as the object of analysis. The B.A. in performance studies at the Tisch School of the Arts offers students the opportunity to explore the fundamental power of performance – on the stage, page, and street.
Curriculum

The Performance Studies major builds on a rigorous interdisciplinary core curriculum combining analytical and practical research to train students to identify and write about a wide range of behaviors and events and to understand how social structures and relations are made. Designed to be flexible, the B.A. allows students to double major and study abroad.

Spanning time periods, geographical regions, and genres, students study performance enactments of all kinds: from postmodern dance to ballet, from everyday rituals to experimental art, from capoeira to performance art, and beyond. They draw on such fields as anthropology, theatre, and history. Courses explore feminist, queer, postcolonial, Marxist, psychoanalytic, and critical race theory. Methods of research and analysis include fieldwork, interviews, archival research, and movement analysis.

Students are encouraged to take full advantage of New York City’s vibrant artistic landscape for seeing performances of all kinds, conducting research, and professional development. Several courses require students to use the city – with its many neighborhoods and subcultures – as a “lab” for exploring theories of everyday practice.

Guests artists have included Holly Hughes, Carmelita Tropicana, Ricardo Dominguez, and Deborah Margolis. Students have worked with prominent artists and venues including Mabou Mines, Anne Bogart, and the Vito Acconci Studio.

The final year culminates with a Capstone Project, a research paper/project that synthesizes what the students have learned, as well as further honing their research, analysis, and writing skills.

Career Resources

The Tisch Office of Career Development strives to provide students and alumni with lifelong professional skills that help establish and sustain successful careers in the arts. TOCD’s services include: Tisch College Central, a searchable internship/job database; individualized career counseling (by appointment and weekly walk-ins); resume and cover letter reviews; career workshops and events; industry mentorship programs; access to electronic industry research tools; and a resource library stocked with trade publications and numerous career-related handouts. TOCD is located within Tisch’s Office of Student Affairs.

In conjunction with TOCD, the NYU Wasserman Center for Career Development provides career guidance and development services to NYU students and alumni. The Center hosts seminars, job fairs, and expos; schedules career counseling appointments; connects students with mentors and alumni; trains students in job interview skills and resume/cover letter writing; and compiles employer databases. The Center also maintains NYU CareerNet, an online database of both on- and off-campus job and internship listings. Students may use Wasserman’s resources to identify sustainable employment opportunities or explore additional career interests outside of the arts.

Alumni

Performance Studies alumni maintain a lifelong affiliation with the Tisch School of the Arts and have gone on to a wide variety of careers in the arts and beyond. Many alumni will want to pursue academic careers and may go on to earn advanced degrees in Theater Studies, Dance Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Ethnic Studies, Cultural Studies, Visual/Media Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work, and Law. Alumni also become teachers, artists, administrators, musicians, critics, writers, journalists, radio personalities, political activists, choreographers, curators, and much more. This makes for an exceptionally rich community of thinkers, doers, and makers.

As part of a vibrant network of mentors, artists, and entrepreneurs, Performance Studies alumni are supported by the Tisch Office of Alumni Relations and the Tisch Office of Career Development. By creating interdisciplinary and cross-generational collaborations, these two offices help alumni maintain a connection to the past while growing into their future. Of particular note are two main alumni councils, Tisch East and Tisch West, whose activity is centered on metropolitan NYC and LA respectively.