

MUMH 4070

Operatic Literature: Opera, Race, and Representation



University of North Texas
College of Music
Fall 2020
MWF, 11-11:50

Instructor:

Dr. Peter Mondelli
Office Hours – W and F, 10-10:50

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Representation matters. That holds for opera, too. For centuries, artists in Europe and the Americas have used the art form as a way of representing other peoples and their cultures. This class will consider critically the complex legacies of those representations, ranging from genuine attempts at cross-cultural empathy and understanding, to blatant misrepresentations meant to suppress and oppress. As conversations surrounding opera turn with greater frequency toward questions of representation, diversity, and inclusion, this class will provide an opportunity to reflect on tradition and the status quo. The goal is neither to condemn nor to endorse these works, but to understand them in order to foster more productive conversations about opera, race, and representation.

Reading and Listening

There is no required text. Readings will be made available on Canvas. You can stream performances of the repertory in question via Met Opera on Demand and Opera in Video.

Reading and listening assignments should be completed before class.

Attendance and Class Participation

Regular attendance is expected. I will keep a record of absences, and will reserve the right to withdraw or fail any student who misses more than seven classes. Of course, I recognize that personal and professional lives can get hectic, and am willing to make accommodations *with advance notice*.

Regular participation is also expected. This is an upper-level course; therefore, you should expect to learn as much from each other as from me and the readings. You should come to class prepared to discuss the topic at hand. I intend to keep the day-to-day workload light in order to facilitate more in-depth discussions. These conversations cannot happen, however, if you have not put in work outside of class. Your level of preparedness and participation will figure heavily into your final grade.

COVID-19 impact on attendance:

While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. It is important that you communicate with me *prior to being absent* as to what may be preventing you from coming to class so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, or any of the other possible symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptomtesting/symptoms.html>) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

Discussion Boards

As a way of facilitating class discussion and sharing ideas, there will be weekly discussion boards on Canvas. Each Friday, I will post some of my reactions to the following week's reading and listening assignments. You can add your own posts, respond to me, and respond to each other over the weekend. Discussion boards will be graded by participation.

Response Papers

During the term, you will turn in three short (~2 page) response papers. These papers will give you a chance to address some of the issues in class in greater depth.

Final Paper

For the end of the term, you will write a longer (~7-10 page) final paper on the topic of your choice. I will check in on your progress during the semester to avoid (as much as possible) a last-minute rush.

Grading

Attendance and class participation	30%
Discussion Boards	10%
Response Papers	30%
Final Paper Progress Reports	10%
Final Paper	20%

Academic Integrity

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a “0” for that particular assignment or exam [or specify alternative sanction, such as course failure]. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Academic Integrity), who may impose further penalty.

According to the UNT catalog, the term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

- a) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations;
- b) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
- c) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university;
- d) dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or
- e) any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage.

The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to:

- a) the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and
- b) the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

See: [Academic Integrity](#)

https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003.AcadIntegrity.Final_.pdf

Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

See: [Student Code of Conduct](#)

<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

Access to Information: Eagle Connect

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect.

See: [Eagle Connect](#)

eagleconnect.unt.edu/

ODA Statement

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access.

See: [ODA](#)

disability.unt.edu. (Phone: (940) 565-4323)

UNT Policy Statement on Diversity

UNT values diversity and individuality as part of advancing ideals of human worth, dignity and academic excellence. Diverse viewpoints enrich open discussion, foster the examination of values and exposure of biases, help educate people in rational conflict resolution and responsive leadership, and prepare us for the complexities of a pluralistic society. As such, UNT is committed to maintaining an open, welcoming atmosphere that attracts qualified students, staff, and faculty from all groups to support their success. UNT does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status in its application and admission process, educational programs and activities, employment policies and use of university facilities.

See: [Diversity Statement](#)

https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/04.018_PolicyStateOnDiversity.pub8_18.pdf

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total hours registered. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

Students holding music scholarships must maintain a minimum 2.5 overall cumulative GPA and 3.0 cumulative GPA in music courses. If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended that you to schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

See: [Financial Aid](#)

<http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates.

See: [FERPA](#)

<http://ferpa.unt.edu/>

Counseling and Testing

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor whose position includes 16 hours per week of dedicated service to students in the College of Music and the College of Visual Arts and Design. Please visit the Center's website for further information:

See: [Counseling and Testing](#)

<http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>.

For more information on mental health issues, please visit:

See: [Mental Health Issues](#)

<https://speakout.unt.edu>.

The counselor for music students is:

Myriam Reynolds

Chestnut Hall, Suite 311

(940) 565-2741

Myriam.reynolds@unt.edu

Add/Drop Policy

Please be reminded that dropping classes or failing to complete and pass registered hours may make you ineligible for financial aid. In addition, if you drop below half-time enrollment you may be required to begin paying back your student loans. After the 12th class day, students must first submit a completed "Request to Drop" form to the Registrar's Office. The last day for a student to drop a class in Spring, 2020 is March 30th. Information about add/drop may be found at:

See: [Add Drop](#)

<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-add-drop>

Student Resources

The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:

See: [Student Resources](#)

https://www.unt.edu/sites/default/files/resource_sheet.pdf

Course Overview

Unit 1 – Tales of Cross-Cultural Contact

Week 1 – Giacomo Puccini, *Madama Butterfly*

- ❖ Arthur Groos, “Return of the Native: Japan in ‘Madama Butterfly/Madama Butterfly’ in Japan”

Week 2 – Georges Bizet, *Carmen*

- ❖ Kerry Murphy, “*Carmen: Couleur locale* or the Real Thing?”

Week 3 – Gioacchino Rossini, *L’Italiana in Algeri*

- ❖ Richard Osborne, *Rossini*

Unit 2 – Representing the Other

Week 4 – Richard Wagner, *Das Rheingold*

- ❖ Marc Weiner, *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination*

Week 5 – Antonín Dvořák, *Rusalka*

- ❖ Brett Cooke, “Constraining the Other in Kvapil and Dvořák’s *Rusalka*”

Week 6 – Saint-Saëns, *Samson et Dalila*

- ❖ Ralph Locke, “Constructing the Oriental ‘Other’: Saint-Saëns’s *Samson et Dalila*”

Week 7 – Rameau, *Les Indes Galantes*

- ❖ Olivia Bloechl, *Native American Song at the Frontiers of Early Modern Music*

Unit 3 – Three Views of Ancient Egypt

Week 8 – Verdi, *Aida*

- ❖ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

Week 9 – Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte*

- ❖ Martin Nedbal, “Mozart as Viennese Moralist: *Die Zauberflöte* and Its Maxims”

Week 10 – Handel, *Giulio Cesare*

- ❖ Interviews with David McVicar

Unit 4 – Modern Concerns and Approaches

Week 11 – Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess*

- ❖ Ray Allen, “An American Folk Opera? Triangulating Folkness, Blackness, and Americanness in Gershwin and Heyward’s *Porgy and Bess*”

Week 12 – Bernstein, *West Side Story*

- ❖ Frances Negrón-Muntaner, “Feeling Pretty: *West Side Story* and Puerto Rican Identity Discourses”

Week 13 – Glass, *Satyagraha*

- ❖ Linda and Michael Hutcheon, “Philip Glass’s *Satyagraha*: Para-Colonial Para-Opera”

Week 14 – Adams, *Death of Klinghoffer*

- ❖ Robert Fink, “*Klinghoffer* in Brooklyn Heights”

Week 15 – Saariaho, *L’Amour de loin*

- ❖ Amin Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*