

HIS 295-02 Contextualizing Opera: The NY Metropolitan Opera Live in HD Broadcasts

Spring Semester 2019
Mondays 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
JRC 202



COURSE INFORMATION

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Office Hours: M/W 10:00-11:00 at the Grill, by appointment
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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 likely an unfamiliar experience for all 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

SCHEDULE

1/28 initial meeting and assignment of opera lectures
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SATURDAY

2/2 **Bizet *Carmen* (1875)**
Professor Don Smith, pre-performance lecture
Harris Center Cinema

2/4 class discussion of Smith lecture and *Carmen*
Aida lecture presentation, Emily Rhodes '19
Enrique, Millicent, and Hannah discuss general information learned re: Donizetti/*La Fille*
and initial research angle interests
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2/11 Enrique, Millicent, and Hannah discuss extant historiography/scholarship, potential approach/argument, and primary sources/evidence in support of argument
Anna and Travis discuss general information learned re: Wagner/*Die Walküre* and initial research angle interests
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- 2/18 Enrique, Millicent, and Hannah present draft thesis, discuss lecture structure
class considers public presentation strategies
Anna and Travis discuss extant historiography/scholarship, potential approach/
argument
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- 2/25 Enrique, Millicent, and Hannah present draft lecture and receive peer critique
Anna and Travis discuss primary sources/evidence in support of argument
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SATURDAY

3/2 **Donizetti *La Fille du régiment* (1840)**
ENRIQUE RUEDA, MILLICENT WAKEMAN, and HANNAH WILKINS
pre-performance lecture
Harris Center Cinema

3/4 class discussion of Donizetti lecture and production
Anna and Travis present draft thesis, discuss lecture structure
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3/11 Anna and Travis present draft lecture and receive peer critique
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SPRING BREAK

SATURDAY

3/30 **Wagner *Die Walküre* (1870/1876)**
ANNA BUNDY and TRAVIS SLOFFER, pre-performance lecture
Harris Center Cinema

4/1 class discussion of Wagner lecture and production

4/8 Kally and Alec discuss general information learned re: Poulenc/*Dialogues* and
initial research angle interests
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4/15 Kally and Alec discuss extant historiography/scholarship, potential approach/
argument
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4/22 Kally and Alec discuss primary sources/evidence in support of argument
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4/29 Kally and Alec present draft thesis, discuss lecture structure
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5/6 Kally and Alec present draft lecture and receive peer critique
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SATURDAY

5/11 **Poulenc *Dialogues des Carmélites* (1957)**
KALLY CARR and ALEC WOOD, pre-performance lecture
Harris Center Cinema

TBA class discussion of *Dialogues* lecture and production
LOCATION TBA