Course Descriptions

Fine Arts Department

The Houston High School Fine Arts Department- where creativity thrives and every student is part of a family. From the stage to the studio, we celebrate talent, passion, and collaboration, offering opportunities for students to express themselves and grow together. Explore the heart of HHS, where the arts bring us closer finding our horsepower.

Course Offerings in Fine Arts

Students are required to earn a minimum of one (1) Fine Art credit for graduation; however, students may follow course sequences to fulfill an area of focus in Fine Arts.

Fine Arts Course Sequences

General Courses			
Art I Introduction to Film Art History AP		Theater Arts I: Introduction Mixed Choir Introduction to Music DE ONLINE	
Visual Arts Program Sequence			
Level I	**Level II**	**Level III**	**Level IV**
Art I Honors	*Choose one or two:* Mixed Media Studio Honors Painting and Drawing Studio Honors Illustration and Narrative Art Honors Art History AP	*Choose one or two:* Mixed Media Studio Honors Painting and Drawing Studio Honors Illustration and Narrative Art Honors Art History AP	Studio Art: Drawing AP
Theatre Arts Program Sequence			
Level I	**Level II**	**Level III**	**Level IV**
Theatre Arts I Honors: Beginning Acting*	Theatre Arts II Honors: Scene Study*	Theatre Arts III Honors: Advanced Acting	Theatre Arts IV DE: Advanced Production Theatre Arts V DE: Advanced Production
Vocal Music Program Sequence			
Level I	**Level II**	**Level III**	**Level IV**
Mixed Choir	Treble Choir Honors* Concert Choir Honors*	Theory & Harmony Honors	Music Theory AP Introduction to Music DE ONLINE
Instrumental Music Program Sequence			
Level I	**Level II**	**Level III**	**Level IV**
Instrumental Music Honors	Varsity Band Honors* Color Guard Honors* Improvisation Honors*	Theory & Harmony Honors Jazz Band Honors*	Music Theory AP Introduction to Music DE ONLINE
Chamber Orchestra Honors	Orchestra Honors* Symphony Orchestra Honors*	Theory & Harmony Honors	Music Theory AP Introduction to Music DE ONLINE
In years 2, 3, & 4, students may repeat level one courses for additional credit and for completion of a fine arts area of focus.			

Course Offerings in Fine Arts: Visual Arts

Art I

Art I is designed as an introductory course for students seeking to satisfy the Fine Arts graduation requirement or who may not yet sure of how extensively they wish to pursue the study of art. Designed to give students a basic understanding and appreciation for art principles and practices, Art I emphasizes basic skills-development and creative problem solving. Students enrolled in Art I are exposed to foundational theories and practices necessary to better appreciate visual art. Additionally, students will participate in hands-on activities to formulate and develop creative approaches to art making. The Art I curriculum requires the application of a variety of techniques and processes in multiple media to create successful works of art. Over the span of the course, students will take part in experiences meant to help develop technical ability, creative problem-solving skills, observational sensitivity, and visual/spatial awareness. In addition, students will discover how historical concepts, enduring themes, and societal issues both inspire and motivate artists. Students at all levels of talent and ability can expect successful outcomes and a better understanding and appreciation for art.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: None; $25 Studio Fee and associated supplies required	

Art I Honors

Art I Honors is an advanced, introductory-level course designed for those serious about the study of art as a main priority in high school. Students enrolled in this course should have the intention of maintaining an intentional visual arts focus on developing their potential for placement in an Advanced Placement art course their senior year. This course focuses primarily on two-dimensional processes with an emphasis on developing a greater understanding of art, its theory, and practices. Curriculum involves the application of elements and principles of design, development of observational drawing skills and creative problem-solving abilities, exposure to new media and techniques, and overall personal growth. Designed to be the first course of several for young art students at HHS, Art I Honors is reserved for the truly talented artist who demonstrates a real commitment to creating, learning, and growing in the craft. Hardworking and self-motivated students can expect to achieve the greatest amount of success.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-10
Prerequisite: Portfolio review and Teacher recommendation required prior to enrollment (transfer students undergo portfolio review prior to placement); Estimated materials cost of $100; Memo of understanding	

Mixed Media Studio Honors

Mixed Media Studio Honors is intended to offer advanced art students the opportunity for in-depth exploration of art forms in multiple media such as - but not limited to - print and paper making, fibers and textiles as well as a variety of three-dimensional materials and techniques to create individual works of art. Students will be involved in the development of work making use of these media either individually or in combination. The course covers the vocabulary, materials, media, and processes of chosen art forms as well as the design elements used. Students will be encouraged to refine skills while also developing their artistic styles following and breaking from traditional conventions. Study may also include exposure to major artists, artistic movements, and styles to support interested art students in expanding their experience in multiple artistic disciplines. A course designed for advanced art students interested in a more expansive experience, which additionally focuses on introducing students to thematic portfolio development as a preparation for the Studio Art: Drawing AP course during the senior year. Mixed Media Studio Honors may be taken in conjunction with Painting and Drawing Studio Honors or Studio Art: Drawing AP.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 10-12
Prerequisite: Completion of Art I Honors; Portfolio review and Teacher recommendation required prior to enrollment (transfer students undergo portfolio review prior to placement); Estimated materials cost of $100; Memo of understanding	

Painting and Drawing Studio Honors

Painting & Drawing Studio Honors is intended to offer advanced art students the opportunity for in-depth explorations of a variety of painting & drawing techniques and media (such as watercolor, tempera, oils, acrylics, pen-and-ink, pastel, chalks) emphasizing observation and interpretation of the visual environment, life drawing, and imaginative painting. The course includes instruction on the vocabulary, materials, media, and processes of painting and drawing as well as the application of the elements of art and principles of design, along with a study of art and artists from a worldwide perspective, and instruction in the critique process. Advanced courses may encourage students to refine their creative processes and develop their own artistic styles following and breaking from traditional conventions. Study may also include exposure to major artists, artistic movements, and styles to support interested art students in expanding their experience in these artistic disciplines. A course designed for advanced art students interested in a more expansive experience, which additionally focuses on introducing students to thematic portfolio development as a preparation for the Studio Art: Drawing AP course during the senior year. Painting & Drawing Studio Honors may be taken in conjunction with Mixed Media Studio Honors or Studio Art: Drawing AP.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 10-12
Prerequisite: Completion of Art I Honors; Portfolio review and Teacher recommendation required prior to enrollment (transfer students undergo portfolio review prior to placement); Estimated materials cost of $100; Memo of understanding	

Illustration and Narrative Art Honors

Illustration and Narrative Art Honors is a performance course concentrating on the processes, history, and media used in illustration, narrative, and sequential (comics) arts. Students will engage in projects that incorporate the working process to develop original ideas and concepts which convey messages, stories, and themes used in commercial art and pictorial storytelling ranging from product and client endorsements such as poster design, book illustration, and the creation of comics, animation, and graphic novels. This is a multimedia class, and students will use a wide variety of mediums and materials to create their work for each individual assignment. Illustration and Narrative Art Honors may be taken in conjunction with any advanced studio or Studio Art: Drawing AP.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 10-12
Prerequisite: Completion of Art I Honors; Portfolio review and Teacher recommendation required prior to enrollment (transfer students undergo portfolio review prior to placement); Estimated materials cost of $100; Memo of understanding	

Art History AP- *EPSO*

Art History AP is a college-level course on the development of art across the world from prehistory to the present. Students will study not only Western art but art from Asia, the pre-Columbian Americas, Africa and Australia. Art History AP emphasizes painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture, as well as other media primitive to these regions. The course also requires students to read the art textbook, historical documents, both primary and secondary, and to write and speak about them in a scholarly fashion. This component of the course requires students to understand in-depth the historical form, function, content, and context of the art object. There is a fee associated with this course. A final qualifying examination is required, and all students enrolled in the course must pay the fee for this examination. Receiving a certain score on the Advanced Placement exam may earn the student college credit. This course may be used to satisfy the required Fine Arts credit for graduation.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 10-12
Prerequisite: Materials cost associated; Memo of understanding	

Studio Art: Drawing AP- *EPSO*

Studio Art: Drawing AP is an Advanced Placement Art course intended to parallel typical, introductory, college-level studio classes. Students work throughout the course to create an extensive portfolio of work. This course is intended to address three main concerns: (1) a sense of quality in a student's work; (2) the student's concentration on a particular visual interest or problem; and (3) the student's need for breadth that presents formal, technical, and expressive innovations. AP art students at HHS have been groomed over three years prior to their enrollment and represent an elite group of talented, motivated, and passionate young art students. Only the most devoted AP art students can expect success, as outside-class work is an integral component of the course and will be assigned and reviewed weekly. A final qualifying examination is required, and all students enrolled in the course must pay the fee for this examination. Receiving a certain score on the Advanced Placement exam may earn the student college credit. Registration for AP courses is a final decision. Students will supply many of their own materials; however, there is an estimated class fee of $40.00 and an additional required AP exam fee. Summer work is assigned and required of all enrolled.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 12
Prerequisite: Completion of at least one Studio Honors course; Portfolio review and Teacher recommendation required prior to enrollment (transfer students undergo portfolio review prior to placement); Materials cost associated $35; Memo of understanding; AP Exam fee; Submission of AP Portfolio	

Course Offerings in Fine Arts: Instrumental and Vocal Music

Instrumental Music Honors

Instrumental Music Honors is a performance course designed to build the musical skills needed for Varsity Band Honors. Students will improve technique, tone, and ensemble performance while learning music theory fundamentals. Select performances and occasional after-school rehearsals may be required. Successful completion prepares students for placement in Varsity Band Honors.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: Memo of understanding; course may be repeated	
Special Note: Students must enroll in Varsity Band Honors in the spring semester.	

Varsity Band Honors

Varsity Band Honors, also referred to as Concert Band, is a performance class dealing with marching as well as concert music and includes theory and music appreciation. The group performs at football games, parades and various concert performances throughout the year. Varsity Band and Concert Band competitions are included in the curriculum as well as solo and ensemble participation. Members of regional and all-state groups are selected from this group. After-school practices for all phases of the program are decided according to need.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding; course may be repeated	
Special Note: Students must enroll in Varsity Band Honors in the fall and spring semesters. Color Guard will enroll in Varsity Band Honors in the fall and Color Guard Honors in the spring.	

Color Guard Honors

Color Guard Honors is a performance-based course that develops students' movement, coordination, and visual performance skills through dance, choreography, and the use of flags, rifles, etc. Students work collaboratively as an ensemble to interpret music, refine technique, and demonstrate discipline, teamwork, and performance etiquette through rehearsals and school or community performances.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12

Prerequisite: Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding; course may be repeated
Special Note: Students must enroll in Varsity Band Honors in the fall and Color Guard Honors in the spring.

Improvisation Honors

Our jazz combos (part of our "Silver Note Collective" jazz programming) meet in the fall semester during school. Improvisation Honors is a course for experienced instrumental students to learn the fundamentals of our nation's first original genre of music. They will learn the language of jazz within the context of a small "combo" setting. This course is primarily for students who play saxophone, trumpet, trombone, or a rhythm section instrument (piano, guitar, bass, drum kit), but any student can audition. This **fall-only** course is audition-based. For information on who to reach out to for auditions, see https://www.thehoustonband.com/join

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding; course may be repeated	
Special Note: Students may also enroll in Jazz Band Honors in the spring, but it is not required.	

Jazz Band Honors

The Jazz Band (also known as the "Silver Note Collective") is a course for experienced instrumental students to learn the fundamentals of our nation's first original genre of music within the context of a traditional "big band" setting. This course is for students who play saxophone, trumpet, trombone, or a rhythm section instrument (piano, guitar, bass, drum kit). This **spring-only** course is only open to students who audition into it. For information on who to reach out to for auditions, see https://www.thehoustonband.com/join

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding; course may be repeated	
Special Note: Students may also enroll in Improvisation Honors in the fall, but it is not required.	

Chamber Orchestra Honors

Chamber Orchestra Honors is open to 9th grade students who desire to learn how to play a string instrument or for students with limited performing experience. No audition is necessary for this class. However, it is a performance-based class with regular school concerts scheduled during the year. Students must have an instrument and necessary accessories, i.e. shoulder rest, endpin stop, etc.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9th ONLY
Prerequisite: Prior string music instruction strongly encouraged, course may be repeated	
Special Note: Students must enroll in Chamber Orchestra Honors in the fall and spring semesters. Select students will move to Orchestra Honors in the spring.	

Orchestra Honors

Orchestra Honors is a performance-based class. This course offers performance opportunities for more experienced string players. Students will continue to refine sight-reading skills and performance techniques. Occasional public performances will be required in addition to regularly scheduled school concerts. Students in this course must pass an audition prior to enrollment.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 10-12
Prerequisite: Audition; Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding; course may be repeated	

Special Note: Students must enroll in Orchestra Honors in the fall and spring semesters.

Symphony Orchestra Honors

Symphony Orchestra Honors is an advanced performance ensemble for upperclassmen requiring 2 formal concerts and between 4 & 6 outreach concerts every year. Concerts and repertoire expose students to a variety of orchestral literature from the Classical through Contemporary periods, including operatic, popular, and film music. Participation in the Symphony Orchestra broadens students' skills and experience in performing, understanding, and appreciating great music.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 10-12
Prerequisite: Audition; Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding; course may be repeated	
Special Note: Students must enroll in Symphony Orchestra Honors in the fall and spring semesters.	

Mixed Choir

Mixed Choir is designed for students with beginner to intermediate experience in choral singing. Mixed Choir focuses on building a strong foundation in vocal technique, music literacy, and ensemble skills. Students will perform a variety of choral repertoire and learn the fundamentals of singing in a group setting. No audition and previous choir experience is required—just a willingness to learn and grow through music! Students will perform in school concerts and events throughout the year. A course fee and the purchase of performance apparel is required.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: None	
Special Note: Students must enroll in Mixed Choir in the fall and spring semesters.	

Treble Choir Honors

Treble Choir Honors is a select ensemble for treble voices (sopranos and altos) looking to expand their vocal skills in an ensemble setting. This intermediate-level course develops tone quality, blend, sight-reading, and part independence through diverse and challenging repertoire. Students are expected to demonstrate growing musicianship and a commitment to rehearsals and performances. Auditions are required for enrollment. A course fee and the purchase of performance apparel is required.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: Audition; prior ensemble experience; Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding; course may be repeated	
Special Note: Students must enroll in Choir Treble Honors in the fall and spring semesters.	

Concert Choir Honors

Concert Choir Honors is the most advanced choral ensemble designed for experienced singers repertoire and perform at concerts, community events, festivals, and competitions. Students are expected to demonstrate growing musicianship and a commitment to rehearsals and performances. Auditions are required for enrollment along with a commitment to regular practice. Students are also required to participate in All Southwest Honor Choir auditions. A course fee and the purchase of performance apparel are also required.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: Audition; prior ensemble experience; Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding; course may be repeated	
Special Note: Students must enroll in Concert Choir Honors in the fall and spring semesters.	

Theory & Harmony Honors

Theory & Harmony Honors provides students experiences with the fundamentals of music including composition, arranging, analysis, aural development, and sight reading. This course is an excellent introduction for students who may wish to enroll in Music Theory AP but may desire a broader foundation of experience prior.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 10-12
Prerequisite: Completion of or concurrent enrollment in one of the performance-based ensembles; Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding	

Music Theory AP - *EPSO*

In the HHS Music Theory AP course, students will be required to read, notate, compose, perform, and listen to music. The development of aural skills is a primary objective of the Music Theory AP course. Throughout the course, students will listen to musical works attentively and analytically, developing their "musical memory" and their ability to articulate responses to formal, stylistic, and aesthetic qualities of the works. Performance, using singing, keyboard, and students' primary performance media, should also be a part of the learning process. Although sight-singing is the only performance skill that is directly tested by the examination, training in all these areas will develop the aural skills that are tested. Once again, fluency and quickness with basic materials are essential. The student's ability to read and write musical notation is fundamental to such a course. It is also assumed that the student has acquired at least basic performance skills in voice or on an instrument. A final qualifying examination is required, and all students enrolled in the course must pay the fee for this examination. Receiving a qualifying score on the Advanced Placement exam may earn the student college credit. Students will be asked to take a placement test in the fall to help determine appropriate placement in Music Theory AP or Introduction to Music DE ONLINE.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 11-12
Prerequisite: Completion of Theory & Harmony Honors and/or Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding; AP Exam fees; Completion of AP exam	

Additional offering: Introduction to Music DE ONLINE - *EPSO*

Introduction to Music DE ONLINE focuses on music of various Western and non-Western cultures and historical periods, including the creative process, the formal elements of music, and musical styles, genres, and media. This course may be used to satisfy the required Fine Arts credit for graduation.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 11-12
Prerequisite: Admission to UofM; ACT composite 19+; 100 admissions index score; DE agreement	
Dual Enrollment Credit: Upon successful completion of the course, 3 hours of college credit (MUS1030) will be awarded by the University of Memphis.	

***Introduction to Music DE ONLINE includes online instruction from faculty at the University of Memphis. The course is not a self-paced, asynchronous course, and students are required to meet expectations for performance and reach pacing milestones set forth by UofM and HHS.*

Course Offerings in Fine Arts: Theatre and Production

Introduction to Film

Introduction to Film explores the art of filmmaking and the techniques directors use to bring stories to life on screen. Students will study elements such as lighting, camera angles, sound, editing, and visual composition to understand how each choice shapes emotion, meaning, and audience experience. Through film viewing, discussion, and creative projects, students will develop foundational film literacy and gain insight into how movies communicate beyond the script. This course may be used to satisfy the required Fine Arts credit for graduation.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: None	

Theatre Arts I: Introduction

Theatre Arts I: Introduction offers the student a broad overview of the theatre world, with particular attention paid to theatre production, theatre history, technical theatre, and the overlap of the storytelling arts, including film, television, and other media sources. Emphasis is on appreciation and criticism rather than performance. Topics include the kinds of opportunities that exist in the world of theatre and related media styles: critics, directors, actors, and design (scenic costume, lighting, and sound). Students will learn how to work productively in groups, how to manage a project, and how to think creatively. Students are required to attend two productions at Houston High School. This course is designed for the student who needs a general fine art credit.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: None	

Theatre Arts I Honors: Beginning Acting

Theatre Arts I Honors: Beginning Acting offers the student a broad overview of the theatre world, with particular attention paid to theatre production, theatre history, technical theatre and the overlap of the storytelling arts, including film, television, and other media sources. Course programming is tailored to the student with a deep appreciation for and who anticipates participation in the HHS Theatre program. Topics include the kinds of opportunities that exist in the world of theatre and related media styles: critics, directors, actors, and design (scenic, costume, lighting, and sound). The honors students will spend additional time researching specific theories of directing, acting, and criticism. Honors students will be required to see and critique one play per quarter and encouraged to volunteer on the two major Houston High productions.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 9-10
Prerequisite: Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding	

Theatre Arts II Honors: Scene Study

Theatre Arts II Honors: Scene Study is designed for the performance-oriented student; however, students interested in technical theatre will find an excellent experience to support their growth. It examines practical and theoretical approaches to performance including improvisational acting, acting styles, acting methodology, movement, voice and scene study. Playwriting and elementary directing techniques are included in this course of study. Students are expected to critique live theatrical presentations at Houston High School. Students will also participate in two class recitals per year. Honors students are also expected to audition for the major Houston theatre productions, keep a daily performance journal, and complete one research project per quarter on a different theatre professional (or another topic as allowed by the instructor).

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 10-12
Prerequisite: Teacher recommendation and/or completion of Theatre Arts I Honors: Beginning Acting.	

Theatre Arts III Honors: Advanced Acting

Theatre Arts III Honors: Advanced continues the study of the performance arts. It will be used to prepare students' college scholarship auditions and various competitions in the Memphis area. Honors students might give special attention to period styles and performance. One research project will be completed per quarter reflecting learning about different career paths in the media arts. Honors students are required to participate in both major Houston High School theatre productions.

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 11-12
Prerequisite: Completion of Theatre Arts II Honors: Scene Study; Teacher recommendation; Memo of understanding	
Special Note: Students must enroll in Theatre Arts IV DE: Advanced Production *OR* Theatre Arts V DE: Advanced Production in the spring semester, if UofM admission requirements are met.	

Theatre Arts IV DE: Advanced Production - *EPSO*

Theatre Arts IV DE: Advanced Production provides a workshop setting for students who desire to learn advanced techniques and gain practical experience in all production phases of theatre. This course is strictly performance oriented. An individual course of study is prepared for each student with an emphasis on writing, directing, or design (scenic, costume, sound, or lights). Students enrolled in this course are required to participate in Houston High School major productions. Theatre Arts IV DE: Advanced Production and Theatre Arts V DE: Advanced Production are companion courses, but it is not required to take both. UofM Course: THEA 1030

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 11-12
Prerequisite: Completion of Theatre Arts III Honors: Advanced Acting; Teacher recommendation; admission to UofM; ACT composite 19+; 100 admissions index score; DE agreement.	

Theatre Arts V DE: Advanced Production - *EPSO*

Theatre Arts V DE: Advanced Production serves as the second course in the Advanced Production course sequence and provides a workshop-style setting for students seeking to develop advanced techniques and gain hands-on experience. The course is strictly performance-oriented, with each student following an individualized course of study emphasizing writing, directing, or design (scenic, costume, sound, or lighting). Students enrolled in this course are required to participate in Houston High School major productions. UofM Course: THEA 2511

Credits: 1.0	Grade Level: 11-12
Prerequisite: Completion of Theatre Arts IV DE: Advanced Production; Teacher recommendation; admission to UofM; ACT composite 19+; 100 admissions index score; DE agreement.	