



## **MS 307 MUSIC AND POLITICS**

IES Abroad Vienna

**DESCRIPTION:** Music's role in the formation of cultural and national identity is, while generally undeniable, often problematic in the particulars. How does music tell stories that relate to and reflect upon political narratives? Can music constitute a political act? Surveying political developments in Western music history, this course traces musical events relevant to the history of Western culture as a whole. Our investigation of historical works and their musicological criticism will shed light on important social movements, revolutionary aspirations and politicized cultural events. In doing so, we will identify political trends in Western art music from 1750 to the present, and examine various ways in which they are still significant today.

Vienna served as a uniquely influential base for musical thought since the 18th century; its substantial public funding for the arts continues to invest in music's pertinence to the present moment. This course enables assessment of Austrian strengths vis-a-vis those found in the performing arts in the United States of America. We begin with the concept of Regietheater, which acts through reinterpretation to hold a more fitting mirror to reflect the relevance of stories created in other eras. We take an in-depth look at Vienna during the American Revolutionary War and the French Revolution with Beaumarchais, Da Ponte and Mozart's views on revolutionary times in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Topics central to the Napoleonic Wars as found in the works of Haydn and Beethoven will also be considered. We assess musicological criticism of Schubert, and examine Wagner and Verdi's musical projects, comparing the formation of the German and Italian nations. To better grapple with the modernist crisis, Mahler and Strauss's strivings are juxtaposed with the critical stance of French symbolists and impressionists. We evaluate artistic responses to World War II, to the Holocaust and its aftermath, both in Europe and the United States.

The more music theory skills one has at hand, the better, but no prior music theory or analysis is necessary. Ability to read music a plus, but also not required.

**CREDITS:** 3 credits

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45 hours

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** none

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

- Lectures
- Discussions
- Audio and audiovisual musical examples

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- Class participation - 10%
- Midterm exam - 25%
- Event reports/Responses to readings (2) - 20%
- Term Paper - 20%
- Final exam - 25%

**Class Participation Grading Rubric**



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|----------|--|
| <b>A</b> | <b>Excellent participation</b><br>The student's contributions reflect an active reading of the assigned bibliography. Skillfully synthesizes the main ideas of the readings and raises questions about the applications and implications of the material. Demonstrates, through questions and comments, that he or she has been capable of relating the main ideas in the readings to the other information discussed in the course, and with his or her own life experience. The student makes informed judgments about the readings and other ideas discussed in class, providing evidence and reasons. He/she respectfully states his/her reactions about other classmates' opinions, and is capable of contributing to the inquiry spiral with other questions. The student gets fully involved in the completion of the class activities. |
| <b>B</b> | <b>Very good participation</b><br>The student's contributions show that the assigned materials are usually read. Most of the time the main ideas are identified, even though sometimes it seems that applications and implications of the information read were not properly reflected upon. The student is able to construct over others' contributions, but sometimes seems to interrupt the shared construction to go over tangents. He/she is respectful of others' ideas. Regularly involved in the activities but occasionally loses concentration or energy.  |
| <b>C</b> | <b>Regular participation</b><br>The participant evidences a regular reading of the bibliography, but in a superficial way. He/she tries to construct over others' ideas, but commonly provides comments that indicate lack of preparation about the material. Frequently, contributions are shallow or unarticulated with the discussion in hand.  |
| <b>F</b> | <b>Insufficient participation</b><br>Consistently, the participant reads in a shallow way or does not read at all. Does not participate in an informed way, and shows lack of interest in constructing over others' ideas.   |

### Midterm Exam

You are to choose two of four essay topics to prepare ahead of time, and then complete your response within a two-hour exam period. The exam is open book, closed note: you may cite excerpts as quotations where relevant.

### Event Reports/Responses to readings

2 1000-word papers. Analysis of interpretive concepts of Regietheater in a staging seen live in Vienna during the course of the semester would be preferred. You may also choose to respond to *Figaro*, by focusing on a particular character or scene to unpack, both in the play, libretto, music and performance; toward the end of the semester, you may also respond to Eckhard John's "Music in Concentration Camps" article.

### Paper

8-10 pages. Position a musical work written in an explicitly political context. Where applicable, include coverage of the author's, librettist's and composer's biography, the work's genesis, public reception, and influence.

### Final Exam

You are to choose two of four essay topics to prepare ahead of time, and then complete your response within a two-hour exam period. The exam is open book, closed note: you may cite excerpts as quotations where relevant.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students should have:

- identified various interfaces between music and politics, including music as social protests, music in identity politics, music as a vehicle for nationalist debates, and music as it has been monitored by totalitarian regimes;
- gained a general understanding of the development of musical styles in Western art music;
- become familiar with Vienna's unique musical culture and its wide array of musical institutions, including its opera houses, concert halls and other venues.



**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

IES Vienna requires attendance at all class sessions, including field study excursions, internship meetings, scheduled rehearsals, and all tests and exams. Attendance will be taken for every class. If a student misses more than the equivalent of a week of classes without an excuse, the final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade (for example, A- to B+) for every additional unexcused absence.

**Excused absences** are permitted only when:

- 1) a student is ill (health issues),
- 2) when class is held on a recognized religious holiday traditionally observed by the particular student, or
- 3) in the case of a grave incident affecting family members;
- 4) exceptions may be made for conflicting academic commitments, but only in writing and only well in advance of missed class time.

*Any other absences are unexcused.*

**CONTENT:**

| Week          | Content  | Assignments  |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Music and Politics<br><br>Entering Vienna’s musical culture; Research methods, Writing about music         | Read: <i>Le Nozze di Figaro</i> (excerpts from original play and libretto)   |
| <b>Week 2</b> | Mozart: A Renegade Genius  | Read: Maurice Lever's Beaumarchais biography, pp. 3-13, 97-180, 255-267.<br><br>Watch Salzburg Festival 2006 production of <i>Figaro</i> (Director Claus Guth) |
| <b>Week 3</b> | Enlightenment Principles; <i>Figaro</i> continued  | Read OHWM pp. 394-401 and 406-408<br><br><i>Report #1 due by Friday.</i>   |
| <b>Week 4</b> | Haydn: A Princely Servant<br><br>Haydn’s <i>Missa in Tempore Belli</i>                                     | Read: OHWM pp. 438-449<br><br><u>Course-related trip</u> to Mozarthaus   |
| <b>Week 5</b> | Politics and the Symphony<br><br>Beethoven’s 3 <sup>rd</sup> (the “Eroica”) and 9 <sup>th</sup> Symphonies | Read: Excerpts from Esteban Buch, <i>Beethoven’s Ninth: A Political History</i><br><br><i>Term Paper Proposal due in class on Monday.</i>                      |
|               | MIDTERM EXAMS  |  |
| <b>Week 6</b> | Sex and Sensibility in Schubert <i>Lieder</i> and Works for Piano  | Read: Maynard Solomon “Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini”, 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Music XII/3 (Spring 1989), pp. 193-206.                 |
| <b>Week 7</b> | The Composer as Political Icon   | Read OHWM pp. 684-699.   |



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|                | Verdi's <i>Nabucco</i> and <i>Otello</i>                                   |   |
| <b>Week 8</b>  | Music and Nationalism<br><br>Wagner's Prelude to <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> | Read OHWM pp. 666-684.<br><br><i>Term Paper due by Friday.</i>  |
| <b>Week 9</b>  | Modernism: Unhinging the World<br><br>Mahler, Satie, Debussy, Stravinsky   | Read OHWM pp. 822-853.  |
| SPRING BREAK   |  |   |
| <b>Week 10</b> | Music and Terror   | Read OHWM 959-65, 71-77; Eckhard John, "Music and Concentration Camps"<br><br><i>Paper #2 due by Wednesday.</i> |
|                | FINAL EXAMS  |   |

**COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:**

- Excursion to the Mozarthaus, where Mozart composed the Marriage of Figaro.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- Buch, Esteban. *Beethoven's Ninth: A Political History*. Trans. Richard Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- John, Eckhard. "Music and Concentration Camps: An approximation," trans. Ernest Livingstone. *The Journal of Musicological Research* 20/4 (2001), pp. 269–323.
- Lever, Maurice. *Beaumarchais: A Biography*. Trans. Susan Emanuel. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.)
- Solomon, Maynard. "Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini", *19th Century Music* XII/3 (Spring 1989), pp. 193-206.
- Taruskin, Richard and Christopher H. Gibbs. *The Oxford History of Western Music College Edition*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Referred to as OHWM.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- de Beaumarchais, Pierre-Augustin Caron. *The Marriage of Figaro*. Trans. Bernard Sahlins. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1994.
- Crittenden, Camille. *Johann Strauss and Vienna: Operetta and the Politics of Popular Culture*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.)
- Hanson, Alice M. *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*. (Cambridge: The University of Cambridge, 1985.)
- Hertz, Daniel. *Haydn, Mozart and the Viennese School 1740-1780*. (New York: Norton, 1995.)
- Hertz, Daniel. *Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven, 1781-1802*. (New York: Norton, 2009.)
- McClary, Susan. "The Blasphemy of Talking Politics during Bach Year." In *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception*. Ed. Leppert and McClary. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.)
- Schumann, Robert. *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings*. Ed. and trans. Henry Pleasants. (New York: Dover, 1965.)
- Schorske, Carl E. *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1980.)
- Weiss, Piero and Richard Taruskin, eds. *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1984.)