

HIS 239-01

**Tyrants and Tunesmiths:
Opera, Politics, and Society in Modern Europe**
Spring Semester 2013
Tuesday and Thursday 12:45-2:05
Alumni Recitation Hall #120



COURSE INFORMATION

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

Office: Mears #305, (641) 269-4465

Office Hours: M+F 10:00-11:00 a.m. Mears #305, Tues 4:15-5:15 p.m. at the Grill, and by appt

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the complex relationship between music production and political power in the nineteenth and twentieth 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, attendance at the New York Metropolitan Opera Live in HD broadcast series at the Harris Center, and a field trip to the Chicago Lyric Opera's production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*.

Course requirements are the following: regular, active, and thoughtful participation during discussions; two case study papers; one comparative analysis paper; one performance review paper; and a final, peer-reviewed presentation with accompanying annotated bibliography on a musico-political topic of students' own devising. 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

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 AND GRADING

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.

You are expected to attend class regularly except in case of dire emergency. You should always have the reading materials in hand, annotated and ready for discussion. 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 Papers

At the end of the France, Germany, and Soviet Union units, I will circulate an essay topic for a paper of roughly five pages in length. You may **choose one of the three units** and write a carefully-crafted response paper analyzing the material which we have covered in readings, discussions, and viewing for that unit only. Deadlines for each paper are indicated on the course schedule.

Comparative Analysis Paper

In conjunction with the College's New York Metropolitan Opera Live in HD broadcasts, there will be two comparative paper topics that ask you to incorporate class materials, a few additional short readings, and your experience attending one of the broadcasts. You may choose **one of the two topics** and write a carefully-crafted comparison paper of roughly five pages in response to the prompt provided. This semester, the comparisons are: 1) Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* paired with Berlioz's *Les Troyens* (1/31) and 2) Wagner's *Das Rheingold* paired with Wagner's *Parsifal* (3/2). Deadlines for each paper are indicated on the course schedule.

Performance Review Paper

Our unit on Verdi's *Rigoletto* with which our field trip to the Chicago Lyric Opera is associated requires a **performance review paper**. The topic will be circulated during our trip.

Presentation and Annotated Bibliography

At the end of the semester, each student will be responsible for a **peer-reviewed presentation** of roughly 12 minutes in duration on a substantive, carefully-researched topic of your own devising, developed in consultation with me. Each presentation is expected to take into account political and social context as well as musical style and to incorporate a discussion of one or more of the broader issues raised during the semester. An **annotated bibliography** recording the research sources for your presentation is also required.

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) You may NOT choose to do your case study analysis and comparative analysis papers on the same national contexts.
- 2) You have the **option to rewrite one** of your papers for an averaging of the two earned grades.
- 3) There is no final exam in this class.

WRITING MENTOR

Finally, in this course we also enjoy the added resource of a writing mentor, Jo Megas. You are **required** to consult with Jo on two occasions over the course of the semester: 1) when you are in the throes of writing your first paper (whether that is a case study analysis or a comparative analysis is up to you), and 2) when you develop the first full draft of your annotated bibliography.

For the paper, you may consult with her to flesh out your **ideas** as you think through the assignment, to hammer out an overall **structure** for the paper, to discuss the shaping of a coherent and thorough **thesis statement**, to decide on the proper and most convincing **use of evidence** for your paper, to tighten up the style and **clarity** within in your draft, or any combination of these things.

As for the annotated bibliography, Jo will be a first set of eyes and advice as you pull together your resources and articulate their usefulness for your final project. You are also strongly encouraged to consult with Jo as you are developing your ideas for the outside research project (presentation and annotated bibliography). You may also work with Jo in the process of your (optional) paper rewrite.

Please note that 1) you should make and respect office hour appointments with Jo just as you would with professors or other student colleagues; 2) her role is to serve as a supplemental resource, not as a replacement for the professor, and I am responsible for all of the assessment of your work as with any other course at Grinnell; and 3) you certainly should feel free to consult with Jo on more than the two occasions required of you for the course.

megasjoa@grinnell.edu

Writing Mentor Burling Library Office Hours: Monday 1:00-2:00, Thursday 2:15-3:15, and by appt

COURSE GRADING

course participation	35%
case study analysis paper	10%
comparative analysis paper	10%
performance review paper	5%
final presentation	20%
annotated bibliography	20%

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 22 **Introduction**

PART I FRANCE

Jan 24 **LECTURE: French Revolutions, 1789-1871**

Jan 29 **The Rise of French Grand Opera**

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

Jan 31 **The Fall of French Grand Opera**

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

THURSDAY

JANUARY 31 METROPOLITAN OPERA LIVE IN HD VIEWING #1 (OPTIONAL)

Berlioz *Les Troyens* @ Harris Center

Talk at 5:30, Curtain at 6:00

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS PAPER

- Berlioz, excerpts from *Memoires of Hector Berlioz from 1803-1865, comprising his travels in Germany, Italy, Russia, and England*. Trans. Rachel Holmes, ed. Ernest Neuman (1932): pp. 494-502
- David Cairns, "The Trojans" in *Berlioz: Servitude and Greatness, 1832-1869* (1989/2000): 591-627

SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 3 CLASS VIEWING #1

Meyerbeer *Les Huguenots* (1836)

- Synopsis of *Les Huguenots* (Fulcher pp. 247-251)

Feb 5 Discussion of *Les Huguenots*

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*, pp. 201-206 + 222-226

Tues Feb 5 cont

- Meyerbeer letters to Minna (1834-6)
Topic for Case Study Analysis Paper #1 (Meyerbeer) handed out in class

Feb 7

Responding to *Les Huguenots*

- Press reviews of *Les Huguenots* (1836)
Le Monde Dramatique, *Le Ménestrel*, *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*
- Other responses (1836)
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

ITALY

Feb 12

MINI-LECTURE: *Risorgimento* and Italian Irredentism, 1815-1914

- John Rosselli, "Music and Nationalism in Italy" in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism*, ed. White and Murphy (2001), pp. 181-196

Feb 14

Institutional Contexts and the Making of *Rigoletto*

- Alessandro Roccatagliati, "The Italian theatre of Verdi's day" in *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi* (2004), pp. 15-28
- Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, excerpts from *Verdi: A Biography* (1993), pp. 263-287

FRIDAY

Case Study Analysis Paper #1 (Meyerbeer) due OR

FEBRUARY 15

Comparative Analysis Paper #1 (Meyerbeer & Berlioz) due
5:00 p.m. by electronic submission

SATURDAY

METROPOLITAN OPERA LIVE IN HD VIEWING #2 (REQUIRED)

FEBRUARY 16

Verdi *Rigoletto* @ Harris Center
Talk at 11:30, Curtain at 12:00

Feb 19

Discussion of *Rigoletto*

Scholars take on *Rigoletto* I: Politics and Performance

- Anthony Arblaster "Verdi: The Liberal Patriot" in *Viva la Libertà! Politics in Opera* (1992), pp. 91-97, 111-116
- Alex Ross, "Verdi's Grip: Opera as Popular Art" in *Listen to This* (2010), pp. 188-203

Feb 21

Scholars take on *Rigoletto* II: Gender and Anomalies

- Cormac Newark, "'Ch'hai di nuovo, buffon?" or What's new with *Rigoletto*?" in *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi* (2004), pp. 197-208
- Joseph Kerman, "Verdi and the Undoing of Women" in *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 1 (2006): 21-31 <http://owwww.jstor.org.cat.lib.grinnell.edu/stable/3878271>

MINI-LECTURE: German unification, 1815-1871

PART III GERMANY

Feb 26

A German Musical Tradition? / Ludwig II + Wagner

- Applegate + Potter "Germans as the "People of Music": Genealogy of an Identity" in *Music and German National Identity*
- McIntosh *The Swan King* Preface + Chapters 1-6 (pp. 1-69)

Feb 28

Ludwig II + Wagner to the Bitter End

- McIntosh *The Swan King* Chapters 7-19 + Epilogue (pp. 70-204)

SATURDAY

MARCH 2

METROPOLITAN OPERA LIVE IN HD VIEWING #3 (OPTIONAL)

Wagner *Parsifal* @Harris Center

Talk at 10:30, Curtain at 11:00

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS PAPER

- Richard Wagner, Paraphrase of *Parsifal* prelude (1880)
- Richard Pohl, Letter from Bayreuth (July 1886)
- John Deathridge "Strange Love; or, How we learned to stop worrying and love Wagner's *Parsifal*" in Julie Brown, ed., *Western Music + Race* (2007): 65-83

SUNDAY

MARCH 3

CLASS VIEWING #2

Wagner, *Das Rheingold*

- Wapnewski synopsis of Rheingold

Mar 5

Discussion of *Rheingold*

Wagner the Revolutionary

- Wagner "Man and Established Society" and "The Revolution" (1849)
- Wagner *Opera and Drama* (1851), excerpts
- Krohn "The Revolutionary of 1848-1849"

Mar 7

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)

SUNDAY

MARCH 10

CHICAGO LYRIC OPERA's *Rigoletto* – curtain at 2:00

- review synopsis of *Rigoletto*
- Performance review paper topic handed out on trip*

Mar 12

Discussion: CLO's *Rigoletto*

Preparing for the *Rheingold* Premiere

- Eyewitness accounts of rehearsals (1876)
all in *First Nights at the Opera*, pp. 284-292
- Press releases from the Bayreuth Festival (1876)

- Mar 14 **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
- Topic for Case Study Analysis Paper #2 (Wagner) handed out in class*

FRIDAY

- MARCH 15 *Rigoletto performance review paper due*
5:00 p.m. by electronic submission

SPRING BREAK

PART IV SOVIET UNION

- Apr 2 **MINI-LECTURE: Russian Revolution and Soviet Union, 1917-1991**
Framing the Relationship between Composer and Dictator
- Volkov *Shostakovich and Stalin*
Prologue, Chapters I - III (pp. 3-141)

- Apr 4 NO CLASS - I WILL BE AWAY AT A CONFERENCE

FRIDAY

- APRIL 5 *Case Study Analysis Paper #2 (Wagner) due OR*
Comparative Analysis Paper #2 (Rheingold & Parsifal) due
5:00 p.m. by electronic submission

SUNDAY

- APRIL 7 CLASS VIEWING #3
Shostakovich, Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk (1934)
- Synopsis of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*

- Apr 9 Discussion of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*
The 1920s + 1930s and the Arts
- Shostakovich letters (1923-1927)
 - Mayakovsky + Mandelstam poems (1930s)
 - Moskvina *The Soviet Theater* (1939)

- Apr 11 NO CLASS - I WILL BE AWAY AT ANOTHER CONFERENCE

- Apr 16 **Key Articles and Essays**
- *New York Times* "New Soviet Opera is Presented Here" (1935)
 - *Pravda* "Muddle Instead of Music" (1936)
 - *Pravda* "The Opera *The Great Friendship* of V. Muradelli (1948)

- Shostakovich "Art Must Reflect Reality" (1962)
- Shostakovich (with Volkov) *Testimony: Memoirs* (1979)

Apr 18

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)
- Topic for Case Study Analysis Paper #3 (Shostakovich) handed out in class*

Apr 23

Individual Consultations re: research projects

Apr 25

Peer-Reviewed Presentations - Group 1

Apr 30

Peer-Reviewed Presentations - Group 2

May 2

Peer-Reviewed Presentations - Group 3

FRIDAY

MAY 3

Case Study Analysis Paper #3 (Shostakovich) due
5:00 p.m. by electronic submission

May 7

Peer-Reviewed Presentations - Group 4

May 9

Peer-Reviewed Presentations - Group 5

WED

MAY 15

FINAL ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
Mears #305 at 12:00 noon