

**LEAH THIFFAULT**

Age: 27

Major: French and women's studies

Planned Graduation: December 2009

When Leah Thiffault was 18, “my head was just in dance. It wasn’t in school.” She had started ballet at age 3 and along the way graduated to contemporary jazz and modern, dancing semi-professionally with a Seattle company in high school. Thiffault spent a year at the University of Washington, but found the lure of Los Angeles and the entertainment industry too strong to resist. After six years in Southern California, she landed a job as a dancer on a cruise ship, performing shows while traveling from Alaska to Antarctica. Her career in dance morphed into automobile marketing—“they would hire dancers and actors . . . to be brand ambassadors for various products”—but at that point, Thiffault came to the realization that “intellectually, I was feeling stagnant.” She enrolled in Pasadena City College, earned an associate’s degree, and set her sights on transferring to Wellesley. “I applied here pretty blind,” Thiffault says. “I really didn’t expect to get in once I did a little more research, but I did, and it’s been great.” She tries to take advantage of the multitude of events hosted on campus (“I went and saw [screenwriter] Alan Ball last week”) and dances with the Wellesley College Dancers. “I’ve relearned that I really love to learn and how important it is to have an active mind,” Thiffault says. “In my jobs, that wasn’t really asked of me. To think critically, to look for solutions, just to have a wider awareness of the world—it’s great.”

