Classical Music Seminar

MUH 6673  
Tuesday, Periods 9–11 • MUB 146 • Fall 2021

Dr. Michael Vincent • michaelvincent@ufl.edu • Office hours by appointment

Overview

This course explores European classical music during the eighteenth century. Topics include composers such as Mozart and Haydn, genres such as operas and symphonies, and approaches to research such as analysis and historiography. Students will conduct advanced research throughout the course. During Week 2, we will conduct a scavenger hunt for music with the aid of thematic catalogs, library sigla, and specialized research tools. The final project may be submitted as a traditional written paper or a non-traditional format such as a YouTube video essay.

Expectations

❖ Reading

You’re expected to come to class having completed all reading on the syllabus for that week. Be ready to engage with the materials. Have a copy available. Take notes for each assigned text so you can easily reference arguments, course themes, and striking details.

You can access all course materials for free. While most texts are available digitally through UF’s library, some are limited to hard copies. Check at least one week in advance. Use the VPN service to access library materials off-campus. If necessary, order books several weeks in advance through UBorrow or Inter-Library-Loan.

❖ Writing

Starting with Week 2, each week you will write a short response paper (500 words). This is not a research paper, but an opportunity to organize your thoughts about the week’s topic. Treat the response paper like a candid reaction to the readings, addressing salient
issues as you see fit. The professor may assign alternatives to response papers.

- **Discussion**
  Our meetings will be devoted to discussion and analysis of course material. Each person will take turns leading discussions for half of each weekly meeting. The leader will supply the class with discussion questions. The discussions need not follow a specific format. You could play media (recorded or live music, film scenes), ask questions, direct us to passages, or prepare worksheets. The leader is exempted from that week’s response paper. Class members not leading the discussion are expected to participate meaningfully. The professor may assign additional activities to aid discussion, such as guiding questions for the readings.

**Evaluation**
Weekly response papers: 40%
Capstone project: 25%
Capstone presentation: 10%
Participation and preparation: 25%

**Course Objectives**
Students should gain:

- A perspective on European music and culture in the eighteenth century
- Familiarity with contemporary debates surrounding the Enlightenment
- Skills in critiquing historiographies and historical narratives
- Ability to express critical perspectives in a research project

**University & Course Policies**
Class attendance and makeup work conforms with university policy.

Accommodations for students with disabilities conforms with university policy. Contact the Disability Resource Center for more information.

Grading conforms with university policy.

The university expects students to provide feedback on this course by completing online evaluations here. Summary results of these assessments are available here.

All violations of academic honesty will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for disciplinary action without exception. The Honor Code is available here.

The professor reserves the right to amend the syllabus.
Reading List

Week 1: The Classical Style
An assortment of short definitions of the classical style. We will read them in class.


Other Grove articles: Enlightenment, Galant, Empfindsamkeit, Rococo, Sturm und Drang

Week 2: A Scavenger Hunt with Haydn
We will meet in the AFA library for the scavenger hunt.


Saturday Review, July 1980. Article on HC Robbins Landon (on Canvas)

Week 3: Pergolesi Sets the Stage
We explore influential vocal music from the Italian master.


Week 4: A Free-Floating Immortal Cephalopod
A philosopher relates the latest scientific discoveries to comic opera.


Week 5: Listening for Signs in Classical Music
In which we decode symbols of the classical style.


Week 6: Haydn and the String Quartet
We acquaint ourselves with the father of the string quartet.

Part III: “Haydn from 1770 to the Death of Mozart,” Chapter 1: “String Quartet”

Week 7: Mozart and the String Quartet
We explore Mozart’s string quartets and their influences.


Week 8: Myths about Mozart
The man, the legend, the cyberpunk time traveler.

Miloš Forman’s *Amadeus* (1984) [UF DVD (2 copies)]


Week 9: Pleasure and Italian Comic Opera
Why did audiences like comic opera?


Week 10: The Social World of Mozart’s Operas
How did class and the aristocracy intersect with opera?


**Week 11: The Performing Body**  
Unheard aspects of music performance in the 18th century.


**Week 12: Symphonies and the Public**  
What did symphonies mean to audiences in the 18th century?


**Week 13: The Classical Concerto**  
Readings and activities to be decided.

**Week 14: The Classical Sonata**  
Readings and activities to be decided.

**Weeks 15 & 16: Final Projects and Presentations**