

## THEATER & DANCE

The theater and dance courses and programs provide the student with opportunities to enhance artistic and creative talents. Students of performance, dance, direction, playwriting, design, production, and technical theater work directly with theater faculty and professional artists to create excellent theater and dance productions to develop personal skills.

The school's arts requirement of three courses for entering freshmen or two courses for all others may be satisfied by any combination of visual arts, daytime dance, theater, or music courses.

### Theater

The theater department endeavors to spark new interest in those who have never done theater before, to further the development of students who have had some theater background, and to hone the technique and talent of the advanced student of theater. Theater performances offer development opportunities for students not only in acting, singing, dancing, directing, producing, public speaking, and playwriting, but also in technical and leadership positions such as stage management, lighting and sound design, costume, set, lighting, scenic art, carpentry, sound, and stage crews.

In addition to the formal classes listed below, Loomis Chaffee mounts a number of diverse genres of theater and dance productions each year. These include: Fall Play (a drama or a comedy, classic or contemporary); Fall Dance Showcase (works in progress from our fall classes and original student choreography); Winter Musical; Spring Original Student Playwriting Festival and Spring Dance Revue.

Students participating in the fall main-stage productions receive an exemption for the athletics requirement for the fall term. Students cast in the winter musical receive a physical education dance credit.

Theater courses are open to students of all classes, interests, and abilities. To be competitive for admission to acting schools and/or to establish a strong theater resume for liberal arts college applications, a serious student should audition for at least one major and one minor production each year, as well as take at least one theater course each year. Help in planning a theater curriculum can be obtained from the department faculty early in the student's career.

#### **Acting I: Introduction to Acting** (*term course*)

#### **Acting I: Introduction to Acting** (*half course*)

In an effort to enhance confidence in a non-judgmental atmosphere, Introduction to Acting engages its students with highly improvisational theater games and exercises. Over the course of the term or year, students work to discover greater on-stage comfort levels and to decrease stage fright. Typical exercises emphasize movement, speech, creativity, originality, and spontaneity, and prepare students for the more traditional acting theory offered in Fundamentals of Acting. The term course option may be taken as a sixth course.

#### **Acting for the Camera**

##### *half course*

This course prepares the acting student with techniques and skills for performing on camera. Classes will provide opportunities for on-camera acting experience in scripted and improvised scene work, shot framing, and story boarding. Performers looking to learn in-depth about meeting the challenges involved in on-camera acting will appreciate and enjoy this course. The course also exposes students to hands-on experience in technical aspects of the behind-the-camera process in capturing the actor's on-screen performance. This course will help students unlock proven techniques of film making for building their own audition tapes, acting reels, short film, and web-series. Students will take turns acting in scenes and working behind the camera. This course may be taken as a sixth course. Prerequisite: Acting I or permission of the department.

#### **Acting: Improvisation**

##### *term course*

Improvisation class will challenge the acting students to think on their feet while building strong communication and listening skills. Performance improvisation requires the actor to work moment-to-moment establishing settings,

relationships, situations, and conclusions to both comedic and dramatic story telling. The class will also explore masks to improvise through physical story telling. The class will further challenge the acting student to rid themselves of theatrical self-censorship allowing them to make intelligent, informed, and exciting choices for the stage. This course may be taken as a sixth course. Prerequisite: Acting I or permission of the department

### **Acting: Stage Combat**

*term course*

Stage Combat is the illusion of violence for stage or screen. This course is an introduction and exploration of technical and aesthetic aspects of stage combat. The goals are for the students to develop the ability to safely portray violence onstage within the context of a play with specificity and dramatic power as well as to understand how stage combat fits into the practice of theater as a whole. Understanding the techniques of safe and effective performance combat is a primary objective. The students will build a strong foundation of footwork, attacks, and defenses, and explore movement and partnering techniques specifically for stage combat. Other aspects of the class include the development of strength, flexibility, hand/eye coordination, and the understanding and application of principles of safety in working with a partner and in ensemble. This course may be taken as a sixth course. Prerequisite: Acting I or permission of the department

### **Acting II: Fundamentals of Acting**

*half course*

This course emphasizes the philosophical basis and techniques necessary for acting in modern comedy and drama. Students improve their acting, improvisation, and audition skills by studying naturalistic, objective-based, moment-to-moment acting techniques. The class stresses audition pieces, monologues, and scene study from contemporary plays. Viewing of selected film scenes and visits to professional theaters in New York and Connecticut complement the course. This course may be taken as a sixth course. Prerequisite: Introduction to Acting or permission of the department

### **Acting: Shakespeare (GESC)**

*half course*

This course is designed to make Shakespeare accessible to the performer by learning techniques for acting the text while experiencing the delights and challenges of these classic plays, which take place in a multitude of historical times and places. Shakespeare's works have been globally translated into more than 80 languages and have been performed throughout the world in over 70 nations. His plays (comedies, tragedies, and history plays) tell surprising but recognizable tales of human nature, relationships, conflict, love, war, and the human condition. Students will study and perform Shakespeare's plays in a variety of cultural contexts to discover and determine how context affects storytelling in our modern and globalized society. By studying and playing Shakespeare's characters through scene work and individual soliloquies the students will explore the sharing of common stories across cultures. While honing their performance skills the students will develop their communication, critical thinking and problem-solving skills while holding a lens up to current world affairs through Shakespeare's words that offer insight, liberate, inform, and inspire. Prerequisite: Acting I or permission of the department.

### **Masks in Culture and History (GESC)**

*half course*

This theater performance course is designed to explore the cultural significance of masks in societies from around the globe. Students will investigate the role masks play in ritual, celebration, protection, and theater across disparate societies. Students will also discover and uncover the full dramatic potential of the body's movement and gesture when working in a mask. They will relinquish voice and concentrate fully on creating in the present. Mask work helps develop a heightened sense of discovery, awareness of space, a broadened comprehension of body language, and the cross-cultural awareness of the ability of gesture to communicate. While developing the expressive power of movement, stillness and the dramatic attitudes of the mask, students will explore different rhythms in nature: elements, animals, colors, and materials through simplified "honest" gesture and creativity. Students will each create a mask for storytelling to be developed over the course of the year.

### **Technical Theater**

*half course*

This course introduces the fundamentals of technical theater. Students gain experience in the construction of scenery and costumes, the hanging and focusing of lighting instruments, and the operation of computerized lighting and sound control equipment. In addition to participating in evening classes that present concepts and skills, students demonstrate their practical knowledge by crewing Theater & Dance Department productions. Experienced students apply their practical knowledge by serving as designers and stage managers for the student-run shows in the NEO Theater during the spring, and to the creation of their own original work. It is important to note that this class meets for two hours on Monday and Wednesday evenings.

## **Playwriting & Directing**

*half course/juniors and seniors*

For the first half of the year, students read professional ten-minute and full-length plays, and write several short plays. During the second half of the year, the students of this course learn the fundamentals of stage directing, stage management, and theatrical leadership on their way toward directing one play from each of the class' writers. The course culminates with the Norris Ely Orchard Theater's Students Original Playwriting & Directing Festival.

## **Public Speaking & Argumentation**

*half course*

In an increasingly competitive world, the ability to express oneself and speak in public with clarity, persuasiveness, and even elegance is a critically important skill. Of related and equal importance is the ability to readily analyze, develop, and defend a sound and persuasive argument. This course is designed to develop students' confidence and competence to speak in public and argue persuasively and logically. Students hone their speaking skills using a variety of traditional speech events and exercises including oral interpretation of literature, the persuasive delivery of famous speeches, impromptu and extemporaneous speaking exercises, persuasive original speeches and "after dinner" speaking designed to entertain as well as to inform. The course also introduces traditional forms of debate: both extemporaneous and prepared.

## **Independent Studies in Theater**

*term course*

Loomis Chaffee Theater Department encourages the development of an Independent Study Project in theater. The student must arrange for a member of the theater faculty to be the project advisor, **submit a written proposal**, and obtain approval from the academic advisor and the dean of faculty.

# Dance

A variety of dance classes are offered, both during the day and after school. Some classes offer performance opportunities. Daytime dance half courses fulfill an arts credit. After-school dance classes fulfill the physical education requirement. All dance classes may be repeated for credit or for meeting physical education requirements. Please see physical education dance class descriptions on pages 57.

## **FALL**

### **DAYTIME DANCE** (All half courses)

**Art of Dance**  
**Dance Performance Ensemble**  
**Choreography and Composition**

### **AFTER-SCHOOL DANCE**

**Dance Company** (*yearlong*)  
**Ballet Technique** (*term course*)

## **WINTER**

**Art of Dance**  
**Dance Performance Ensemble**  
**Choreography and Composition**

**Dance Company** (*yearlong*)  
**Hip Hop** (*term course*)

## **SPRING**

**Art of Dance**  
**Dance Performance Ensemble**  
**Choreography and Composition**

**Dance Company** (*yearlong*)  
**Jazz Dance Techniques** (*term course*)

### **Art of Dance**

*daytime/half course*

This course introduces students to dance by engaging with the multiple purposes of the art form through hands-on experiences, by exploring the history and current state of dance as a form of creative expression and social and cultural practice. Students will learn about ballet, modern, and jazz dance through technique classes, readings, discussions, videos, written responses, and collaborative projects. By examining dance in both global and local contexts, we will move towards a fuller appreciation and understanding of the influence of dance in our everyday lives as well as an embodied reflection and expression of the world in which we live. This half-course is open to all students, with no previous dance experience necessary.

### **Dance Performance Ensemble**

*daytime/half course*

This course is for students with intermediate to advanced dance experience and is taken concurrently with Art of Dance as a co-requisite (Art of Dance together with Dance Performance Ensemble equates to the previous Dance Company I

class). Dance Performance Ensemble applies the skills and insight developed in the Art of Dance course to stage performance. Performance Ensemble students will learn choreography for performance in Fall Dance Showcase, MLK Day, and Spring Dance Revue. Students will also work collaboratively with the instructor and each other to research and explore the themes of each piece of choreography. Students who wish to audition for Dance Company (after school, fulfills physical education requirement), are strongly encouraged to first enroll in Art of Dance and Dance Performance Ensemble (half-courses). Prerequisite: at least two terms of Loomis Chaffee dance classes or at least two years of recent previous dance training; Co-requisite: Art of Dance; placement determined by instructor

### **Making Dance: Choreography and Composition**

*daytime/half course*

In this course students will explore and examine the history, theories, and methods of discovering, creating, and crafting dance movement. By learning to manipulate the variables of space, time, energy, rhythm, form, style, and dynamics, students will learn to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through their own unique, creative, original work. Course work includes the study of the history of dance, the work of a variety of choreographers and their different styles, physical improvisation and movement creation, solo and/or group choreography, discussion, feedback, journaling, and research. Select students will have the opportunity to preview their works-in-progress in the Fall Dance Showcase and to present finished pieces in the annual Spring Dance Revue. Please note: this course welcomes a range of experience levels from novice to advanced dance practitioners as this is a composition rather than a technique class.