

The Ohio State University School of Music

## **Introduction to Opera**

Autumn 2017

**Instructor:** Dr. Kirsten Speyer Carithers  
**Music 3342** (3 credits)  
Wed./Fri. 9:35-10:55am

**Office Hours:** [TBD] and by appointment  
**Contact:** [TBD]

### **Course description**

As the precursor to movies and to music video more generally, opera counts as the most involving and contemporary of all art forms. This course will present the fullest range of this "exotic and irrational entertainment," as surveyed across centuries and nations (Italy, France, Germany, Austria, and the United States). Since its inception in the 1600s, opera has used an extraordinary range of artistic elements to create dramatic visual and sonic performances: larger-than-life costumes, sets, dance, orchestra, poetry, mythology, allegory, and vocal virtuosity and artistry. Opera has served as both the popular music of its day – with superstar performers and sometimes scandalous commentary on society – and as elite intellectual practice, embodying heady artistic forms and philosophies.

The course will study operas from the 17th century to the present. Students will watch recordings during class time and will attend live performances on local stages. The focus will be the European operatic tradition, with some comparisons to musical/dramatic genres around the world. Participants will consider opera as both an artistic expression and a social force, analyzing music and drama as well as representations of race, nationality, class, and gender.

### **Materials**

**Text:** There is no required textbook for this course. Required readings will be posted on the course website.

**Audio/video:** Requirements will include experiencing opera through videos, movie theater events, and live performances.

### **Requirements and Grading**

Students are expected to come to class prepared for discussion, having read, watched, and listened to assigned material. Assignments are due at 5:00pm on the dates listed in the Course Schedule.

Grades will be calculated on the following basis:

- Short written responses (journals): 4 @ 5% each
- Event report: 20%
- Mid-term exam (essay, open-note): 20%
- Final project (opera design): 30%
- Participation (including but not limited to: contributing to class discussion, general engagement, participating in group activities, and seeking help outside class if needed): 10%

## **Academic Policies**

**Attendance:** Consistent attendance is obligatory for successful performance in the course. Absences will negatively impact your participation grade, beyond one “free” absence. There may be opportunities to reduce the penalty through make-up work, at the discretion of the instructor. You remain responsible for any missed course material. If at all possible, contact your instructor prior to the missed class, or as soon afterward as is feasible.

**Academic integrity:** Please be aware of University-wide policies regarding dishonesty in academic work. “Academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed, illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, or of the circumstances under which you are obligated to cite a source in your writing, please discuss with the instructor.

Instructors are required to report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. Students are responsible for familiarity with University policies and the Code of Student Conduct (<https://studentlife.osu.edu/csc>). Please note that assignments submitted via Canvas may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Submitted papers may be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

**Electronic devices:** Laptops and tablets may be used during class meetings when specified. Please minimize distractions to others by keeping the sound off and by refraining from non-class-related activities.

**Students requiring accommodations:** Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Disability Services is located at 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Ave.; phone: 292-3307; VRS: 429-1334; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Unit 1: The Birth of Opera/ Classic Tales

Week 1 (8/23-25): Course introduction (what is/was opera? comparisons to other related genres, origins, broad changes over past 400+ years, key terms and concepts)

Week 2 (8/30-9/1): Monteverdi, *Orfeo* (1607)

Week 3 (9/6-8): Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas* (1689)

**Friday, 9/8: JOURNAL 1 DUE**

### Unit 2: Gender Issues

Week 4 (9/13-15): Rossini, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (1816)

Week 5 (9/20-22): Bizet, *Carmen* (1875)

Week 6 (9/27-29): Strauss, *Salome* (1905)

**Friday, 9/29: JOURNAL 2 DUE**

### Unit 3: Representing Race and Ethnicity

Week 7 (10/4-6): Puccini, *Madama Butterfly* (1904)

Week 8 (10/11-13)

**Wednesday, 10/11: EXAM**

Friday, 10/13 – No class meeting (fall break)

Week 9 (10/18-20): Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess* (1935)

**Friday, 10/20: JOURNAL 3 DUE**

### Unit 4: Orientalism and other Exoticisms

Week 10 (10/25-27): Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782)

Week 11 (11/1-3): Verdi, *Aida* (1871)

Week 12 (11/8-10): Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Mikado* (1885)

**Friday, 11/10: JOURNAL 4 DUE**

### Unit 5: (Post)modern Opera

Week 13 (11/15-17): Glass, *Einstein on the Beach* (1976)

**Monday, 11/20: EVENT REPORTS DUE**

Week 14 (11/22-24): No class meetings (Thanksgiving break)

Week 15 (11/29-12/1): Adams, *Doctor Atomic* (2005)

Week 16 (12/6-8): Adaptations for screen

**Monday, 12/11: FINAL PROJECTS DUE**