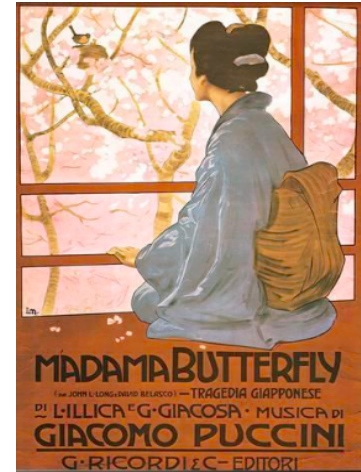


HIS 239-01 Tyrants and Tunesmiths: Opera, Politics, and Society in Modern Europe

Fall Semester 2019

Tuesday 10:00-11:50, Thursday 10:00-10:50

Mears 217



COURSE INFORMATION

Dr. Kelly J. Maynard, Grinnell College Department of History

Office: Mears 215

Office Phone: (641) 269-4465

Office Hours: M 1:15-2:45 in Mears 215, Th 1:15-2:45 at the Grill, and by appt

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the complex relationships among music/stage production, political power and social values and identities in the long nineteenth century and the present in several national contexts including France, Italy, Germany, Argentina, and the United States. We consider specific relationships among creators, politicians, institutions, and audiences and seek to understand how such relationships helped to shape both the works themselves and the political and social realities around them in the processes of inception, performance, and reception. In class we analyze a range of sources from personal letters to staging sketches, newspaper articles, aesthetic treatises, political rants, musical scores, costumes, libretti, and poetry. The course also includes online viewings, attendance at NY Met Live in HD broadcasts, and course-embedded travel to Chicago over fall break, when we will attend performances of Verdi's *Luisa Miller* and Rossini's *Barber of Seville* as well as conduct research at the Newberry Library.

Course requirements include regular, active, REactive, and thoughtful participation during discussions; a series of short papers designed to help you grapple with different kinds of texts and develop a range of self-expressive and persuasive skills; and eager, responsible participation in our short course-embedded travel over fall break to Chicago. Please note that no particular training or expertise in music is required for this class. Curiosity is a great place to start.

I want every person in this classroom to succeed and am deeply committed to creating an environment that helps make that possible. So I encourage students with documented disabilities in any form to discuss reasonable accommodations with me. You will also need to have a conversation about and provide documentation of your disability to the Coordinator for Student Disability Resources, John Hirschman, located on the 3rd floor of Goodnow Hall (x3089).

COURSE TEXTS

Claudio Benzecry, *The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession* (University of Chicago Press, 2012)
ISBN: 0-226-04342-8 - paperback

Additional readings will be available on P-Web or handed out in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Although occasional lectures provide broad historical context for some of the units which we explore, this class otherwise is conducted like a seminar. Our meetings center upon discussion of assigned readings and viewings, and it is through the free and open exchange of ideas that we all benefit the most from the class.

Class Attendance & Discussion

You are expected to attend class regularly – except in case of dire emergency – with the reading materials in hand. Please note that by definition every absence from class has a negative impact upon the overall quality of our conversations. Your grade will be impacted accordingly. After two uncommunicated absences you will receive an F for the participation portion of the course grade. After three uncommunicated absences you will fail the course entirely.

NY Metropolitan Opera Live in HD Broadcasts

Three Saturdays during the semester (10/12, 11/9, 11/23) the NY Metropolitan Opera Live in HD broadcasts will take place at the Harris Cinema. Pre-performance lectures begin at 11:30 a.m. and admission is free with your student ID. Attendance is mandatory at all three of the broadcasts except under extreme circumstances and course readings, discussions, and assignments are built around these broadcasts. Please alert me as soon as you know of any conflicts so we can make alternative arrangements.

Chicago Course Embedded Travel

During the latter weekend of fall break we will travel by bus to Chicago and stay for two nights and three days in the city (10/25-10/27). We will attend two operas, take a tour of the Chicago Lyric house, and spend a day at the Newberry Library doing a small research project. Participation in all of the components of this trip is mandatory, and we will have short reflection assignments that integrate our experiences with other course materials.

Final Analysis Paper

During the last two weeks of the semester we will work individually on a paper that analyzes and synthesizes course materials and serves as the final assignment for the class. We will work collaboratively on scaffolding, drafting, and revisions. The finished paper is due on Monday 12/6.

COURSE GRADING

Your overall grade will be calculated according to the following formula:

course participation	35%
NY Met performance review paper	10%
Chicago CET reflection essays	25%
Final analysis paper	30%

COURSE SCHEDULE

please prepare all readings (•) for class on the day they are listed on the syllabus

R Aug 29 **Introduction**

PART I IDENTIFYING "GRAND OPERA": LES HUGUENOTS IN PARIS, 1836

T Sept 3 **Lecture - The French Revolution and its Echoes**

R Sept 5 **Constructing a Grand Opera**

- Description of the Opera House in Galignani *New Paris Guide* (1839)
- Meyerbeer/Veron Contract (1834) with amendments
- *Mise-en-scène* documents (1835-6)
all in *First Nights at the Opera*, pp. 201-206 + 222-226

T Sept 10 **Grand Opera as Politics**

- Jane Fulcher, Introduction and C2, "The Politics of Grand Opera's Rise and Decline" in *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicized Art* (1989), pp. 1-10 & pp. 47-121

R Sept 12 **Staging *Les Huguenots*: Behind the Scenes**

- Meyerbeer letters to Minna (1834-6)
- In-class viewing: *Les Huguenots* Act I

weekend viewing: finish *Les Huguenots*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47Og7nQtWag>

T Sept 17 **Reviewing *Les Huguenots* (1836, 2002)**

- published reviews from *Le Monde Dramatique*, *Le Ménestrel*, *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* Hector Berlioz, George Sand, Charles De Boigne, Henry Chorley
all in *First Nights at the Opera*, pp. 212-222
- Newark "Metaphors for Meyerbeer" in *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 127/1 (2002) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3840478>

PART II WAGNER THE "REVOLUTIONARY": DAS RHEINGOLD AT BAYREUTH, 1876

R Sept 19 **LECTURE: German unification, 1815-1871**
• Applegate + Potter "Germans as the "People of Music": Genealogy of an Identity" in *Music and German National Identity*

T Sept 24 **Wagner on the Left**
• Wagner "Man and Established Society" and "The Revolution" (1849)
• Wagner *Opera and Drama* (1851), excerpts (pp. 91-102)
• Krohn "The Revolutionary of 1848-1849"

R Sept 26 **Wagner on the Right; Ludwig II**
• McIntosh *The Swan King*, excerpts
• Wagner Preface to the *Ring* libretto (1863)
• Wagner "To the Kingly Friend" (1864)
• Wagner diary entries (1865)

T Oct 1 ***Rheingold* takes the stage**
• Eyewitness rehearsal accounts (1876) all in *First Nights at the Opera*, pp. 284-292
• Press releases from the Bayreuth Festival (1876)
In-class viewing: *Das Rheingold*, Scene I

outside of class viewing: finish *Das Rheingold*
<https://grinnell-naxosvideolibrary-com.grinnell.idm.oclc.org/title/A05008443>

R Oct 3 **Reviewing *Das Rheingold***
• Memoires and press reviews of *Das Rheingold* (1876)
Daily Telegraph, *Manchester Guardian*, *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, *Neue Freie Presse*,
Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, *New York Tribune* all in *First Nights at the Opera*,
pp. 293-296 + 300-313
• Other responses (1876) – Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Saint-Saëns

PART II GETTING AT AUDIENCE – A SOCIOLOGICAL ANGLE

T Oct 8 • Claudio Benzecry, *The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession*
preface, introduction, chapters 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 (pp. xi-110)

R Oct 10 • Benzecry, chapters 5 + 6 + 7 + conclusion (pp. 111-194)
NY Met performance review paper prompt handed out in class

SATURDAY **NY Met Live in HD Broadcast - Harris Cinema**
10/12 **PUCCINI - TURANDOT (1926)**
pre-broadcast lecture begins 11:30

PART III ITALY AND OPERA IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

- T Oct 15 LECTURETTES**
Creating the Nation, Contextualizing the Trinity: Rossini Verdi Puccini
 • Abbate and Parker, "Rossini and transition" in *A History of Opera* (2012), pp. 188ff
 • Abbate and Parker, "Young Verdi" in *A History of Opera* (2012), pp. 241ff
- R Oct 17 "Largo al factotum" from *The Barber of Seville***
Class visit: Mark Laver, GC Department of Music
[NY Met performance review paper due in class](#)

FALL BREAK**PART IV COURSE EMBEDDED TRAVEL to CHICAGO**

- Fri Oct 25 Departure from Grinnell c. 7:00 a.m.**
VERDI - LUISA MILLER (1849)
7:00 curtain
- Sat Oct 26 Newberry Library research day**
10:00-4:00
- Sun Oct 27 ROSSINI - BARBER OF SEVILLE (1816)**
2:00 curtain
Arrival in Grinnell c. 11:00 p.m.

PART V OPERA AND ITS OTHERS: QUEERNESS, ORIENTALISM, AND MINIMALISM

- T Oct 29 Chicago CET debrief**
 • Wayne Koestenbaum, Chapter 1, "Opera Queens" (excerpts) and "A Pocket Guide to Queer Moments in Opera: "Il barbiere di siviglia " in *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire* (1993), pp. 214-215
- R Oct 31 Scholars grapple with *Butterfly*:**
 Ralph Locke, "Imperialism and "the exotic Orient"" in *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (2009), pp. 175-213
- T Nov 5 Scholars grapple with *Butterfly* II:**
 Domingos de Mascarenhas, "Beyond Orientalism: The International Rise of Japan and the Revisions to Madama Butterfly" in Cowgill, Cooper, Brown eds., *Art and Ideology in European Opera* (2010), pp. 281-302
- R Nov 7 Scholars grapple with *Butterfly* III:**
 Arthur Groos, "Madama Butterfly between East and West" in Schwartz and Senici, eds., *Puccini and His World* (2016), pp. 49-84

SATURDAY **NY Met Live in HD Broadcast - Harris Cinema**
11/9 **PUCCINI - MADAMA BUTTERFLY (1904)**
Lecture begins 11:30

T Nov 12 **Reviewing *Madama Butterfly***
 • Alexandra Wilson, "A frame without a canvas: *Madama Butterfly* and the superficial" in *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism, and Modernity* (2009), pp. 97-104

R Nov 14 **Revisiting *Madama Butterfly***
 • Wayne Koestenbaum, "A Pocket Guide to Queer Moments in Opera: Butterfly's entrance in *Madama Butterfly*" pp. 199-200
 • Catherine Clément, Prelude and "Madame Butterfly" in *Opera, Or the Undoing of Women* (1988), pp. 3-24 & pp. 43-47

T Nov 19 **Opera and Ideas**
 • Robert T. Jones and Philip Glass, *Music by Philip Glass* (1987) [excerpts]

R Nov 21 **Philip Glass in the Year of Orwell**
 • John Rockwell, "City Opera Tries a Bold New Tack: The City Opera Reaches for an Innovative Vision" *NYT* 3/4/1984
 • John Rockwell, "Opera: Premieres of Two Works by Philip Glass" *NYT* 3/26/1984
 • John Rockwell, "New Opera is Thriving after Years of Neglect: Musical Theater Now Encompasses Many Forms" *NYT* 8/5/1984
 • John Rockwell, "Philip Glass Zeroes In On Opera as Theatre" *NYT* 11/4/1984
 • Donal Henahan, "City Opera: 'Akhnatén' by Glass" *NYT* 11/5/1984
 • Donal Henahan, "City Opera's Big Gambles Paid Off Handsomely: Big Gambles" *NYT* 11/18/1984
 • Steven Holden, "The Avant-Garde Is Big Box Office" *NYT* 12/16/1984

SATURDAY **NY Met Live in HD Broadcast - Harris Cinema**
11/23 **GLASS - AKHNATEN (1984)**
Lecture begins 11:30

T Nov 26 **discussion of *Akhnatén***
Final Analysis paper prompt handed out in class

THANKSGIVING BREAK

T Dec 3 **Final Analysis individual meetings**
R Dec 5 **Final Analysis individual meetings**

T Dec 10 **Final Analysis revision meetings**
R Dec 12 **Course Roundtable and Wrap-Up**

MONDAY
12/16 ***Final Analysis paper due by electronic submission AND by hard copy at Mears by noon***