



MS/CU/EU 351 OPERA HISTORY 1: BEGINNINGS THROUGH THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

IES Abroad Vienna

DESCRIPTION:

This is a survey of the history of opera from its Renaissance-era beginnings to the Classical period. Opera as a performance form will be analyzed in context of pervasive socio-political, artistic, architectural, and musical climates at various stages of its development. Reading will include dramatic texts and theoretical essays (both contemporaneous and contemporary); as it will be discussed in class, required reading, viewing, and/or listening assignments are to be completed prior to class lectures. Regular trips will address and expand upon material introduced during class lectures, and attendance is required.

In addition to providing an historical overview of forms and practice, this course will require students to see and analyze several live opera performances. Weekly writing assignments addressing these live performances and required reading/listening/viewing selections will be expected to integrate concepts and analytical methodology addressed in class.

Students will also be required to submit and briefly present a final project on the last day of class. As emphasis is placed on opera as a multidisciplinary theatrical experience, all aspects of its execution—from composition to staging to management to distribution—will be addressed and offered as subjects for students' final projects. Both the topic and medium of the final project will be determined by the student under the guidance and with the approval of the professor (parameters of the final project are addressed in further detail below).

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Lectures and discussions, both in the classroom and at assigned exhibitions/performances/locations
- Required reading, listening, and viewing assignments, available on Moodle
- Attendance of several performances/exhibitions/etc. outside of class
- Guest lectures

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Preparation for and participation in class discussions: 10%
- Mid-term test: 15%
- Final project proposal: 10%
- Weekly written responses to readings and performances: 30%
- Final presentation and project: 35%

All sources must be fully referenced. Plagiarism will be taken seriously and will result in course failure and academic review hearing.

Preparation for and participation in class discussions

Full credit will be awarded to students who are regularly vocal in class discussions, pose questions, and contribute to lectures and trips in a way that reflects a critical engagement with reading assignments and course content.

Mid-term test

The in-class written exam will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and brief (1-page or less) essay formats.

Weekly written responses to readings and performances



As the purpose of these exercises is to develop concise, content-rich responses to reading/viewing/listening assignments, guiding questions will occasionally be posed to help direct the focus of student responses. All written assignments must be submitted electronically via Moodle or email in PDF format.

Written responses to required readings should be roughly 500 words (1 page, single-spaced/2 pages double-spaced).

Written analyses of live performances should be at least 1000 words (2 pages, single-spaced/4 pages, double-spaced).

Final Project Proposal

Students must submit a roughly 800-word (2 pages single-spaced/4 pages double-spaced) written proposal presenting their chosen topic and medium no later than the 9th class meeting (5th week of class; date TBD). These proposals will allow the professor to troubleshoot potential issues, offer possible resources, and clarify expectations concerning the scope of the student's work.

A successful project proposal is one that:

- articulates the chosen research topic in a clear and specific way
- outlines scholarly resources and student's engagement with them thus far
- stipulates the expressive medium of the final project (including specific technical requirements and duration) and reason for choosing it
- presents the student's research questions and expectations for the completed project
- provides a rough timeline for the project's execution.

Proposals will be discussed during the 10th class meeting. If a proposal is determined to insufficiently meet the criteria outlined above, the submission of a revision may be required.

Final Project/Paper

Students may select one of the following for their final project:

Paper

Students who choose this option will be required to submit a 3000-word academic paper exploring the topic presented in the student's project proposal. Their research must be well documented (including correct citation and bibliography) and reflect critical engagement with both primary and secondary resources relevant to their topic. Papers must be submitted no later than finals week (exact date TBD).

Project

In the spirit of opera's multidisciplinary scope, students are encouraged to find a field of inquiry (topic) and mode of expression (medium) that appeals to their personal interests and challenges them to broaden their expressive capabilities. While both the topic and the medium of student projects are flexible, their scope must demonstrate a depth of engagement equivalent to that of the academic paper option. While no written report is required, students who choose the project option must also submit citation for their work in the form of a bibliography.

Approved media may include (but should not be limited to) short documentary film, performance, technical drawing/design, comic/graphic series, exhibition/installation, program note/editorial, or audio podcast/broadcast. Additional ideas are welcome.

Please note: All students—including those who decide to write a paper and those whose chosen project medium is not inherently performance-based—will be asked to present a brief overview of their work on the final day of class. There is no length requirement for the presentation per se; while some students may choose performance/presentation as their project medium, others who choose non-oral media formats may only require 3-5 minutes to present their work. The use of visual aids is strongly encouraged.

Individual or group work will be accepted; for those who choose to work in groups, final projects must accordingly reflect all group members' cumulative efforts. In other words, the scope of group projects must be more comprehensive than individual projects in order to reflect the combined efforts of all group members.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

- identify and discuss key developmental moments in the history of opera as a performance medium from pre-operatic forms through the late Classical period
- situate these developments within larger historical, cultural, and aesthetic context
- demonstrate a working understanding of Aristotelian dramatic theory
- analyze the relationship between various logistical parameters of operatic production and shifting trends in its patronage, funding, and audiences
- perform meaningful research through relevant scholarly channels using archival resources
- process and present information in a way that reflects a depth of engagement with key concepts and material

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Please see the IES Vienna Attendance Policy, which can be found in your Vienna Student Handbook.

CONTENT:

Week/Session	Content	Listening/Viewing	Reading
1	1	Course Introduction, Basics of Dramatic Theory & Terminology, Ancient Greek Origins	Aristotle, chs. I, IV – XVIII (pp. 3 – 39) Till, ed./Campana, ch. 9 “Genre and poetics” (pp. 202 – 224)
	2	Trip: Kunsthistorisches Museum – Comparative Aesthetics of Italian City States ca. 1600	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i> pp. 21 – 82
2	3	Forerunners to the Operatic Form & The Florentine Camerata (<i>Peri’s Euridice</i>)	Grout, ch. 4 (pp. 23 – 39) Pirrota, ch. 2 “Classical theatre, <i>intermedi</i> and <i>frottola</i> music” (pp. 37 – 75)
	4	Guest Lecture/Performance: James Kryshak, Miyuki Schüssler –Vocal Performance Practice Through Operatic History	Burkholder & Palisca, Vol. I, chs. 65 (pp. 386 – 396) <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> (Kammeroper, Sept. 27 – Oct. 7) Pfister, chs. 4.4. – 4.6. (pp. 120 – 159)
3	5	Monteverdi’s <i>L’Orfeo</i> : in-class viewing with lecture	Burkholder & Palisca, Vol. I, ch. 66 (pp. 397-420): Claudio Monteverdi excerpt from Act II of <i>L’Orfeo</i> (1607) <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> (Kammeroper, Sept. 27 – Oct. 7) Grout, chs. 6 & 7 (pp. 50 – 77) Till, ed./Zeiss, ch. 8 “The dramaturgy of opera” (pp. 179 – 201)
	6	Trip: Nupi Jenner, Luthier—Trends and Techniques in the Construction of Stringed Instruments	Burkholder & Palisca, Vol. I, chs. 67 – 68 (pp. 421 – 441) Grout, chs. 8 – 9 (pp. 78 – 110)

			<i>Don Giovanni</i> (Staatsoper, Oct. 5-13)	
4	7	Commercial Opera in Venice (and Beyond), Metastasio's Opera Reforms and <i>Opera Seria</i>	<i>Don Giovanni</i> (Staatsoper, Oct. 5-13)	DelDonna & Polzonetti, ch. 4 (pp. 66 – 84) Grout, chs. 14 & 16 (pp. 181 – 225, 246 – 273) Till, ed./Payne, ch. 2 “The business of opera” (pp. 53 – 68)
	8	Trip/Guest Lecture: Music Collection of the Austrian National Library (ÖNB Musiksammlung)—Archival Research Practices, Elizabeth Kata, MA Monteverdi in Vienna, Cesti's <i>Il pomo d'oro</i> at the Viennese court		<i>TBD by guest speaker</i>
5	9	<i>Commedia dell'arte, opera buffa</i> and the Influence of Neapolitan Comedy on the Continent FINAL PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE	Burkholder & Palisca, Vol. II, ch. 93 (pp. 1 – 16) <i>Giulio Cesare in Egitto</i> (Theater an der Wien, Oct. 18)	DelDonna & Polzonetti, ch. 12 (pp. 214 – 232) Wilbourne, “The Tragedies and Comedies Recited by the Zanni” (pp. 1 – 18)
	10	Content review and final project proposal troubleshooting		
6	MIDTERM WEEK: TEST			
7	11	<i>Tragédie lyrique</i> of Lully and Rameau, <i>la querelle des bouffons</i>	Burkholder & Palisca, Vol. I, chs. 77 & 87 (pp. 511 – 536, 626 – 646)	Grout, ch. 11 (pp. 122 – 134) DelDonna & Polzonetti, ch. 9 (pp. 155 – 213) Till, ed./Ertman, ch. 1 “Opera, the state and society” (pp. 25 – 48)
	12	Trip: Theatrumuseum Exhibit “Spettacolo barocco!” – Baroque-era performance practice and stagecraft		Till, ed./Ridout, ch. 7 “Opera and the technologies of theatrical production” (pp. 159 – 176) Pfister, chs. 1 – 2 (pp. 1 – 39)
8	13	England and the German-Speaking World: Purcell, Händel	Burkholder & Palisca, Vol. I, ch. 79 (pp. 537 – 544) Burkholder & Palisca,	Grout, chs. 12 – 13 (pp. 135 – 180)

			Vol. II, ch. 94 (pp. 17 – 29)	
	14	Guest lecture: Raphael Schluesselberg (Theater an der Wien, Oper Rund Um, Teatro Barocco) – Early Music Performance Practice: Reproducing Baroque Sounds in Contemporary Productions		<i>TBD by guest lecturer</i>
9	15	CHECK-IN: FINAL PROJECT PROGRESS Gluck and his Reforms, Haydn and the Court Patronage System	Burkholder & Palisca, Vol. II, ch. 96 (pp. 30 – 52)	Grout, ch. 15 (pp. 226 – 245)
	16	Trip: walking tour of 1 st district & visit to Mozarthaus		Grout, ch. 17 (pp. 274 – 296)
10	17	Early Mozart, Classicism, Orientalism		Till, ch. 13 “‘An exotic and irrational entertainment’: opera and our others; opera as other” (pp. 298 – 324)
	18	Guest lecture: Director Lloyd Wood – Directing <i>Don Giovanni</i>		Till, ch. 10 “The operatic work: texts, performances, receptions and repertories” (pp. 225 – 253) Till, ed./Morris, ch. 4 “‘Too much music’: the media of opera” (pp.95 – 116)
11	19	Late Mozart and the Beginnings of the Romantic Period	Burkholder & Palisca, Vol. II, ch. 107 (pp. 218 – 240)	DelDonna & Polzonetti, ch. 8 (pp. 140 – 152)
	20	Guest lecture/performance: Early and Classical Opera in Performance – Margaret Plummer (Staatsoper Wien), Anne Wieben, Anthony Oliveras, Deirdre Brenner (IES)		<i>TBD</i>
12	FINALS WEEK: PRESENTATIONS OF PROJECTS			

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Kunsthistorisches Museum
- Nupi Jenner, Luthier
- Music Collection of the Austrian National Library (ÖNB Musiksammlung)
- Theatermuseum Exhibit “Spettacolo barocco!”
- Walking tour of 1st district
- Visit to Mozarthaus

REQUIRED VIEWING:

All three of the following productions:

- Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos*. (Kammeroper, Sept. 27 & 29; Oct. 1, 3, 5, & 7)
- W. A. Mozart, *Don Giovanni*. (Staatsoper, Oct. 5, 8, 11 & 13)
- G. F. Händel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (Theater an der Wien, Oct. 18)

REQUIRED READING:

Selections from the following (see above for assignments):

- Oskar Piest, ed. *Aristotle: On Poetry and Style*. G. M. A. Grube, trans. New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1958.

- Sophocles, *The Oedipus Plays of Sophocles; Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone*. Paul Roche, trans. New York: New American Library, 1958.
- Grout, Donald Jay. *A Short History of Opera*, Edition 2. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.
- Anthony R. DelDonna and Pierpaolo Polzonetti, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- J. Peter Burkholder and Claude V. Palisca, eds. *Norton Anthology of Western Music, Volume 1: Ancient to Baroque*, Edition 5. London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006.
- J. Peter Burkholder and Claude V. Palisca, eds. *Norton Anthology of Western Music, Volume 2: Classic to Twentieth Century*, Edition 5. London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006.
- Wilbourne, Emily. *Seventeenth-Century Opera and the Sound of Commedia dell'Arte*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- Nicolas Till, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Pirotta, Nino. *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*. Karen Eales, trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Pfister, Manfred. *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*, John Halliday, trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Additional reading relevant to the required viewing will be assigned according to the performance schedule. Live performances vary each season, and required viewing (and accompanying literature) will be determined once season programming is announced (usually in April). Because this course is structured to encompass opera history over two semesters, this course will be available to full year students without risk of repetition of content.

RECOMMENDED VIEWING:

- G. F. Händel, *Ottone, Re di Germania*. (Theater an der Wien, Sept. 24)
- W. A. Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte*. (Volksoper, Sept. 22, 26 & 30, Oct. 5, Nov. 18)
- F. Cavalli, *La Rosinda*. (Landestheater Linz, Blackbox: Sept. 16, 19, 21, 23, 26, 28 & 30, Oct. 2)
- *Dionysien* (Felsenreitschule Salzburg, Nov. 3, 5, 11, 14, 18 & 21)
- R. Strauss, *Daphne*. (Staatsoper, Dec. 1, 4 & 7)
- L. v. Beethoven, *Egmont* (Theater an der Wien, Dec. 15)

RECOMMENDED READING:

- Roger Parker, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Opera*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Kerman, Joseph. *Opera as Drama*. New York: Random House, 1956.
- Pfister, Manfred. *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (trans. John Halliday). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY:

Gretl Satorius is a freelance writer and dramaturg based in Vienna, Austria. She holds a BFA in Dramaturgy and Criticism from The Theatre School at DePaul University and MA in Theatre, Film, and Media History from the University of Vienna. Her scholarly writing has appeared in publications such as *Religion and the Arts* (Brill), *Masken und Kothurn* (Böhlau), *Ether Magazine*, and *Vienna: In Your Pocket*, and as video reportage for *CultVisual*. She is currently pursuing her doctoral degree at the University of Vienna; her dissertation focuses on the “Salomania” phenomenon following the 1905 premiere of Richard Strauss’ *Salome*.

Recent dramaturgical engagements include *Behind the Curtain: Don Giovanni* (Glyndebourne Festival), *Don Giovanni* (English Touring Opera), *Impossible* (West End and international tours), and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Houston Symphony). Her work has garnered numerous awards, including the California Governor’s Award, the Marcus Award for Dramaturgy, the What’s On Stage Award for “Best New Opera Production” (*Don Giovanni*, 2016), and “Best Film” accolades at the People’s Film Festival for original documentary screenplay, *The Five Powers* (2016). Current projects include *Behind the Curtain: La Traviata* for Glyndebourne (2018) and a new translation of Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* for the Springfield Regional Opera (2018).



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