MUSIC 307 Imaginative Worlds of Opera
Fall 2013

David Lawton, Instructor; Oksana Nesterenko, Teaching Assistant
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.—12:50 p.m., Music Building, Room 0113
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SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

MUS 307 - I: Imaginative Worlds of Opera

Considering opera's blend of drama, music, spectacle and stage action, the course examines diverse European operatic traditions from a variety of angles, ranging from expressive roles for music to social and cultural values embodied in individual works. Study focuses on outstanding repertory pieces such as Mozart's Marriage of Figaro, Verdi's Otello, and Berg's Wozzeck. Not for music major credit.

Prerequisite: MUS 101 or 119 or 130

3 credits

Opera is the most elaborate of collaborative art forms, involving both in its creation and its performance highly skilled individuals from a variety of different disciplines: composers and librettists in the creative phase, and singers, orchestral players, dancers, directors, designers, and production personnel in performance. This course will be a one-semester introductory course that explores various facets of the operatic experience separately at first, and then continues with a survey of six masterpieces from the early 17th through the 19th centuries: Monteverdi’s Orfeo (1607), Mozart’s Don Giovanni (1787), Verdi’s La traviata, (1853), Wagner’s Die Walküre (1854), Bizet’s Carmen (1875), and Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin (1877). Intended for non-majors, the course will involve reading assignments in the required textbook, as well as listening and viewing of recorded performances and supplementary reading assignments in the Music Library and on the Blackboard site.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the various facets of the operatic experience (the opera house, the orchestra, the singers and dancers) through a midterm examination at the end of the first Unit.

2. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the creative process of composers and librettists, and the relationship of opera librettos to the literary sources from which they were derived in a selection of famous Italian, French, German, and Russian operas from the 17th to the 20th century through a second midterm and a final examination. The student will demonstrate a deeper understanding of this process through a take-home essay, which will be part of the second midterm.

3. The student will demonstrate an understanding of how different values influence operatic production styles (stage direction, and set, costume, and lighting design) in several important European nations, including Italy, France, Germany, Russia, and England through a take-home essay on the final examination.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Make Up Policy
Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class meeting. If you are not able to attend a class, please notify me at least one day in advance by e-mail, stating the reason for your absence. Because my lectures do not duplicate the reading assignments, it is important to attend every class.

Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive; please make every effort to arrive on time, and do not leave until I dismiss the class.

Your grade will be based on two midterm examinations (the first including the short report), a final examination, several other written assignments, and attendance.

Description and schedule of Required Readings and/or Assignments
See below under MEETING SCHEDULE

Exams
See below under MEETING SCHEDULE

GRADING

The course will be divided into three units, as follows:

Unit I: The operatic experience; Monteverdi and Mozart: September 5—26
Midterm No. 1 (on Unit I): Thursday, October 3.

Unit II: Tchaikovsky and Verdi: October 8—29
Midterm No. 2 (on Unit II): Tuesday, November 5

Unit III: Bizet and Wagner: November 7—December 3
Final Exam (on Unit III): Wednesday, December 11

Thursday, December 4 will be a review session for the Final Exam.

The final examination is scheduled for Wednesday, December 11 from 5:30—8 p.m., in Room 0113.

Your grade will be based upon your cumulative average for the semester, based upon your scores on each one of the three examinations, take-home essays and extra-credit assignments or exam questions. In calculating your final grade, I will use the following percentages calculated on the basis of your cumulative point total for the semester as a percentage of the total points possible:

95—100%: A
90-95%: A-
87—89%: B+
84—86%: B
80—83%: B-
77—79%: C+
74—76*: C
70—73%: C-
67—69%: D+
64—66%: D
60—63%: D-
59% or lower: F
In calculating your final grade I will also factor in attendance, particularly in borderline cases where the percentage could is on or near the boundary between two letter grade levels. In that case good attendance will favor the higher grade level, and poor attendance the lower one.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Unit I: The operatic experience; Monteverdi and Mozart

Tuesday, August 27:
Distribution of syllabus; course overview; administrative business.

Thursday, August 29:
NO CLASS (I will be out of town conducting a concert). Please get started on your reading (Parakilas, Part I Experiencing Opera: Chapters 1-4, pp. 5-91)

Tuesday, September 3: No classes in session at Stony Brook

Thursday, September 5:
Where operas are performed: the opera house
Reading: Parakilas, Chapter 1, pp. 5-25

Tuesday, September 10:
The role of the orchestra
Reading: Parkilas, Chapter 2, pp. 27-41

Thursday, September 12:
The cast: voice types, writing for solo voices and for ensembles
Reading: Parakilas, Chapter 3, pp. 43-63

Tuesday, September 17:
How opera tells stories
Reading: Parakilas, Chapter 4, pp. 65-91

Thursday, September 19:
A masterpiece of the early Baroque Era: Monteverdi’s Orfeo
Reading: Parakilas, Chapter 5, pp. 95-119.
Listening: Monteverdi, Orfeo.
The libretto in Italian with English translation is posted on the Blackboard site.

Tuesday, September 24:
Eighteenth-century comic opera
Reading: Parakilas, Chapter 9, pp. 217-255.
Listening: Mozart, Don Giovanni, Act 1
See “Electronic resources” on p. 5 of this Syllabus for the URL of the Italian libretto, and of the English translation.
Thursday, September 26:
Listening: Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, Act II

Tuesday, October 1:
Review session for first midterm

Thursday, October 3:
First midterm. The exam will consist of multiple-choice, true-false, and fill-in-the-blank questions, and will cover the reading and specific listening assignments from this first Unit.

**Unit II Tchaikovsky and Verdi**

Tuesday, October 8:
**Romantic opera of the 19th century**
Reading: Pushkin’s novel *Eugene Onegin*, Chapters 2, 3, 4; and the libretto of Act I of Tchaikovsky’s opera. The libretto is posted on Blackboard; the novel is available online, in English translation, at the following URL: http://lib.ru/LITRA/PUSHKIN/ENGLISH/onegin_j.txt

Thursday, October 10:

Saturday, October 12:
You will be required to attend the Metropolitan Opera HD telecast of *Eugene Onegin* at the Staller Center for the Arts, starting at 1 p.m. You may purchase your tickets at the Staller Center Box office during their normal hours, Monday through Saturday, 12 noon to 6 p.m.

Tuesday, October 15:
Listening: Tchaikovsky, *Eugene Onegin*, Act I

Thursday, October 17:

Tuesday, October 22:
Reading: Parakilas, Chapter 4, pp. 67-90; Chapter 11, pp. 315—320.
Listening: Verdi, *La traviata*, Act I
See “Electronic resources” on p. 5 of this Syllabus for the URL of the Italian libretto, and of the English translation.

Thursday, October 24:
Listening: Verdi, *La traviata*, Act II

Tuesday, October 29:
Listening: Verdi, *La traviata*, Act III

Thursday, October 31: Review session for second midterm examination.
Tuesday, November 5 Midterm examination on Unit II, in class. The exam will be of the same type as the first midterm, but there will be a take-home essay question due at the exam. The topic will be posted on the Blackboard site.

**Unit III: Bizet and Wagner**

**Thursday, November 7:**  
Opera on themes of domestic conflict  
Listening: Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I.  
See “Electronic resources” on p. 5 of this Syllabus for the URL of the French libretto, and of the English translation.

**Tuesday, November 12:**  
Listening: Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II

**Thursday, November 14:**  
Listening: Bizet: *Carmen*, Acts III and IV

**Tuesday, November 19:**  
Wagner’s Music Dramas  
Reading: Parakilas, Chapter 12, pp. 335-371.

**Thursday, November 21:**  
Listening: Wagner, *Die Walküre*, Act I  
See “Electronic resources” on p. 5 of this Syllabus for the URL of the German text, with the English translation.

**Tuesday, November 26:**  
Listening: Wagner, *Die Walküre*, Act II

**Thursday, November 28:** NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

**Tuesday, December 3:**  
Listening: Wagner, *Die Walküre*, Act III

**Thursday, December 4**  
Review session for Final Examination.

The final examination will take place on Wednesday, December 11, 2013 from 5:30—8:00 p.m., in Room 0113. The final exam will only cover the material from Unit III of the course, and will be exactly the same kind of exam as the second midterm, including a take-home essay question due at the exam; the topic will be posted on the Blackboard site.

**CLASS PROTOCOL**  
The use of cell phones during class lectures is disruptive, and will not be allowed. During class you may use a laptop computer to take notes on lectures. During exams all electronic devices, such as cell phones, laptop computers, i-pods or i-pads, pagers, etc. must be turned off and placed under your seat.
Arriving late for class or leaving early is disruptive, and is not acceptable.

CLASS RESOURCES

Required text
The required textbook is available in the campus bookstore:

Electronic Resources

   https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=DndAAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&authuser=0&hl=en&pg=GBS.PP4
2. Verdi, *La traviata*, libretto, Italian text:
3. Verdi, *La traviata*, libretto, English translation:
   http://www.dennisalbert.com/Opera/latraviata.htm
4. Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, libretto, Italian:
5. Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, libretto, English translation:
   http://www.murashev.com/opera/Don_Giovanni_libretto_English
6. Tchaikovsky, *Eugene Onegin*, libretto, English:
   http://www.murashev.com/opera/Eugene_Onegin_libretto_English
7. Bizet, *Carmen*, libretto: French text:
   http://opera.stanford.edu/Bizet/Carmen/libretto.html
8. Bizet, *Carmen*, libretto, English translation:
   http://www.dennisalbert.com/Opera/Carmen.htm
8. Wagner, *Die Walküre*, libretto, German and English:
   http://www.rwagner.net/libretti/walkure/e-walk-a1s1.html

Blackboard site

A blackboard site will be maintained for the course.

Access to our class's on-line Blackboard site:

You can access class information on-line at: http://blackboard.sunysb.edu If you have used Stony Brook's Blackboard system previously, your login information (Username and Password) has not changed. If you have never used Stony Brook's Blackboard system, your initial password is your SOLAR ID# and your username is the same as your Campus Net ID, which is generally your first initial and the first 7 letters of your last name (if you have a sparky account, it's your username).

For help or more information see:
http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/helpdesk/docs/blackboard/bbstudent.php For problems logging in, go to the helpdesk in the Main Library SINC Site or the Union SINC Site, you can also call: 631-632-9602 or e-mail: helpme@ic.sunysb.edu

The operas that we will be studying are all available in the listening files posted on the Blackboard site for the course. For each exam I will post on Blackboard the specific excerpts that you will need to know
for the exam. In order to listen to these files through the blackboard site, you will need either iTunes (a free download which many of you may have and use with your iPods) or for people with older computers that cannot install iTunes (pre-windows 2000 operating system) you can use "quicktime player" to access the files.

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The University Senate Undergraduate and Graduate Councils have authorized that the following required statements appear in all teaching syllabi (graduate and undergraduate courses) on the Stony Brook Campus.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

**Academic Integrity:**

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/

**Critical Incident Management:**

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.