

HIS 282-01 Contextualizing Opera: The NY Metropolitan Opera Live in HD Broadcasts

Fall Semester 2019
time/location TBD



COURSE INFORMATION

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

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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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OVERVIEW

This course is a 2-credit, 200-level variable topic research class that takes as its basic content the New York Metropolitan Opera's Live in HD series (in which roughly 8-14 operas per year are streamed live in movie theaters across the globe - including at the Harris Center on the Grinnell campus). Students choose one of the operas scheduled during the semester and research its historical context, formal characteristics, and scholarly treatment. In addition to cultivating basic historical literacy skills, students come to the class with and incorporate their own particular areas of interest and expertise. Working alone or with a small group of other students depending on enrollment, students prepare and deliver one twenty-minute, pre-broadcast lecture based upon their research and interests.

OBJECTIVES

The main goals of this course are

- to cultivate research skills in a collaborative environment with faculty mentorship
- to engage critically with a range of primary sources, learning to interrogate their authorship, biases, contexts, and variably interpretable meanings
- to examine the work of modern scholars across disciplines and learn to identify their arguments, methods, conversational position, and use of evidence
- to hone skills in the clear, concise formulation of ideas with particular attention to the development of an argument and the marshaling of appropriate supporting evidence
- to support and critique fellow students' work in constructive, respectful ways
- to cultivate student skills in public presentations that both deliver scholarly content AND entertain and engage a general audience.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

This is a two-credit course that runs throughout the entire semester. Since this is an unfamiliar experience for most of us, here are some basic parameters. As compared to a four-credit course, 1) we meet for half the contact hours; 2) students spend half the time commitment of work outside of class; 3) all assignments cumulatively require roughly half as much labor; and 4) your grade at the end of the semester will carry half the weight of a normal four-credit course. In light of the fact that attending Saturday broadcasts is a necessary but time-consuming endeavor, we will not have common readings for discussion on Tuesdays. Instead, all of your class preparation will be connected to your research process as you prepare your pre-performance lecture.

Your grade will be assessed according to the following formula:

20%	class attendance, participation, and peer feedback of research development
20%	timely and thorough preparation of research components
20%	peer lecture feedback
40%	pre-broadcast lecture

In the weeks leading up to your scheduled lecture, you should be prepared to do the following:

- identify extant historiography/scholarship, potential approach/argument
- identify primary sources/evidence in support of argument
- draft thesis, decide on lecture structure, consider public presentation strategies
- present draft lecture, receive peer critique

I want every person in this class 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). Please be in touch with me at any time and by whatever means you find most comfortable if there is anything I can do to help.

SCHEDULE

9/2 initial meeting and assignment of opera lectures

w/o

9/9 Viv and Maggie discuss general information learned re: Puccini/*Turandot* and initial research angle/interests

w/o

9/16 Viv and Maggie discuss extant historiography/scholarship, potential approach/argument

w/o
9/23 Viv and Maggie discuss primary sources/evidence in support of argument

w/o
9/30 Viv and Maggie present draft thesis, discuss lecture structure
Eva and Nannan discuss general information learned re: Puccini/*Butterfly* and initial research angle/interests

w/o
10/7 Viv and Maggie present draft lecture and receive peer critique
Eva and Nannan discuss extant historiography/scholarship, potential approach/argument

SATURDAY

10/12 Met Live in HD
Puccini *Turandot* (1926)
pre-broadcast lecture 11:30
Harris Cinema

w/o
10/14 class discussion of *Turandot* lecture and production
Eva and Nannan discuss primary sources/evidence in support of argument
Morgan and Enrique discuss general information learned re: Glass/*Akhmaten* and initial research angle/interests

w/o
10/21 FALL BREAK

SATURDAY

10/26 Met Live in HD
Massenet *Manon* (1884)
pre-broadcast lecture 11:30 by Emeritus Professor Don Smith
Harris Cinema

w/o
10/28 Eva and Nannan present draft thesis, discuss lecture structure
Morgan and Enrique discuss extant historiography/scholarship, potential approach/argument

w/o
11/4 Eva and Nannan present draft lecture and receive peer critique
Morgan and Enrique discuss primary sources/evidence in support of argument

SATURDAY

11/9 **Met Live in HD**
Puccini *Madama Butterfly* (1905)
pre-broadcast lecture 11:30
Harris Cinema

w/o class discussion of *Butterfly* lecture and production

11/11 Morgan and Enrique present draft thesis, discuss lecture structure

w/o

11/18 Morgan and Enrique present draft lecture and receive peer critique

SATURDAY

11/23 **Met Live in HD**
Glass *Akhnaten* (1983)
pre-broadcast lecture 11:30
Harris Cinema

w/o

11/25 class discussion of *Akhnaten* lecture and production
course wrap up

THANKSGIVING

w/o

12/2 NO CLASS MEETING

w/o

12/9 NO CLASS MEETING