

Syllabus of Introduction to Opera

MUSC 154 – THTR 154

Spring Semester 2025

Mondays | 6.45-9.15pm / Sala 5

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Office Hours: Mon. 5.30-6.30pm by appointment

Course Description

This course, distributed in weekly sessions, offers the student an overview of the development of opera in Europe with an emphasis on some of the most representative Italian operas and authors from the 17th to the 20th century. As the course considers opera as a cultural phenomenon, the historical, intellectual, political, social, religious, and economic conditions that influenced the development of this art, will be also examined during the semester. The course includes some opera projections. Each of them is preceded by an introduction to the period in which they were first performed to provide the students with a historical, social, and cultural background. Each projection will be followed by class discussion. Students will sit for two examinations during the semester. The examinations will include multiple-choice questions, short answer questions and three longer questions based on watching excerpts from the operas analysed in class. Quizzes will be given the next class after each projection of a new opera. Missed quizzes may not make up.

In addition to the operas seen in class, the students will be asked to watch other operas: assigned out-of-class videos will be suggested during the semester.

The teacher will also organize one or more opera evenings according to the season of the Opera House. Moreover, as this course considers opera as an art form that combines music and drama, libretto structure, music forms, different types of arias and other aspects will be analysed. Assigned out-of-class videos will be announced or posted on SAKAI.

Learning Outcomes

The aim of this course is to acquire the basic knowledge to understand the cultural phenomenon of opera. Difference in style between early operas and later operas will become easy to grasp. The student will become familiar with musical terms like da-capo aria, cavatina-cabaletta, recitativo secco, recitativo accompagnato, chorus, ensemble etc. The distinction between an opera seria, a comic opera, an opéra comique and other genres will be clear by the end of the semester. Moreover, the student will learn how to individuate musical themes, how to recognize descriptive symphonies and different types of arias.

Required Text / Materials

The text including basic notes for the course and synopsis of the operas that will be seen in class or assigned during the semester will be available on Sakai. PowerPoint presentations used to introduce some classes as well as and other suggested readings and videos will be available either on SAKAI or in the University library.

Evaluation

<u>Assessment components</u>		GRADING SCALE
MID TERM	20%	A 100-94
FINAL EXAM	30%	A- 93-90
FOUR QUIZZES	40%	B+ 89-87
Class discussion/ Participation	10%	B 86-84
		B- 83-80
		C+ 79-77
		C 76-74
		<u>C- 73-70</u>
		D+ 69-67
		D 66-60
		F 59 or below

Attendance policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student. **Due to the current situation, students are also asked not to attend class if they are ill.**

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.
- For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.

This course meets once a week, thus a total of one unexcused absence will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in **1% lowering of the final course grade.**

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism according to the LUC Student Handbook.

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. *As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.*

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.



JOHN FELICE

**ROME
CENTER**

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

January

- 20** Introduction: technical terms, singers' voices with examples, forerunners of opera. The seventeenth century: the beginnings, the Florentine Camerata, the Roman opera.
- 27** Claudio Monteverdi and his *L'Orfeo*.

February

- 3** Review and discussion of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*. **I QUIZ.**
The Venetian Opera. The second half of the seventeenth century: Lully. The eighteenth-century opera: Scarlatti. Bach. Opera seria and comic opera.
- 10** Mozart and his *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

14 Opera night: Opera and ballet

- 17** Review and discussion of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. **II QUIZ.**
The nineteenth century: introduction to Donizetti and his *L'Elisir d'amore*
- 24** Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'amore*

March

- 3** General review **MID-TERM EXAM.**

7-16 SPRING BREAK

- 17** The nineteenth century: Opéra comique, Operetta. Introduction to Bizet's *Carmen*.
- 21** Bizet's *Carmen*
- 24** Discussion of Bizet's *Carmen* **III QUIZ.**
The Romantic opera and Wagner versus Verdi. Introduction to Verdi's *La traviata*.
- 31** Verdi and his *La traviata*

April

- 7** Discussion of Verdi's *La traviata* **IV QUIZ.**
Puccini and his operas. Introduction to Puccini's *Tosca*. (*The students are asked to watch the opera and visit the places of Tosca: Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, Palazzo Farnese and Castel Sant'Angelo*)
- 14** Discussion of Puccini's *Tosca*. A glance to the 20th century opera. Review and conclusion

18-21 EASTER BREAK

- 28** **FINAL EXAM**