

Arts: Theatre & Dance

The Arts curriculum balances performance and practice with careful academic study and analysis. Whether in Music, Theatre & Dance, or Visual Arts, students are challenged to use their intellectual, emotional, and physical intelligence to create meaningful work, exhibitions, and performances. Instructors encourage students to take the risks necessary to explore, create, and grow as artists, while providing them with a framework for understanding how their endeavors relate to the larger artistic world. The Horace Mann Department of Theatre and Dance is committed to instructing students in beneficial habits of mind, body, and spirit. We encourage collaborative skills, and foster patience, kindness, humor, and empathy as valued tools for living a full and happy life.

Graduation Requirement:

For the class of 2026, a total of two credits in grades 9 through 12. All students must take at least one half credit in studio/performance, and at least one half credit in appreciation in any arts discipline.

For all other classes, a total of one-and-a-half-credits in grades 9 through 12, minimum. All students must take at least one half credit in studio/performance, and at least one half credit in appreciation. See half- credit requirement on page 4.

Theatre & Dance (ARTD) Courses Offered in 2025-26

200-level

- Theatre Ensemble Foundations (ARTD 205)
- Stagecraft in School - Period H Crew (ARTD 211)
- Dance Workshop (ARTD 212 /PHED 212)
- Introduction to Design & Technical Theatre (ARTD 215)
- Playwriting and Production (ARTD 220)
- Dance in Historical and Cultural Perspective (ARTD 230)
- History of American Musical Theatre (ARTD 231)
- Performance in Major Theatre & Dance Productions (1/3 credit)
- Stagecraft Afterschool (1/3 credit)

300-level

- Dance Performance (ARTD 313 / PHED 313)

400-level

- Musical Theatre Performance (ARTD 410)
- Applied Design & Technical Theatre (ARTD 412)

Courses Not Offered in 2025-26:

- Acting for the Camera (ARTD 310)
- Acting Technique (ARTD 320)
- Theatre Ensemble Seminar (ARTD 411)

200-level courses:

ARTD 205 - Theatre Ensemble Foundations

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: None

Studio/Performance credit

This course is designed for students to rehearse, produce, and perform a play. Theatre Ensemble Foundations (TEF) is the entry point to courses of study in Theatre Performance. In TEF, students will produce two plays over the course of the year, one per semester. In the pursuit of play production, students will engage in Acting, Script Analysis, Movement, Voice and Speech, and any other skills that might be specific to each production including: Dialect, Stage Combat, Puppetry, Character Study, etc. Students are required to attend all HM UD school productions and one off-campus field trip. After completing this course, students are eligible to take Acting Technique, Theatre Ensemble Seminar, and Acting for the Camera.

ARTD 211 - Stagecraft in School - Period H Crew

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle Prerequisites: None

Studio/Performance credit

This is a full-year, half-credit course which meets during a regularly scheduled period during the school day. Students learn how to safely use tools in the construction of set pieces, how to hang, focus, and circuit lights, and a variety of other skills related to theatrical scenic technology. Students in this course are not required to attend after-school classes and are not expected to run the backstage activities for the season's productions.

ARTD 212 - Dance Workshop for Arts Credit

PHED 212 - Dance Workshop for PE Credit

Half credit, Meets five days in every ten-day cycle Prerequisites: None

Studio/Performance credit or PE credit

Students taking this class for PE credit can be excused for one-third of the academic year in order to take Health 1 or Health 2, or play on a school athletic team.

Dance Workshop emphasizes the development of a strong technical base in American classical forms including Ballet, Modern, Jazz, Tap and Hip Hop, as well as Pilates and/or Yoga, and World Dance influences. Training includes warm-ups, improvisation, stretching exercises, and traveling combinations. Rhythmic awareness and the relationship between music and dance will be emphasized throughout.

Dance is a performing art and as such, there is the potential to share our work with the greater Horace Mann community throughout the year. Performance and/or participation in the annual Winter Dance Concert and two dress rehearsals is required. Students are also required to attend one off-campus field trip. Additional assignments to encounter live dance of students' choice and on their own time may also be a part of this course.

ARTD 215 - Introduction to Design & Technical Theatre

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: None

Studio/Performance credit

This course introduces students to the tools and techniques necessary to the process of designing for the theatre. Students explore how design choices are used as a storytelling mechanism, and how the design process will apply to creative endeavors within the theatre, such as plays, musicals, dance or opera. Students work in a variety of media as they explore scenic, lighting and costume design for the theatre. Students will also use the skills they learn throughout the year to assist in the building and execution of HM productions. Skills and tools include: safety training on the different tools and materials used in constructing scenery, knowledge of lighting instruments and basic instruction on creating and executing a lighting plot, knowledge and techniques of using a counterweight rigging system, drafting of technical plans and elevations, scale model making, sketching and rendering. Emphasis is placed on the clear communication of the student's design ideas and their personal interpretation of theatrical texts. Completion of the course allows students to be eligible to design for the Theatre and Dance production season. Students are required to attend all HM school productions in order to engage in constructive conversations regarding design choices and execution. Students are also required to attend one off-campus field trip.

ARTD 220 - Playwriting and Production

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: Submission of a short scene and approval of the instructor

Studio/Performance credit

Playwriting students begin reading plays by influential playwrights, to learn to understand and analyze great writing. Scene writing and guided exercises provide the basis for experimenting with elements of structure, character, rhythm, and style. The group collaborates to learn about drafting through performing each other's work, followed by revising and rewriting. All class members are expected to act in readings and participate in lively discussions on writing techniques. Attending performances outside of Horace Mann and all HM productions is a requirement of the course. The final project is the writing of a one-act play that may be submitted to the One-Act Play Festival. While selected plays are produced every other year in this festival, the course culminates annually in staged readings of each writer's work.

ARTD 230 - Dance in Historical and Cultural Perspective

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: None

Appreciation credit

This course looks at dancing as it exists in a variety of world cultures, including our own, as social activity, an expression of religious beliefs, popular entertainment, and high art. Through a combination of visual materials, readings, discussion, and in-class essays, the students ask and answer such questions as: "What is dancing?", "Why do we dance?", "Why are there enemies of dance?", "Where does choreography come from?", and "How has dance evolved over the course of history?" In addition to the class work, there are sessions in the dance studio where we try out what we've been studying, from social dances of various eras to ballet, modern dance, jazz, and even recent film choreography. Quizzes and homework assignments complement the classwork and studio sessions. Students are also required to attend one off-campus field trip.

ARTD 231 - History of American Musical Theatre

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: None

Appreciation credit

Examining Musical Theatre as a commercial product, an agent for cultural change, and as a chronicle of our times, this course is a historical survey of the American Musical. We look at the musical's development from its origins in burlesque, light opera, and vaudeville; to its contemporary form, with a focus on the changing views of audiences and in the context of American and world culture. Students are required to attend all HM musical productions and one off-campus field trip.

ARTD 201 - Performance in Major Theatre & Dance Productions

One-third credit, meets Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays after school until 5:45 pm

Prerequisites: Auditions

Studio/Performance credit

Three fully-staged productions of world theatre and dance are undertaken each year. Through them, students explore the art of theatre in all of its complexity. Actors learn style, interpretive skills, movement, voice and speech, and gain experience in making commitments and meeting deadlines. The goal of the Horace Mann Dance Department is to inspire and guide students in all elements of dance, choreography, and performance skills. The Dance Concert consists of faculty- and student-generated choreography, providing dancers with an optimum rehearsal and performance experience.

ARTD 202 - Stagecraft Afterschool

One-third credit, meets Tuesdays and Thursdays after school until 5:45pm

Prerequisites: None

Studio/Performance credit

Four fully-staged productions are undertaken each year. Through them, students explore the art of theatre in all of its complexity. Students learn technical skills such as carpentry, painting, sound engineering, and theatrical lighting, and gain experience in making commitments and meeting deadlines. To take this course, the student must attend crew on one of the first three crew days in a quarter and commit to the Technical Crew for that quarter. The faculty will register the members of the class at the end of the second week of meetings. Students in this course have the opportunity to run the backstage activities for the season's productions.

300-level courses:

ARTD 313 - Dance Performance for Arts Credit

PHED 313 - Dance Performance for PE Credit

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: Approval of the instructor

Studio/Performance half credit or PE credit

Participation in after-school sports or Health class does not exempt students from Dance Performance.

This course builds upon the foundations established in Dance Workshop and finally places the emphasis on performance. The course culminates in multiple presentations throughout the year. Performance in the annual Winter Dance Concert *and two dress rehearsals* is mandatory. Students are also required to attend one off-campus field trip.

400-level courses:

ARTD 410 - Musical Theatre Performance

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: At least one credit (two half credits) in any combination of Acting Technique, Dance Workshop, Dance Performance, Glee Club, Concert Glee Club, Treble Choir, or successful participation in at least two HM Upper Division theatrical productions, and departmental approval.

Auditions for this class will be held in the Spring for the following Fall.

Grades 11-12

Studio/Performance credit

Through individualized instruction and small group work, students identify areas of artistic growth and work with their instructors to select and learn material from the musical theatre. Students have time in class to prepare and perform their pieces in a studio setting. In this course, students approach the works of the musical theatre from the perspective of both actors and musicians. Students work together and independently to create a book of repertoire that is representative of the world of Musical Theatre, their personality, and skill set. Performances showcasing this work are open to the greater school community. Students are also required to attend one off-campus field trip.

ARTD 412- Applied Design & Technical Theatre

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: Intro to Design and Technical Theatre (ARTD 312), and departmental approval.

Studio/Performance credit

This class is a continuation of concepts studied in Intro to Design and Technical Theatre. Students work on further refining their skills in drafting, model making, color rendering and textual analysis. This course allows for more in-depth discussions of design production and text. We will also build a portfolio of work that carries them beyond their time at HM. Students have the opportunity to collaborate with the faculty directors and choreographers to develop scenic, lighting, sound, and costume designs for Horace Mann theatre and dance productions. They will also use their skills to assist in executing their designs. For productions in which their designs are being implemented, they may be asked to attend after school crew or technical rehearsals. Students are required to attend all HM Productions in order to engage in constructive conversations regarding design choices and execution. Students are also required to attend one off-campus field trip.

Courses Not Offered in 2025-26:

ARTD 310 - Acting for the Camera

[Course not offered 2025-26]

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: Theatre Ensemble Foundations (ARTD 205), Acting (ARTD 210), or performance credit in at least two HM Upper Division productions

Studio/Performance credit

This course provides practical instruction for acting on camera and navigating a film set. The fundamental techniques covered in Acting for the Camera are applied to performances in a variety of formats, including film, commercials, and television. Actors experiment with a range of styles and genres using both original and produced text. Throughout the year, students in Acting for the Camera may collaborate with students taking Filmmaking to create unique on-screen moments. The class watches and discusses a wide variety of on-screen performances and applies observations to their own craft. On-camera performances are shared with the larger Horace Mann community at least once a semester as a course requirement.

ARTD 320 - Acting Technique

[Course not offered 2025-26]

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: Theatre Ensemble Foundations or performance credit in at least two HM Upper Division productions

Studio/Performance credit

This class is for students who are interested in the history and fundamentals of acting. Skills covered include physical behavior, stage movement, voice and speech, character development, improvisation, and historical or period drama. Using the work of contemporary and classical playwrights, students begin to develop their own technique. We open our studio to the school community for in-class performances at least once per semester. Students are required to attend all HM school productions and one off-campus field trip. Students who take this course are prepared for Theatre Ensemble Seminar, Acting for the Camera, and Musical Theatre Performance.

ARTD 411- Theatre Ensemble Seminar

[Course not offered 2025-26]

Half credit, meets five days in every ten-day cycle

Prerequisites: Departmental approval; priority is given to students who have previously been in two HM Upper Division productions or taken one or more classes within the Theatre and Dance Department.

Studio/Performance credit

Theatre Ensemble Seminar is for curious and motivated students looking to broaden their theatrical studies. Units of study include advanced performance styles, directing, playwriting, devised theatre and more. The course emphasizes play production. Over the course of each semester students will work together to produce a performance to be shared with the school community. In the first semester students will work to produce a published play. The second semester will focus on an original piece that will be devised within the class. Students are required to attend all HM school productions and one off-campus field trip.