

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

Spring Semester 2020

Thursdays 11:00-11:50

HSSC NE lounge



## COURSE INFORMATION

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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

1/23 initial meeting and assignment of opera lectures

1/30 Jacob does a whirlwind draft presentation after learning *P&B*, determining the thematic angle he'd like to pursue, identifying the relevant arguments other scholars have made, working through primary sources that speak to his area of interest, deciding what his argument is, and drafting his talk (!!). That's all.  
Morgan discusses general information learned about *Agrippina* and initial research angle/interests

- SATURDAY**
- 2/2 **Met Live in HD**  
**Gershwin *Porgy and Bess* (1935)**  
**pre-broadcast lecture 11:30 by JACOB JOHNSON**  
**Harris Cinema**
- 2/6 class discussion of *Porgy and Bess* lecture and production  
Morgan discusses extant historiography/scholarship on *Agrippina*, potential approach/argument, and primary source ideas
- 2/13 Morgan discusses primary sources/evidence in depth and direction of argument  
Youwong discusses general information learned about *Der fliegende Holländer* and initial research angle/interests
- 2/20 Morgan presents draft thesis, discusses lecture structure  
Youwong discusses extant historiography/scholarship on *Der fliegende Holländer*, potential approach/argument, and primary source ideas
- 2/27 Morgan presents draft lecture and receives peer critique  
Youwong discusses primary sources/evidence in depth and direction of argument  
Lucas discusses general information learned about *Tosca* and initial research angle/interests
- SATURDAY**
- 2/29 **Met Live in HD**  
**Handel *Agrippina* (1709)**  
**pre-broadcast lecture 11:30 by MORGAN FRANKLIN**  
**Harris Cinema**
- 3/5 class discussion of *Agrippina* lecture and production  
Youwong presents draft thesis, discusses lecture structure  
Lucas discusses extant historiography/scholarship on *Tosca*, potential approach/argument, and primary source ideas
- 3/12 Youwong presents draft lecture and receives peer critique  
Lucas discusses primary sources/evidence in depth and direction of argument
- SATURDAY**
- 3/14 **Met Live in HD**  
**Wagner *Der fliegende Holländer* (1843)**  
**pre-broadcast lecture 11:30 by YOUTONG WANG**  
**Harris Cinema**
- 3/19 SPRING BREAK  
3/26

- 4/2 class discussion of *Der fliegende Holländer* lecture and production  
Lucas presents draft thesis, discusses lecture structure
- 4/9 Lucas presents draft lecture and receives peer critique  
Alana discusses general information learned about *Tosca* and initial research  
angle/interests
- 4/11 SATURDAY**  
**Met Live in HD**  
**Puccini *Tosca* (1900)**  
**pre-broadcast lecture 11:30 by LUCAS DENNEY**  
**Harris Cinema**
- 4/16 class discussion of *Tosca* lecture and production  
Alana discusses extant historiography/scholarship on *Maria Stuarda*, potential  
approach/argument, and primary source ideas
- 4/23 Alana discusses primary sources/evidence in depth and direction of argument
- 4/30 Alana presents draft thesis, discusses lecture structure
- 5/7 Alana presents draft lecture and receives peer critique
- 5/9 SATURDAY**  
**Met Live in HD**  
**Donizetti *Maria Stuarda* (1835)**  
**pre-broadcast lecture 11:30 by ALANA WILSON**  
**Harris Cinema**
- TBA class discussion of *Maria Stuarda* lecture and production  
course wrap up