



MS 385 GIUSEPPE VERDI – MELODRAMA AND ITALIAN IDENTITY

IES Abroad Milan

DESCRIPTION: The course will focus on the most popular and most frequently performed of all Italian composers: Giuseppe Verdi, lately celebrated worldwide in the bicentenary of his birth. Verdi's life and output is strongly connected to Milan, the geographical heart of his life. It was in Milan that Verdi studied and developed his musical and cultural background from the age of 19, started and ended his career as an opera composer, and eventually, died. This course on Verdi provides the unique opportunity to understand the composer's creative path and style, while getting to know the environment and the institutions where they developed. The course will explore Verdi's interpretation of the main themes of the Romantic era and investigate his relationship with European music and culture. The course will trace the roots of Verdi's art and explore the influence the composer had in shaping the modern Italian identity.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION: Lectures, DVD watching, course-related trips to operas, concerts, exhibitions, CD listening, and score analysis.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course Participation – 25%
- Midterm Exam – 25%
- Final Exam – 25%
- Research Paper – 25%

Course Participation

This course requires attention and critical reaction to the music we will hear, the texts we will read, the DVDs we will watch, and the performances we will attend. Therefore, attendance is strictly required. The mandatory readings should be read throughout the semester in order to gain historical perspective of all the topics covered.

Midterm Exam

Final Exam

Research Paper

Students will have an opportunity to explore of topic of their choice. The instructor will introduce students to the existing resources at local institutions. Deadlines for submitting personal works will be announced in class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the complexity of 19th-Century Opera as a product of interrelated forces and disciplines (literature, both vocal and instrumental composition, gesture, acting, stage setting) with the goal of creating the grand show of opera
- Understand the peculiarity and interest of operatic subjects
- Understand the evolution of Italian *belcanto*
- Understand "Show Business" and its rules during the time of Verdi
- Understand the influence of opera on society, culture, and politics



- Develop a comprehensive grasp of the elements that celebrated the values and/or contributed to the identity of Italy as a new nation: its culture, music, literature, and lifestyle
- Approach Verdi’s masterpieces, analyzing their mechanisms and the grounds of their success, and enduring popularity worldwide.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Regular class attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend classes each day, including course-related trips. IES Abroad Milano allows a maximum of two excused absences per semester. Each further absence will automatically result in a penalty of two points off (2/100) on the final grade. Seven absences per course (including the two excused absences) will result in a failing grade for that course. Furthermore, absence on the date of scheduled tests, presentations, or quizzes does not entitle you to recover/reschedule such tests. Failure to attend your Midterm and/or Final exams will result in an F grade on that paper/exam. It is your responsibility to manage your absences during the term. If you are sick, you will need to apply your absence to the two excused absences allowed for the term. If you use up your two excused absences for personal travel and then are sick at the end of the semester, those sick days will not be excused. Please plan wisely!

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 1 <i>Session 1</i>	Verdi, Shakespeare, and European Romantic Culture	
<i>Session 2</i>	Verdi’s Career in Italy and Abroad	
Week 2 <i>Session 1</i>	Verdi and His Country: The Making of a Nation	
<i>Session 2</i>	Being an Opera composer at Verdi’s Time	
Week 3 <i>Session 1</i>	Getting an Opera out of an Idea	
<i>Session 2</i>	The Ugly as New, Romantic Beauty: Verdi’s ideas on arts	
Week 4 <i>Session 1</i>	Verdi’s World and Characters	

Session 2	How does Verdi's Opera Work?	
Week 5 Session 1	The First Great Success: <i>Nabucco</i> as Monumental Opera	
Session 2	The First Great Success: <i>Nabucco</i> as Monumental Opera	
Week 6 Session 1	Ten Years of Experimental Opera: From <i>Ernani</i> to <i>Macbeth</i> and beyond	
Session 2	Ten Years of Experimental Opera: From <i>Ernani</i> to <i>Macbeth</i> and beyond	
Week 7 Session 1	The Romantic Trilogy: <i>Rigoletto</i> , <i>Il Trovatore</i> , <i>La Traviata</i>	
Session 2	The Romantic Trilogy: <i>Rigoletto</i> , <i>Il Trovatore</i> , <i>La Traviata</i>	
Week 8 Session 1	A New Operatic Project: From <i>Les Vêpres Siciliennes</i> to <i>Un ballo in maschera</i>	
Session 2	A New Operatic Project: From <i>Les Vêpres Siciliennes</i> to <i>Un ballo in maschera</i>	
Week 9 Session 1	Rethinking <i>grand opéra</i> : From <i>La forza del destino</i> to <i>Don Carlos</i> to <i>Aida</i>	
Session 2	Rethinking <i>grand opéra</i> : From <i>La forza del destino</i> to <i>Don Carlos</i> to <i>Aida</i>	

Week 10 <i>Session 1</i>	Shakespeare, Once More: <i>Otello</i> and <i>Falstaff</i>	
<i>Session 2</i>	Shakespeare, Once More: <i>Otello</i> and <i>Falstaff</i>	
Week 11 <i>Session 1</i>	Verdi Outside the Theatre: The <i>Requiem</i> and the Chamber Music	
<i>Session 2</i>	Verdi Outside the Theatre: The <i>Requiem</i> and the Chamber Music	
Week 12 <i>Session 1</i>	Verdi's Myth	
<i>Session 2</i>	Verdi's Myth	

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Raffaele Mellace, *Con moltissima passione. Ritratto di Giuseppe Verdi*. Carocci, 2013 (In Italian)

REQUIRED LISTENINGS:

- DVDs, CDs, operatic scores and instructor's tracks (either on reserve at the IES Abroad Office, or available online)