

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

Fall Semester 2018

Monday / Wednesday, 1:00-2:20 p.m.

Mears 217



## COURSE INFORMATION

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the complex relationship between music production and political power in the nineteenth centuries in four national contexts: France, Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union. We consider specific relationships among composers, politicians, and institutions 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 DVD viewings of several works and course-embedded travel to attend a performance of Puccini's *La Bohème* at the Chicago Lyric Opera at the beginning of fall break.

Course requirements include regular, active, REactive, and thoughtful participation during discussions; one case study analysis paper; and two performance review papers. Please note that no particular training or expertise in music is required for this class. Curiosity is a great place to start.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Jane Fulcher, *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicized Art* (Cambridge University Press, 1987/2002) ISBN: 0521529433 - paperback

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

Christopher McIntosh, *The Swan King: Ludwig II of Bavaria* (Tauris Parke, 1982/2003) ISBN: 1860648924 - paperback

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

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Although introductory lectures provide the broad historical context for each of the units which we explore, this class otherwise is conducted like a seminar. Our meetings center around 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 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.

This is a writing intensive course, and there are a number of assignments of differing length and requiring different skills. In order to make your workload manageable, considerable choice and flexibility have been built into the syllabus. Please refer to the descriptions below.

### **Case Study Analysis Paper**

At the end of three of our case study units - France, Germany, and the Soviet Union - I will circulate case study analysis paper prompts. You choose one of these topics and write a carefully-crafted paper of roughly seven pages incorporating the material which we have covered in readings, discussions, and viewing for that unit. Following the deadline for the first draft of this paper, you will receive extensive comments for revision. The revised paper is due two weeks after you received the first paper back from me OR at another mutually agreed upon time. Should you choose to write on the Soviet Union at the end of the semester, a rewrite will be impossible and you MUST rewrite your two performance review papers instead.

### **Performance Review Papers**

#### **1) Chicago**

During our course-embedded travel to Chicago at the beginning of fall break, I will circulate a prompt requiring that you write a three-page paper incorporating your experiences on the trip as well as class

materials and discussion. Revisions are optional (unless Shostakovich) and due two weeks after you received the first paper back from me OR at another mutually agreed upon time.

## 2) NY Metropolitan Opera Live in HD Broadcasts

Four Saturdays during the semester (10/6, 10/27, 11/10, 12/15, indicated in green on the syllabus), 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. You may choose one of these performances to attend and to write a three page performance review paper, due as indicated on the syllabus. Revisions are optional (unless Shostakovich) and due two weeks after you received the first paper back from me OR at another mutually agreed upon time.

## COURSE GRADING

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

course participation	40%
case study analysis paper	15%
revision	20%
Chicago performance review paper	15%
[revision 5/10%]	
NY Met performance review paper	15%
[revision 5/10%]	

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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

M Sept 3      **Introduction**

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### **PART I: MEYERBEER AND POST-REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE**

W Sept 5      **LECTURE: The French Revolution and Its Echoes**

M Sept 10     **The Rise of French Grand Opera**

- Fulcher *The Nation's Image* Introduction and Chapter 1 + 2 (pp. 1-121)

W Sept 12     **The Fall of French Grand Opera**

- Fulcher *The Nation's Image* Chapters 3 + 4 and Conclusion (pp. 122-204)

M Sept 17     **Staging *Les Huguenots*: Behind the Scenes**

- 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
- Meyerbeer letters to Minna (1834-6)

**VIEWING** Meyerbeer *Les Huguenots* (1836)  
**Sept XX tba** • **Synopsis of *Les Huguenots* (Fulcher pp. 247-251)**

W Sept 19 **Discussion of *Les Huguenots***  
**Responding to *Les Huguenots*: Reception**  
 • Huebner, "Opera Audiences in Paris, 1830-1870" in *National Traditions in Nineteenth-C Opera: Italy, France, England, and the Americas* (2010), pp. 163-182  
 • Press reviews of *Les Huguenots* (1836)  
*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

M Sept 24 **Responding to *Les Huguenots*: Analysis**  
 • Newark "Metaphors for Meyerbeer" in *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 127/1 (2002) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3840478>

**CASE STUDY ANALYSIS #1 PAPER PROMPT HANDED OUT IN CLASS**

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**PART II: PUCCINI - PIETY, PUBLICITY, and PARIS**

W Sept 26 **LECTURE: *Risorgimento* and Italian Irredentism, 1815-1914**

M Oct 1 READINGS TBA

W Oct 3 READINGS TBA

F Oct 5 **CASE STUDY ANALYSIS #1 PAPER DRAFT DUE**  
**9:00 p.m. by electronic submission**

**SATURDAY**  
**10/6**

**NYMet Live in HD - Verdi, *Aida* (3h 36')**  
**LECTURE BY EMILY RHODES '19 French & History, Euro Studs Concn**

M Oct 8 READINGS TBA

**VIEWING** Puccini *La Bohème* (1900)  
**Oct XX tba** • **Synopsis of *La Bohème***

W Oct 10 **Discussion of *La Bohème***  
 READINGS TBA

F Oct 12 **NY Met Live in HD broadcast Verdi performance review paper draft due**  
**5:00 p.m. by electronic submission**

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**PART III: GETTING AT AUDIENCE – A SOCIOLOGICAL ANGLE**

- M Oct 15 • Claudio Benzecry, *The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession*  
preface, introduction, chapters 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 (pp. xi-110)
- W Oct 17 • Benzecry, chapters 5 + 6 + 7 + conclusion (pp. 111-194)

**SATURDAY 10/19** **Course-Embedded Travel to Chicago Lyric Opera**  
**Puccini *La Bohème***  
Chicago Civic Opera House tour, 3:00  
Puccini curtain, 7:30  
**PERFORMANCE PAPER PROMPT HANDED OUT DURING TRIP**

**FALL BREAK**

**SATURDAY 10/27** **NYMet Live in HD - Puccini, *La Fanciulla del West* (3h 22')**  
**LECTURE BY MILLICENT WAKEMAN '19 English, European Studies Concentration**

M Oct 29 Discussion of Chicago Lyric Opera's *La Bohème*  
**PERFORMANCE PAPER DRAFT DUE IN CLASS**

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**PART IV: WAGNER, LUDWIG II, AND GERMAN UNIFICATION**

- W Oct 31 **LECTURE: German unification, 1815-1871**  
• Applegate + Potter "Germans as the "People of Music": Genealogy of an Identity"  
in *Music and German National Identity*
- F Nov 2** **NY Met Live in HD broadcast Puccini performance review paper draft due 5:00 p.m. by electronic submission**
- M Nov 5 **Ludwig II + Wagner**  
• McIntosh *The Swan King* Preface and Chaps 1-10 "Wagnerian Strains"
- W Nov 7 **Ludwig II + Wagner to the Bitter End**  
• McIntosh *The Swan King* Chaps 11-19 and epilogue

**SATURDAY 11/10** **Met Live in HD - Muhly, *Marnie* (2h 52')**  
**LECTURE BY ANH THU PHAM '19 Computer Science and**  
**RACHEL HINKLEY '21 Independent Major in Society and Law**

- M Nov 12 **Wagner the Revolutionary**  
• Wagner "Man and Established Society" and "The Revolution" (1849)  
• Wagner *Opera and Drama* (1851), excerpts (pp. 91-102)  
• Krohn "The Revolutionary of 1848-1849"

- W Nov 14      **Wagner the Conservative**
- Wagner Preface to the *Ring* libretto (1863)
  - Wagner "To the Kingly Friend" and "On State and Religion" (1864)
  - Wagner diary entries (1865)
- F Nov 16      **NY Met Live in HD broadcast Muhly performance review paper draft due 5:00 p.m. by electronic submission**
- M Nov 19      **Preparing for the *Rheingold* Premiere**
- Eyewitness rehearsal accounts (1876) all in *First Nights at the Opera*, pp. 284-292
  - Press releases from the Bayreuth Festival (1876)
- CASE STUDY ANALYSIS #2 PAPER PROMPT HANDED OUT IN CLASS**
- VIEWING**      **Wagner, *Das Rheingold* (1876)**
- Nov XX tba**      • **Wapnewski synopsis of *Rheingold***
- W Nov 21      **Discussion of *Rheingold***
- Responding to the *Rheingold* Premiere**
- 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
- R Nov 22      **THANKSGIVING**
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- PART IV: SHOSTAKOVICH AND SURVIVAL/ENABLING IN THE SOVIET UNION**
- M Nov 26      **LECTURE: Russian Revolution and Soviet Union, 1917-1991**
- W Nov 28      **Framing the Relationship between Composer and Dictator**
- Volkov *Shostakovich and Stalin* Prologue, Chapters I - IV (pp. 3-168)
- VIEWING**      **Shostakovich, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (1934)**
- Nov/DecXtba**      • **Synopsis of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk***
- M Dec 3      **Discussion of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk***
- The 1920s + 1930s and the Arts**
- Shostakovich letters (1923-1927)
  - Mayakovsky + Mandelstam poems (1930s)
- CASE STUDY ANALYSIS #2 PAPER DRAFT DUE 9:00 p.m. by electronic submission**
- W Dec 5      **Key Articles and Essays**
- *New York Times* "New Soviet Opera is Presented Here" (1935)
  - *Pravda* "Muddle Instead of Music" (1936)

- W Dec 5 cont
- Pravda "The Opera *The Great Friendship* of V. Muradelli (1948)
  - Shostakovich "Art Must Reflect Reality" (1962)
  - Shostakovich (with Volkov) *Testimony: Memoirs* (1979)

- M Dec 10
- Alternative Readings of the *Lady MacBeth* Incident**
- Fitzpatrick "The Lady Macbeth Affair: Shostakovich and the Soviet Puritans" in *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (1992)
  - Taruskin "Entr'acte: The Lessons of Lady M." in *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (1997)
- CASE STUDY ANALYSIS #3 PROMPT HANDED OUT IN CLASS**

- W Dec 12
- Course Wrap-Up**

**SATURDAY**  
**12/15**

**NYMet Live in HD - Verdi, *La Traviata* (3h 7')**  
**LECTURE BY NICOLETTE MUSACHIO '19 Anthropology, Linguistics Concent'n**  
**ALEC WOOD '19 French and Music**

**FINAL EXAM WEEK**

**FRIDAY**  
**12/21**

**CASE STUDY ANALYSIS #3 DUE, and ALL PAPER REVISIONS DUE**  
**NY MET LIVE IN HD BROADCAST VERDI PERFORMANCE REVIEW PAPER DUE**  
**by electronic submission AND by hard copy at Mears by 4:00 p.m.**