

Jessica Friedman

EDUCATION

- 2023 PhD, Interdisciplinary PhD Program in Theatre and Drama, Northwestern University
Critical Theory Cluster
Dissertation: “Hidden in Plain Sight: Women Choreographers of 1940s American Modern Dance”
Committee: Dr. Susan Manning (chair), Dr. Nadine George-Graves, Dr. Ramón Rivera-Servera, Dr. Elizabeth Son
- 2021 MA, Interdisciplinary PhD Program in Theatre and Drama, Northwestern University
- 2017-2019 Graduate Coursework in the Joint PhD Program in Drama and Theatre, University of California, San Diego/University of California, Irvine
- 2017 BA, Ethnic and Racial Studies (specialization in Race in Performance), Columbia University in the City of New York, Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, Departmental Honors
Significant Research: “Who is Alright in a Rhythm Nation?: Performance as a Vehicle for Decoloniality” selected for funding by Columbia University and awarded Outstanding Thesis Award, advised by Dr. Deborah Paredez, 2016-2017.

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- 2025- Lecturer, School of Music and Dance, San Diego State University
- 2024- Lecturer, Department of Theatre and Dance, California State University, Fullerton
- 2023-2024 Lecturer, Department of Theater and Dance, University of California, Santa Barbara
- 2022-2025 Co-Curator and Digital Exhibit Curator, *Dance to Belong: A History of Dance at 92NY*, 92nd Street Y, New York

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, AND HONORS

- 2025 American Theatre and Drama Society Contingent Faculty Research and Travel Grant Award
Award for excellence in research in American theatre and drama
- 2025 Association for Theatre in Higher Education, High Teaching Load Research Grant for Contingent Faculty
Research grant for contingent faculty with high teaching loads

- 2025 Performance Studies Focus Group, Association for Theatre in Higher Education, Contingent Faculty Scholar Award
Award for research by contingent faculty
- 2025 Library of Congress Annegret Fauser and Tim Carter Fellowship
Competitively awarded fellowship for research and presentation of book project at the Library of Congress
- 2024 American Society for Theatre Research Cambridge University Press Prize Honorable Mention
Award for best plenary presentation at ASTR the previous year
- 2024 American Theatre and Drama Society Contingent Faculty Research and Travel Grant Award Runner Up
Award for excellence in research in American theatre and drama
- 2023 University of California, Santa Barbara, Non-Senate Faculty Professional Development Grant
Competitively awarded grant for integrating research into teaching and mentorship
- 2023 American Society for Theatre Research Jessica Berson Dance Research Assistance Fund Grant
International award for excellence in research in dance-based work in theater.
- 2023 American Society for Theatre Research David Keller Travel Grant Award.
International award for travel and theatre research support.
- 2022 American Society for Theatre Research Selma Jeanne Cohen Presentation Award.
International award for excellence in research at the intersection of dance and theatre.
- 2022 International Federation for Theatre Research New Scholar Award Runner Up
International award for excellence in performance scholarship among emerging scholars.
- 2022 Northwestern University Fellowship in Leadership
Competitively awarded fellowship provides leadership training and financial support.
- 2021 PEO Scholar Award Regional Nominee
Competitively awarded regional nomination for PEO Scholar Award dissertation completion fellowship and financial support.

- 2021 Renate Voris Fellowship
Competitively awarded fellowship and financial support for excellence in doctoral research in the Arts and Humanities.
- 2019 New York Public Library Short-Term Research Fellowship
Competitively awarded fellowship provides archival and financial support for dissertation research conducted at New York Public Library.
- 2019 92nd Street YM-YWHA Archival Research Fellowship
Competitively awarded fellowship provides archival and financial support for dissertation research conducted at the 92nd Street YM-YWHA's archives.
- 2018 Dance Studies Association Selma Jeanne Cohen Award
International award for excellence in dance scholarship among graduate students.
- 2017-2019 University of California, San Diego, The San Diego Fellowship
Competitively awarded fellowship for graduate students.

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

- Forthcoming monograph *Modern Dance in Crisis: Women Remaking Modern Dance in the 1940s.*
Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Under Advanced Contract.
- Forthcoming 2026 Co-Edited with Carolina D Santo and Greer Crawley. *Designers & Crafters.*
Vol. 3. Women's Innovations in Theater, Dance, and Performance. London:
Bloomsbury, Under contract for publication Spring 2026.
- Forthcoming 2026 Co-Edited with Telory Arendell. *Embodied Dramaturgy: Liminal
Movements in Dance and Theatre.* Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire:
Routledge, Under contract for publication expected 2026.

Double-Blind Peer Review Journal Articles:

- 2024 "Recruiting Places: Pearl Primus's Plans for Global Activism through
Community-Engaged Dance Theatre." *Theatre Survey* 65, no. 3: 208-26.
- 2022 "Universalizing the Specific: Janet Collins's Spirituals and Genesis." *Dance
Chronicle* 45, no. 3: 187–206.

Commissioned Articles:

- Forthcoming 2025 Commissioned Article: "Dances about War." *Jacob's Pillow Dance
Interactive*, under contract for publication 2025.
- 2024 Co-Written with Elizabeth W. Son. "Teaching Public Humanities in
Practice." In *Preparing Publicly Engaged Scholars: A Guide for Innovation*

in Graduate Education. New York: American Council for Learned Societies, 2024.

Commissioned Book Chapters:

- Forthcoming 2026 “Finding Meaning in Abstract Modern Dance: Jean Erdman’s Embodied Dramaturgy.” In *Embodied Dramaturgy: Liminal Movements in Dance and Theatre*, edited by Jessica Friedman and Telory Arendell. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, Expected 2026.
- Forthcoming 2026 “Modern Dance at the Arts Club: Merce Cunningham, Jean Erdman, and the Chicago Avant-Garde.” In *Dancing on the Third Coast*, edited by Susan Manning and Lizzie Leopold. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, Expected 2026.
- 2023 “Dancing Sharecroppers: Jane Dudley’s and Pearl Primus’s Border Crossing Blues.” In *Border Crossings: Exile and American Dance, 1900 - 1955*, edited by Ninotchka Bennahum and Rena Heinrich. New York: New York Public Library Press, 2023.

Public Scholarship and Book Reviews:

- 2026 Commissioned Book Review: Lynn Matluck Brooks, Sariel Golomb, and Garth Grimball’s *Dance and Science in the Long Nineteenth Century: The Articulate Body*. *Dance Chronicle*, Forthcoming 2026.
- 2024 Commissioned Book Review: Jacqueline Shea Murphy’s *Dancing Indigenous Worlds: Choreographies of Relation*. *Great Plains Quarterly*, 44.1 (Winter 2024): 106-7.
- 2021 Book Review: Carrie Noland’s *Merce Cunningham: After the Arbitrary*. *Dance Research Journal*. 53, no. 1 (April 2021): 79–81
- 2020 “Reconstructing 1940s Dances of Sophie Maslow and Pearl Primus from the Archives.” *The New York Public Library* (blog).
<https://www.nypl.org/blog/2020/02/18/reconstructing-1940s-dances-sophie-maslow-and-pearl-primus-archives>.

INVITED LECTURES AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Invited Lectures:

- 2026 “Modern Dance in Crisis: Pearl Primus, Eve Gentry, and the Precarity of Boosting Morale in the 1940s United States,” Colloquium Keynote, Department of Theatre and Dance, University of California, Santa Barbara, February.

- 2024 “Embodied Dance History: Pedagogy, Praxis, and Performance,” *DEL Dance to Belong: An Embodied Dance History of 92NY Workshop*, Dance Education Laboratory, 92nd Street Y, July 15.
- 2023 “Prospectus to Defense: Dissertation Completion Strategies,” Theatre and Drama 205 Graduate Seminar: “Research Design and Prospectus Writing,” Northwestern University, January 11.
- 2021 “Race, Cold War Aesthetics, and Modern Dance: The Neutralization of Janet Collins’s Modern Dances, 1947-1949,” Theater 255 Graduate Seminar: “Race, Immigration, and the Cold War Politics of Contemporary American Dance,” University of California, Santa Barbara, March 1.
- 2021 “Moving and Sounding American: Sophie Maslow’s Staging of Contradictions in *Folksay*,” Dance 145g Upper Division Undergraduate Seminar: “Race, Immigration, and Contemporary American Dance,” University of California, Santa Barbara, February 1.
- 2020 “Introduction to Dance Theatre: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and Urban Bush Women.” Theatre 140-1 Lower Division Undergraduate Course: “Theatre in Context,” Northwestern University, September 21.

Conference Papers and Presentations:

- 2025 “Dancing Alarm: Pearl Primus’s and Eve Gentry’s 1940s Anti-Lynching Dances,” American Society for Theatre Research Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado, November 6-9.
- 2025 “Performing War: How Militarized Performance Creates National Reality,” Association for Theatre in Higher Education Annual Conference, virtual, July 28-August 1.
- 2025 “Dancing Women in the Face of State Power: Eve Gentry, Pearl Primus, and the USO,” Dance Studies Association Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., June 25-29.
- 2024 “Corporeal Interventions in World War II USO Performances: Eve Gentry and Pearl Primus, Dancing Women in the Face of Empire,” presenter, and “Changing Ecologies of the Body: Critical Corporeality in Dance, Sport, and Embodied Practice,” group co-convenor, American Society for Theatre Research Annual Conference, Seattle, Washington, November 14-17.
- 2024 “Revisioning Queer Performance Histories: Sybil Shearer’s Modern Dances during the Lavender Scare,” Association for Theatre in Higher Education Annual Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, August 1-4.
- 2024 “Publicly Engaged Scholars,” invited session, ACLS Annual Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland, May 3-4.

- 2024 “Dancing Sharecroppers and the Borders of Leftism: Jane Dudley’s and Pearl Primus’s Border Crossing Blues,” *Border Crossings* Symposium, Santa Barbara, California, January 26-27.
- 2023 “An Unrealized Hope: Pearl Primus’s Border Crossing Dance Theatre Troupe” plenary presentation, American Society for Theatre Research Annual Conference, Providence, Rhode Island, November 9-12.
- 2023 “Making Pathways Meet: Promising Directions for Publicly Engaged Doctoral Training” roundtable, National Humanities Conference, Indianapolis, Indiana, October 25-29.
- 2023 “Women and Theatre Program: An Oral History Project,” interviewer, Women and Theatre Program Pre-Conference for Association for Theatre in Higher Education Annual Conference, August 2.
- 2022 “Dancing a Transcultural Activism: Janet Collins’s Biblical Dances,” National Women’s Studies Association Annual Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 10-13.
- 2022 “Dancing and Concealing: Sybil Shearer’s Modern Dance Response to the Lavender Scare,” American Society for Theatre Research Annual Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 3-6.
- 2022 “Universalizing the Specific: Janet Collins’s Biblical Dances,” Dance Studies Association Annual Conference, Vancouver, Canada, October 13-16.
- 2022 “Modern Dance for Transnational Social Change: Global Echoes in Jane Dudley’s and Pearl Primus’s Danced Activism,” Theatre and Social Change Focus Group Debut Panel, Association for Theatre in Higher Education Annual Conference, Detroit, Michigan, July 28-31.
- 2022 “Modern Dance, Race, and the Unfinished History of Cold War Aesthetics: Janet Collins’s Modern Dances, 1947-1949,” Association for Theatre in Higher Education Annual Conference, Detroit, Michigan, July 28-31.
- 2022 “Dancing Sharecroppers: Jane Dudley’s and Pearl Primus’s Border Crossing Blues,” International Federation for Theatre Research World Congress, Reykjavík, Iceland, June 20-24.
- 2022 “Choreographing Blackness, Jewishness, and Questions of Universality: Janet Collins’s Biblical Modern Dances,” Conney Conference on Jewish Arts, Madison, Wisconsin, March 27-30.
- 2021 “Local Histories, Urban Geographies” Gathering, Dance Studies Association Annual Conference, New Brunswick, New Jersey, October 14-17.
- 2021 “Recovering the Work of Female Choreographers and Rewriting the Shift from Theatricalism to Formalism in Mid-Century Modern Dance,”

- Association for Theatre in Higher Education Annual Conference, Virtual, August 5-8.
- 2019 “Building a Space for One’s Body in an American Cultural and Economic Commons,” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Honolulu, Hawai’i, November 7-10.
- 2019 “Dancing a Demand for Space: The Interventions of Sophie Maslow and Pearl Primus in the American Cultural and Economic Commons,” Dance Studies Association Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois, August 8-11.
- 2019 “Dancing a Demand for Space: The Interventions of Sophie Maslow and Pearl Primus in the American Cultural and Economic Commons at the 92nd Street YM-YWHA,” 92Y Fellow Presentation, *Conney Conference on Jewish Arts*, New York, New York, March 31-April 3.
- 2018 “Dancing a Decolonizing Technique,” invited presenter, Frantz Fanon Foundation Rencontres, New Brunswick, New Jersey, November 17-18.
- 2018 “Josephine Baker’s Decolonial Corporeal Borderland,” Dance Studies Association Annual Conference, Valletta, Malta, July 5-8.
- 2018 “Witnessing in Pearl Primus’s Strange Fruit,” Biennial International Dance Conference, Barbados, West Indies, May 23-26.
- 2018 “Josephine Baker’s Decolonial Mimesis,” InMotion: Performance and Unsettling Borders Conference, Chicago, Illinois, April 27-29.

TEACHING

San Diego State University:

- 2025 Fall Dance 181: “Introduction to Dance”
- 2025 Fall Dance 380: “Dance History: Contemporary Global Contexts”
- 2025 Spring Dance 481W: “Performance Writing: Dance Analysis and Criticism”

California State University, Fullerton:

- 2025 Fall Theatre 200: “Script Analysis”
- 2024-2025 Fall and Spring Theatre 275: “World Theatre History”

University of California, Santa Barbara:

- 2023-2024 Fall, Winter, and Spring Dance 45: “Dance History and Appreciation”

Northwestern University:

2022	Instructor of Record, Dance 101-2: "Introduction to Dance Experience-Dance in Context: Decolonizing Dance Canons"
2022 Winter and Spring	Instructor of Record, Theatre 140-2: "Introduction to Theatre Research and Analysis: Adaptations"
2020	Teaching Assistant, Theatre 140-1: "Theatre in Context"

University of California, San Diego:

2018	Teaching Assistant, Theatre History and Theory 23: "Twentieth Century Drama"
2018	Teaching Assistant, Theatre History and Theory 22: "Theatre 1500-1900"
2017	Teaching Assistant, Theatre History and Theory 21: "Ancient and Medieval Theatre"

EDITORIAL, RESEARCH ASSISTANT, AND DRAMATURGY EXPERIENCE

2022-2023	Tenure Dossier Assistant for Professor Shoshana Ela Cooper, Northwestern University
2022	Research Assistant for Dr. Nina Spiegel, Portland State University
2021	Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama Graduate Assistant for Dr. Elizabeth Son, Northwestern University
2020-2023	Research Assistant for Dr. Susan Manning, Dr. Melissa Blanco Borelli, Dr. Elizabeth W. Son, and Dr. Masi Asare, Northwestern University
2018	Graduate Student Researcher for Dr. Nadine George-Graves, University of California, San Diego
2017-2018	<i>TheatreForum</i> , an international journal of theatre and dance, Editorial Staff
2017-2018	Native Film and Storytelling Institute, Dramaturg and Mentor, University of California, San Diego

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2024	American Theatre and Drama Society Publication Development Forum <i>Competitively selected forum to workshop book proposal</i>
2021-2022	Searle Teaching Certificate Program, Northwestern University
2019	The Newberry Library and The Andrew Mellon Foundation "The Archive: Form, Theory, Practice," Chicago, Illinois, October-December 2019.

Competitively awarded Mellon-funded seminar for doctoral students that instructs and supports in archival research and processing.

PROFESSIONAL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2025-	Women and Theatre Program+: Allied Feminist Coalition, Association for Theatre in Higher Education, Vice-President and Pre-Conference Planner, Elected Position
2025-	Histories of Dance Working Group, Symposium Planning Committee, Appointed Member
2024-	First Book Writing Group in Theatre, Dance, and Performance, Convener
2025	Women and Theatre Program+: Allied Feminist Coalition, Association for Theatre in Higher Education, Mentor for Debut Panel, Appointed Position
2025-	American Society for Theatre Research, Jessica Berson Dance Research Assistance Fund Grant, Award Selection Committee, Appointed Member
2025	<i>Theatre Survey</i> , Peer Reviewer
2024	Women and Theatre Program+: Allied Feminist Coalition, Association for Theatre in Higher Education, Reader for Student Jane Chambers Feminist Playwriting Award, Appointed Position
2023-2025	Women and Theatre Program+: Allied Feminist Coalition, Association for Theatre in Higher Education, Co-Conference Planner, Elected Position
2023-2024	Carol M. Press & Nicholas Tingle Award for Promising Dance Scholar Selection Committee, Appointed Member, University of California, Santa Barbara
2022-2024	Chicago Dance Studies Working Group, Steering Committee, Appointed Member
2022-2023	Mary Poole Undergraduate Theatre Essay Award Committee, Appointed Member, Northwestern University
2022	New Works Lecture by Dr. María Regina Firmino-Castillo (Assistant Professor at University of California, Riverside), Appointed Moderator, Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama, Northwestern University
2021	Research Assistant for Dance Studies Association under supervision of DSA President, Dr. Melissa Blanco Borelli
2020	Decolonizing the Classroom Student Working Group, Member, Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama, Northwestern University
2020	Splash at Northwestern, Appointed Moderator, Northwestern University

Program to provide a university experience for students from low-income high schools in Chicago.

- 2019 Conference Volunteer, *Dancing in Common* Dance Studies Association Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois, August 8-11.
- 2017-2019 Theatre and Dance Department Graduate Student Association Representative, University of California, San Diego

SELECTED DANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY EXPERIENCE

- 2011- Instructor and Choreographer in ballet, pointe, repertoire, dance theatre, composition, and conditioning in community and pre-professional dance instruction settings
- 2014-2017 Leaping Leaders, Manassas, Virginia, Founder and Choreographer
- 2013-2014 First State Ballet Theatre, Wilmington, Delaware, Dancer
- 2013 Terpsicorps Theatre of Dance, Asheville, North Carolina, Dancer
- 2012-2013 North Carolina Dance Theatre, Charlotte, North Carolina, Trainee Dancer and Choreographer
- 2010-2013 Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Dancer and Instructor
- 2010 Dance Theatre of Harlem Pre-Professional Residency, Washington, D.C., Dancer

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- 2024-present Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas
- 2021-present National Women's Studies Association
- 2021-present International Federation for Theatre Research
- 2021-present American Society for Theatre Research
- 2019-present Association for Theatre in Higher Education
- 2018-present American Studies Association
- 2017-present Dance Studies Association
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