

**Master and PhD Theories and Practices of Art. Specialisation: Dance Studies**  
**Arts Department of the Université de Nice Sophia Antipolis, Section Danse<sup>1</sup>**  
by Victoria Pérez Royo

This Masters and PhD programmes are offered by the Arts Department of the Université de Nice Sophia Antipolis, section Danse.

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**Date of opening:** 2002 as Master in Dance. In 2004 started the adaptation process to Bologna guidelines.

**History:**

The Section Dance of the Nice University Sophia Antipolis is the only department in France offering a complete university education in dance studies: Bachelor, Master and Doctoral programme.

The Dance department of the Nice University is since 2002 one important pole of stimulation for the renovation of research on dance in France. It was the first one to offer a doctorate in dance, and by doing so, contributing substantially to feed the dance research field in France with new doctoral students.

Within the Master in Theories and Practices of art there are four possible specialisations: dance studies, theatre studies, music studies and ethnology of performing arts. The report focuses on the first one.

**Professions the degree prepares students for:**

Professions: education and research within the university context, artistic professions in the fields of creation and dissemination. Professions in artistic and cultural fields: production and diffusion;

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organisation and management within cultural institutions in France and abroad; further education for choreographers or performers.

**Student's Profile:**

The main part of the students comes directly from the Bachelor studies. There are also professionals related to dance taking this course. International.

**Specificity:**

Emphasis on a productive articulation between theory and praxis.

The education provided has the special feature of joining a technical training together with a demanding theoretical reflection and awareness for high level research.

This master combines two forms of research: 1) strictly disciplinary, led within an specific field where the student achieves high technical skills; 2) transdisciplinary research, which manifests itself in the associations of students working in different artistic fields, at the same time within the frame of a common reflective theoretical work (for example on aesthetic issues, links between music, poetry, theatrical and/or choreographic topics), and within the context of a common practice in which the different ways of expression are being related to one another.

**Aims:**

- to establish a close relationship between text analysis and different forms of artistic practice (live performance or even the production of artistic works).
- to question the existing relations between a given artistic production and its social and cultural conditions.

In both cases, it is the articulation between theory and practice what is at stake.

**Average number of admitted students per year: 12-25**

**Admission requirements for regular students:**

Previously achieved degrees: Bachelors degree or High School of the Arts degree in dance or related fields.

It is also possible to admit students with other degrees; sometimes they have the opportunity of supplementary attending some Bachelors courses in order to achieve the necessary knowledge to attend the Master classes.

**Required Submission Materials:**

- Portfolio

**Selection procedure:**



The portfolio is evaluated by three different bodies: first, the general commission of the Human sciences, Literature and arts campus, composed by elected tenured members of the teaching staff; second, by the director of the Master; third by the director of the Research Center on the arts, the RITM.

**Evaluation criteria:**

Student's ability to take advantage of the courses. Student's adaptability to the concrete context of the Arts Department. Viability of the proposed research plan.

**Financial aspects**

registration fees: administrative fees only

There are no grants offered directly by the Université de Nice, but the students can apply for the scholarships announced at national level.

**Duration of the programme:** two years

**Total number of ECTS:** 120

**Credits distribution:**

The credits distribution depends on the student's individual selection of subjects.

**Modules**

The modules are not conceived as consecutive unities, but rather as lines defining the studies throughout the four semesters; the percentages of credits assignment for each modules varies in the course of the studies.

1) **Methodology and individual research.**

Compulsory for every student of the Master Arts Theories and Practices. Common basis for all specializations within the Arts Department. Total: 35 ECTS

2) **Disciplinary module.** It offers diverse subjects of theory and praxis on a high level in Dance Studies. Total: 25 ECTS

3) **Transdisciplinary module.** It encourages the reflection on the collaboration among different forms of artistic expression. Transdisciplinarity associates students in two levels simultaneously: within the frame of a theoretical reflection work and by means of a common praxis. In this module the students are also encouraged to attend courses at other faculties that could help them to develop their respective research works. Maximum of ECTS acquired at other faculties: 35 ECTS.

4) **Individual research work:** Total: 25 ECTS (5 in M1 and 20 in M2)



### **Learning approach:**

Education and investigation axes throughout the Masters programme are: analysis of choreographic works and of dance praxis in relation to its context (historical, political, sociological, cultural), and different artistic fields.

Emphasis on the integration of theory and practice.

### **Learning methodology**

- Lectures for theoretical subjects.
- Seminars. Seminars are conceived as highly interactive courses. The students should present practical works related to the subject proposed by the professor as the basis for subsequent discussions and debates in which every student participates.
- Laboratories and workshops.
- Training. There are no technique classes in the master. Nevertheless, the students who consider it necessary for their own research can attend to all technique courses at the Bachelors level they consider adequate. This work has no ECTS assignment.
- Tutorial guidance for the practical work. Individual assessment. The students are encouraged to develop their practical project in collaboration with other students of the same or of the other areas of the master (theatre and music). In this way they develop an interdisciplinary collaborative work, and broaden their practical and theoretical knowledge in other fields.
- Professional orientation. Optional collaboration with a cultural or artistic institution. A maximum of 5 ECTS can be assigned for this work.
- Others: RITM organises monthly a series of lectures held by professors and PhD students in which they present their research. Attendance and active participation is compulsory for the master students. Evaluation and credit assignment of these lectures are part of the Methodology and Individual Research module.

### **Detailed description**

Almost every subject is validated with 5 ECTS. Exceptions are indicated.

#### **SEMESTER 1**

Methodology and individual research. 10 ECTS

#### **Introduction to research:**

Didactic and very pragmatic course in which the participation of the students is fundamental.

Methodology: work presentation as a basis for debate and discussion.

Introduction to research and to the tools necessary to write the Master dissertation



Content: description of the means for creating research work with university standards, such as selection of research topic or redaction of aims, documentation tools (how to create a bibliography, how to find the necessary documentation, how to read and take notes; organisation of a research plan and redaction plan); writing norms.

**Introduction to aesthetic:**

This theory course focuses on the questioning of the aesthetic discipline based on the revolutions set out by avant-garde and postmodernity.

Disciplinary module. 10 ECTS

**Choreographic composition:**

Practical workshop focused on experimentation with tools for choreographic composition.

Assessment elements: work presentation and written dossier.

**Elective course.**

One subject related to the student's individual and professional project at other faculties. The supervisor must agree with the student's choice.

Transdisciplinary module. 5 ECTS

**History of theories on the body part 1:**

The aim of this course is to show how the discourses on the body transform themselves in the course of the time, and how they make their object of research change in a continuous dynamic of adaptation and resistance to the practices, norms and social representations of the body. Main interest: time between XV and XVIII centuries

The students are expected to present the issues related to their own research within this course: in-depth reading and critic of some of the texts proposed in the bibliography.

Assessment: Individual dossier and dissertation

**Ethnochoreology :**

The course focuses on the reflection of the complexity of the ethnochoreological studies and the analysis of concrete choreographic practices under two coordinates: globalization and local recomposition. Further phenomena are examined, such as the transition from traditional dances to the stage and the transformation into 'touristic' choreographic practices. The analysis of these issues will allow for further reflection on relevant topics such as the opposition global / local and the relationship north / south.

Assessment: Individual dossier and dissertation

SEMESTER 2

Methodology and individual research. 15 ECTS



## **Research project**

At the end of the first year the students have to write a report (university standards) about their work (the individual work and the different ones developed for the seminars they have participated in). On this basis the supervisor usually recommends them to follow one of the topics they have tackled.

## **Introduction to Aesthetic 2**

### **Seminar on methodology and discussion about the research progress**

The aim of this seminar is to go in depth into the university research methods which were presented in the course of the first semester. It concentrates mainly on the questions concerning the development of the research issues, the creation of a writing plan, the constitution of a body of knowledge and the writing of the master's dissertation.

Disciplinary module. 5 ECTS

**Choreographic analysis 1:** Methods and methodologies for the choreographic analysis of art works and their processes.

Assessment: research dossier; written text.

Transdisciplinary module. 10 ECTS

**Theory and analysis of dance and theatre:** Aim of this seminar is to question the theory and analysis of theatre and dance based on stage works. It consist of a consideration of the diverse dimensions of theatrical production and reception, the poetic of the representation, particularly the innovations and transformations of the contemporary scene (new technologies, interdisciplinarity).

Assessment: analytical presentation of an excerpt of a production (show, scenic piece)

**Stage production 1:** Theoretical/Practical seminar. How to realise a product for the scene: from the generating idea to the diffusion of the product, through all different stages.

Assessment: Individual dossier and dissertation

### **Anthropology of *live arts* 1:**

Theoretical seminar. Aim of this seminar is to present the emergence of the symbolic verticality of a dichotomic thinking that in Occident was transported to the movement, the body and the voice. Examination of the basis and principles of the great musical and instrumental classifications in western societies.

Assessment: Individual dossier and dissertation

**Knowledge about cultural institutions 1.** The structure, the organisation and the functions of cultural institutions in France, and in Europe (economy, legislation, resources, etc.)

Assessment: Individual dossier and dissertation

### **Staging analysis 1.**

This seminar proposes on the base of the analysis of past and contemporary stagings, to confront the students with the objects and methods of theatre historiography. Students are expected to establish a



body of documents (manuscripts, suit scale-models, films, etc.) susceptible of helping the student to better define the scenic dimension of the choreographic or theatrical form selected. This body will cause a reflection on the methods of identification, dating, interpreting of documents that aim to the establishment of a methodology of analysis specific to the selected study object. Research projects developed by each student will allow for engagement in a common reflection on the historical study of theatricality.

Assessment: analitic presentation on the inventory of the interpretation methods of documents related to an art work.

### SEMESTER 3

Methodology and individual research. 15 ECTS

#### **Questions of research.** (6 ECTS)

This seminar tackles a number of methodological norms to follow during the research process, in particular the positioning of the researcher in relation to the selected object / field of study, as well as the connection to the sources and the tramps of interpretation. Apart from this, orality as a source will be a relevant aspect of this seminar: how to recollect and transcribe oral testimony, how to locate and use audiovisual and oral archives?

Assessment: Individual dossier

#### **Questions of aesthetic**

Walter Benjamin's theory of the art object, especially the thesis developed in his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility"

Assessment: Individual dossier

#### **Foreign language:** (4 ECTS)

Disciplinary module. 5 ECTS

#### **Choreographic composition 2**

Transdisciplinary module. 10 ECTS

#### **History of theories on the body 2.**

Same content of part I but main interest: time between XIX and XXII centuries

#### **Ethnochoreology 2.**

### SEMESTER 4

Methodology and individual research. 20 ECTS

#### **Dissertation** and

**Seminar on Methodology and discussion about the research progress:** (20 ECTS)



The aim of this seminar is to go in depth into the methods of university research tackled in the course of the first semester. It focuses particularly on the questions related to the development of a research issue, the organisation of a writing plan, the composition of a body of research and the writing of a dissertation.

Disciplinary module. 5 ECTS

**Anthropology of life arts 2**

**Knowledge of cultural institutions 2**

**Study of Mise en scene 2**

**Professional work experience**

The students in the last semester of the master are able to substitute the disciplinary module for a practical work experience related to their personal and professional research project.

Transdisciplinary module. 5 ECTS

**Theory and analysis of dance and theatre 2.**

**Choreographic analysis 2.**

**Scenic production 2.**

**Frequency of education.** All the subjects take place on a weekly basis, so there is a continuous regularity of work. There are no intensive workshops.

## **FINAL PROJECT**

At the end of the second year the students write the Master Thesis

**Formal requirements:** written work of 100 - 150 pages, which follows the bibliographical standards of a PhD thesis (summaries, description of sources, predefined structure of three chapters, etc.)

**Accepted formats:** The written dissertation sometimes is accompanied by a practical work; the relationship between the two is decided by the student, who develops a personal methodology.

**Public showing of the work** is possible in the theatres of the university or also in the external venues with which the university has agreements. In the presentation halls of the university showings of student's practical works usually take place 3 or 4 times a year. Some external theatres such as the National Theatre reserve for these presentations at least one night per year, usually at the end of Mai.

**Evaluation criteria:**

The usual for a dissertation within the frame of the university:





Scientific rigour, quality of the conceptual framework, its location in an intellectual context, quality of argument and its formulation, observation of reference and research guidelines, application of appropriate methodologies or evidence of appropriate reading.

**Examining board:** Internal, composed of teaching staff of the Arts Department.

**Financing:** there is no budget for practical works.

**Competencies obtained by the student on completion of the degree:**

Continue with the studies at a doctoral level and orientation towards the professions in the sectors performance and creation, education and investigation, culture, patrimony and edition.

**DOCTORATE IN ARTS: DANCE**

Organised and developed in the *RITM Laboratory. Research Center for the analysis and interpretation of texts in music and performing arts.*

**Year the degree course was founded:** 1995

**Professions the degree prepares students for:**

Professionals for the academy with an emphasis in the articulation between theory and practice.

**Student's Profile:**

Students coming from the Masters programme.

**Aims:**

RITM aims to develop a reflection on the issues of analysis and interpretation of “texts” as they arise in music, dance and in performing arts; that is, in the fields in which the production involves a live production or any kind of performing activity. With “text” is not only the musical or choreographic score meant, but also the very production that results from this kind of objectivation, which, on the other hand, motivates a critical analysis. It is about highlighting the aesthetic and cultural dimensions of the staging of one of these writing techniques in a broader sense: musical, theatrical, scenographic and choreographic writing.

**Specificity:**

close link between the theoretical reflection and the artistic practice, between scientific publications and choreographic creations.

**Admission requirements:**

Masters research degree with final note ‘good’ or higher in dance or disciplines related. Should the final note be inferior, the student might have an interview with the educational board, who can approve the student’s admission.



**Maximum number of students:** 6-7

**Duration of the programme:** three years with a grant; without it maximum 6 years; After this period it is necessary to ask for special permission and to justify the delay in order to continue studying.

### Teaching Units

Doctoral students have to complete in the first two years a number of seminars.

Year 1: 55 hours

Year two: 45 hours

They usually take place Friday in the afternoon.

### Modules

- 1) Methodological seminar. Compulsory for all doctoral students in all faculties. How to conduct research.
- 2) Every year an interdisciplinary conference is organised. Compulsory.
- 3) Presentation of the own research once a year in the research seminar offered by RITM.
- 4) Monthly meeting at RITM in which discussion, debates and presentation of practical works take place; PhD students from other universities are usually invited to participate.
- 5) Final project: PhD Thesis according to the usual academic standards. A practical additional work is optional. The student decides the relationship between both types of work. This work is developed under the guidance of one or two supervisors.

**Formal requirements:** written work of 300 - 350 pages, which follows the bibliographical standards of a PhD thesis (Summaries, description of sources, predefined structure of three chapters, etc.)

**Public showing of the work:** see Masters final work.

**Examining board:** 2/3 internal members of the teaching staff from the Arts department plus two external.

### TEACHING STAFF

Required academic qualifications for teaching staff in theory courses: PhD degree and HDR title (Habilitation á diriger les recherches).

Required professional qualifications for teaching staff in practical courses: competency in their field. These curriculums are evaluated by an internal commission of the department.



Percentage of teaching staff:

**Educational permanent team:** 12 people

from them:

Dance: 3

(Theatre 4 and Music 5)

The number of invited guests varies greatly from year to year.

Percentage in ECTS assignment

Tenured staff. 25 ECTS per semester

Non-tenured staff. 5 ECTS per semester

Also PhD candidates with a grant are supposed to invest up to 60 hours per year with teaching activities.

### **Departmental structure**

Three sections: dance, theatre and music

The research areas are determined by the particular research fields of each member of the teaching staff.

**Departmental financing:** official funding.

### **Research groups**

RITM. Research Center for the analysis and interpretation of texts in music and performing arts.

**Foundation:** 1995

#### **Aims:**

- The development of a reflection on the issues of analysis and interpretation of texts in music and in performing arts; that is, in the fields in which the production implies a life creation. 'Text' means not only the musical or choreographic score and the verbal text as a point of departure of the life work, but also the production resulting from this form of objectivation, which in turn needs a critical analysis. The purpose is to underline the aesthetic and, more generally, cultural issues related to staging of different writing techniques in a larger sense: musical writing, playwriting, choreographic and scenographic writing, etc.

- The integration of theoretical reflection and artistic practice, so that the research work materialises in the double form of scientific publications and musical, scenic or choreographic creations.

#### **Subject areas:**

1) Analysis and interpretation of texts in a broad sense in music and in performing arts.



## 2) Memory of dance.

Four axes:

- Corporal memory in transmission and learning
- Memory, oblivion and historical repressions: construction of written, visual and oral archives.
- Stratification of memories in the improvisation and in the creation.
- Memory and experience: psychological and cognitive strategies of dancing subjectivities.

**Objectives:** to foster exchange and contact among senior researchers and doctoral students.

**Completed projects:**

### **Les Ateliers de la danse**

The principle of the “Ateliers” is based on the organisation led by the doctoral students in dance who work at RITM; they invite external key figures, artists and researchers to the Section Danse de l'Université de Nice. These meetings take the form of research workshops with the aim of generating a theoretical reflection linked to dance practices.

#### **Aims:**

- to create a scientific interdisciplinary exchange, to encourage the development of links among French and international researchers.
- to enrich French research on dance by opening it to the contact and the reality of other countries. The doctoral students place their research within this international and intercultural dimension.
- to create links with local and regional partner institutions in order to promote the local situation in the cultural and artistic fields.

Already three Ateliers were organised:

- International Conference: “Atelier de la danse n. 1: Transdisciplinarité” (Cannes, Palais des Festivals et des Congrès, November 2005. Coordinators: Nathalie Gauthard / Marina Nordera / Charles-Henri Pirat / dance students at the UNSA.
- International Conference: “Atelier de la danse n. 2: Mémoires”-  
In collaboration with Monaco Dance Forum 2006.
- International Conference: “Atelier de la danse n. 3: Traces”. 25-26 November. In collaboration with the Festival de danse de Cannes 2007.



Other Conferences:

- International Conference: “Les discours de la danse, mots-clefs pour une méthodologie de la recherche », 29 November- 1 December 2003, Cannes, Palais des Festivals et des Congrès  
In collaboration with Centre National de la Danse de Pantin.

Publication:

Susanne Franco / Marina Nordera (dirs.): *I discorsi della danza*, 2005

Susanne Franco / Marina Nordera (dirs.): *Keywords in Dance Research*, Routledge, 2007.

**Collaboration projects:**

- Autour d'un choréographe, Alwin Nikolais, Danse et Arts Plastiques (2008)
- Semaine Isadora Duncan (2009)

Collaborating institutions: Sillages, Le Centre de Formation professionnelle Off Jazz, Le Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Nice.

CONTEXT

ACADEMIC NETWORK

**Exchanges and guest students:**

Stay abroad for the students of Nice is optional in the 4th semester.

- Erasmus/Socrates: la Section dance has signed agreements with foreign universities in Spain, Finland, Netherlands, Italy, Austria, Estonia, Sweden and Portugal.
- Specific agreements are active with the Dance Department of the UQAM (Montréal - Canada) and the Dance Department Oklahoma University - USA.

**Interuniversity master:**

European Master 'Erasmus Mundus in Études du spectacle vivant' which associates 15 European universities. The students who are inscribed in one of the programmes of the partner Universities can continue their education in one of them according to the cooperation conditions:

The student completes 60-90 ECTS at the home university; the remaining 30-60 ECTS can be completed at the host university.

Periods of mobility:

- one stay in order to achieve 30 credits.



- one second stay for the development of the final project with the possibility of achieving further 30 ECTS.

**Number of students:** The capacity of the reception university is of 5 visiting students.

**Admission criteria:**

Adequacy to the speciality to the reception university. Viability of the student's project. The host university is responsible for the reception criteria (linguistic improvement, research support)

EXTERNAL NETWORKS

**Links to professional contexts**

Collaboration for different activities and initiatives: (meetings, conferences, shows, workshops) with: ADEM 06 (Délégation Départementale à la Danse et a la Musique), Centre National de la Danse, Conservatoire de Musique, Danse et Théâtre de Nice, Festival de Danse de Cannes, Ballets de Monte-Carlo, Opéra de Nice, Système Castafiore, Théâtre de Grasse, Théâtre National de Nice, Rectorat de Nice, Compagnie Incontro, Compagnie La Citadelle, Compagnie Saeta, Voix publique, Le Terrain Vague, École Supérieure de Danse de Cannes Rosella Hightower, Compagnie Evidanse, Compagnie Ariel, Espace Magnan.

**Infrastructures**

Library, audiovisual studio, laboratory for research, rooms for theory classes, rooms for practical classes, studio.

These facilities are shared with the department of Theatre and Music.

