

Race and Gender in Opera from *Don Giovanni* to *p r i s m*
MUH 7938 — Fall 2021 — TH 4:05-7:05pm

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How to use this syllabus

This syllabus provides you with information specific to this course, and it also provides information about important university policies. This document should be viewed as a course overview; it is not a contract and is subject to change as the semester evolves. Any changes to the syllabus will be communicated to students via email and new syllabi.

General course description

Opera has historically been a medium for storytelling, ranging from the fantastical to the mundane. And even at its earliest, opera has been political. The choice of stories, who tells them, and who performs them, has often highlighted concurrent ideas about various forms of identity. This course will examine how identity plays a role in the musicohistorical, analytical, performance, and reception histories of operas from the Classical period to the present. We will discuss issues present within the works including composition, libretto, and language, issues surrounding the works at the time of premiere/composition such as social, cultural, and reception history, and musicological analyses of the works. Through these various lenses, we will parse out what opera as a storytelling device can tell us about how composers, performers, and audience members thought about identity and how to perform identity musically, sonically, and dramatically.

Course Materials

All readings will be available through Canvas though you are, of course, always allowed to buy your own copies of texts. While there will not be straightforward musical analysis, having scores is suggested. For scores not in public domain, if necessary, they will also be provided. There will also be scores and recordings placed on reserve in the Architecture and Fine Arts Library.

Requirements and Grading

Final grades will be calculated according to the system below. Rubrics and supplemental documents pertaining to the assignments are available on Canvas.

Attendance 25%
Contribution 35%
Final Paper/Presentation 40%

Grading Scale for UF

94-100	A	74-76	C
91-93	A-	71-73	C-
87-90	B+	67-70	D+

84-86	B	64-66	D
81-83	B-	61-63	D-
77-80	C+	0-60	F

Attendance, Discussion, Papers and Projects

This class is a graduate seminar that meets once a week and as such, it is imperative to attend each class meeting. If you are unable to attend class, please let me know as soon as possible. Additionally, the most important element of this course is class participation. Seminars of these nature are dependent upon class participation so please come to class prepared, having done the assigned readings and listenings. There will be a final paper and presentation at the end of the semester.

Academic Honesty

All violations of academic honesty will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for disciplinary action without exception. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report and condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TA.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. Accommodations are not provided retroactively. Accommodations for other circumstances may be available. Examples include childbirth or care, elder care, grieving, or trauma. Consult with your instructor or the Dean of Students Office for more information.

Course Schedule

8/26 Introduction; How Do We Talk about Opera?

9/2 All Women Are Like That
Mozart, *Don Giovanni*; Mozart, *Così fan tutte*

- 9/9 Mozart, cont.
- 9/16 Dangerous Women
Bizet, *Carmen*; Puccini, *Tosca*
- 9/23 Wagner, Identity, Womanhood
Lohengrin; *Tristan und Isolde*; *Parsifal*
- 9/30 Operatic Otherness
Verdi, *Otello*; Verdi, *Aida*
- 10/7 Verdi, cont.
- 10/14 Die Neue Frau
Debussy, *Pelléas et Mélisande*; Strauss, *Elektra*
- 10/21 Americanisms
Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess*; Floyd, *Susannah*
- 10/28 Operatic Masculinities
Britten, *Billy Budd*; Poulenc, *Les Mamelles des Tirésias*
Phil Purvis, "The 'Crisis' of Masculinity in Poulenc's *Les Mamelles des Tirésias*," in *Masculinity and Opera*, ed. Phil Purvis, 236-254
- 11/4 Postmodern Identities
Davis, *X*; Glass, *Satyagraha*
- 11/11 NO CLASS (Veterans Day/AMS 2021)
- 11/18 How Do We Talk about Opera Now?
Reid, *p r i s m*
- 11/25 THANKSGIVING BREAK
- 12/2 Final Presentations