

University of Waterloo

Department of Music

Music 261: Opera

Syllabus (fall 2020)

Lectures: Asynchronous, Available on [Music 261 Learn site](#)

Instructor: Dr. Laura Gray, Associate Professor, Music

Office: WebEx Virtual Office
<https://uwaterloo.webex.com/meet/ljgray>

| 172 008 3017 (Meeting number)

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(Please click on WebEx link & you'll be admitted when available.)
or email me for appointment

Email: ljgray@uwaterloo.ca

Course Delivery

This course will be taught via the [Music 261 LEARN website](#). This site will provide a copy of the syllabus and schedule, lecture slides, video links of excerpts, audio links, assignment posts and other materials. Weekly announcements will also be posted on the course Learn site, so please check in regularly. Instructions about accessing course materials are posted under contents. If you are new to Learn or need some expert guidance on how to navigate the service, please see the help site:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/students>

Course Description: “the Composer as Dramatist”

What makes opera so powerful? Why has it endured for over 400 years since its invention? Where has it entered our social and commercial worlds and what makes it so effective and evocative? How can a dying character continue to sing lengthy and challenging soliloquies before they expire? Opera confronts us sometimes with more questions than answers and, through the music, takes us on a journey of common themes of the human condition.

In this course we will consider the question of how the music tells the story. How does the composer take the story and lyrics and bring it to life, conveying the emotions, essence and meaning of the story through the music? Our theme for the course can be summed up as “the composer as dramatist”. By focusing on one or two operas each week, we will consider ways in which the elements of music – form, melody, orchestration, singing style, rhythm, harmony, etc – are used to interpret the drama. The class will also

discuss broader issues and trends – artistic, cultural, social, political, philosophical and emotional – encountered by opera composers, librettists, producers and audiences.

As a special treat, we will interview two international opera stars, Adrian Kramer and Lucia Cesaroni, in an hour-long video conversation.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course but the ability to read music and some knowledge of basic musical terms and theory are beneficial.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

The goals of this course are:

- to introduce students to a core body of operas that can act as a basis of life-long encounters with opera performances
- to facilitate an understanding of how musical elements are employed by opera composers to bring the story and emotions of characters to life (i.e., how the music “tells the story”)
- to hone our ability to assess critically the quality and effectiveness of performances of full operas and individual performances
- to engage with thematic topics associated with each opera by considering and critiquing some of the seminal literature and scholarly discussions on individual operas
- to collaborate as a team in formulating pertinent questions in discussion with international opera performers.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate aural recognition and comprehension of core works and key scenes from the opera repertoire
- assess opera performances (full productions and individual performances) with critical perception and balanced judgment
- articulate clearly and effectively how musical elements are used in operas to dramatize the story and portray characters
- develop their views on and insights into thematic topics in opera literature

Course Requirements & Assessments:

ASSESSMENT	GRADE WEIGHT	DUE DATE (ALL QUIZZES AND ASSIGNMENTS DUE BY 11:59PM ET ON THE DUE DATE BELOW)
ONLINE QUIZ (OPERA TERMS)	5%	Tues Sept 22
ONLINE LISTENING QUIZ #1	10%	Tues Oct 6
ONLINE LISTENING QUIZ #2	10%	Tues Dec 1
ARIA COMPARISON & CRITIQUE	15%	Tues Nov 17
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT #1	20%	Tues Oct 27
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT #2	20%	Mon Dec 7
ONLINE OPERA REVIEW	20%	Tues Nov 10

Notes on Assessments:

All assignments are posted in full in the “Assignments” module on Learn.

Online Quiz on Opera terms:

- A list of useful terms will be posted on Learn in the “Assignments” module.
- Definitions are found in the glossary linked on Learn.
- The purpose of this quiz is to ensure that all students understand the opera terms being used in class.
- This will not be a timed quiz. Students can complete them on their own and submit them to the appropriate Dropbox file on Learn by the due date and time.
- Due: Tues Sept 22

Aria Comparison & Critique Assignment:

- Information about the assignment will be posted on Learn well before the due date.
- Students are asked to compare three performances by different singers of the same opera aria or scene, assessing each musically, in their acting, in their interaction with other characters, and assessing other factors of the performance.
- Due: Tues Nov 17

Online Listening Quizzes 1 and 2:

- The quizzes and instructions will be posted on Learn well before the due date.
- Each quiz will consist of 2 unidentified audio excerpts drawn from the featured excerpts in class. Students will be asked to identify the composer, opera, scene, characters involved, what is happening in the scene and to discuss how the music dramatizes the scene.
- This will not be a timed quiz. Students can complete them on their own and submit them to the appropriate Dropbox file on Learn by the due date and time.
- Quiz #1 Due: Tues Oct 6
- Quiz #2 Due: Tues Dec 1

Written Assignment 1:

- The purpose of this assignment is to explore how composers use the music in operas to dramatize the characters through a comparison of pairs of characters and their music.
- The questions and instructions will be posted on Learn well before the due date.
- Due: Tues Oct 27

Written Assignment 2:

- The purpose of this assignment is to explore how composers use the music in operas to dramatize the characters and how their changing treatment of form enhanced the drama.
- Instructions will be posted on Learn well before the due date.
- Due: Mon Dec 7

Online Opera Review:

- Please see Learn site for links to several online opera performances. These are provided as a convenience and students are free to choose to review other opera performances.
- Guidelines for the review will be posted on Learn.
- The purpose of the review is to experience an opera in full and to consider the performance as a whole, rather than individual scenes.
- Due: Tues Nov 10

Course Materials:

Audio & Video Excerpts:

1. **Naxos Music Library:** A Music 261 playlist is available by following this link:
[Naxos Music Library](#) . → playlists → Conrad Grebel playlists → MUS 261 Opera playlist.
(You will need to sign in via the library site from home using your watcard barcode here.)
***Maximum simultaneous UW users: 15**
2. **Naxos Video Library:** A Music 261 video clip playlist is available by following this link:
[Naxos Video Library](#) . → playlists → Music 261 Opera playlist.
***Maximum simultaneous UW users: 5**

Other Resources:

3. Library Website: <http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/>
4. Oxford Music Online: a great resource for research, including Grove's Music Online. Access [Oxford Music Online](#). (Off campus you will need to sign in with your watcard barcode.)
5. **Citation Guides (for essays or any reference in written work):**
 - a. **Citation Guide:** Chicago Style author-date [citation style](#)
 - b. **Additional Citation Tool:** use ISBN for citing books: [ottobib.com](#) (Also available on Learn)
 - c. Here is another helpful [guide](#) for citations for music research.

Required Text

There is no required text for this course. Students will need to access online readings, recordings, video links through the Music 261 Learn site.

Readings Available on LEARN (see course schedule for specific excerpts)

"The Barber of Seville – Teatro De La Maestranza." OperaVision, August 27, 2020.

<https://operavision.eu/en/library/performances/operas/barber-seville-teatro-de-la-maestranza>.

Gardiner, John Eliot. "Monteverdi's *Orfeo*: 'a Brilliant and Compelling Fable to the Inalienable Power of Music'." *The Guardian*, August 3, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/aug/03/monterverdi-orfeo-john-eliot-gardiner-the-inalienable-power-of-music>.

Handler, Micah. "Facing the Music: Is the Classical World Ready to Show that Black Voices Matter?" *Forbes Magazine*, June 19, 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/micahhandler/2020/06/19/facing-the-music-is-the-classical-world-ready-to-show-that-black-voices-matter/>.

Hudson, Elizabeth. "Gilda Seduced: A Tale Untold." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4, no. 3 (1992): 229-51. Accessed September 5, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/823693>.

Lazarevich, Gordana. "Serva padrona, La." *Grove Music Online*. 2002; Accessed August 5, 2020. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000007587>.

McClary, Susan. "Images of Race, Class and Gender in Nineteenth-Century France." *Georges Bizet, Carmen*. Cambridge [U.K.]: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 29-43. <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/2027/heb.07560>.

Moss, Stephen. "Why Wagner's *Tristan Und Isolde* Is the Ultimate Opera." *The Guardian*, September 23, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/sep/23/tristan-und-isolde-wagner-opera-met>.

Parakilas, James. *The Story of Opera*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2013.

Robinson, Paul. "'Fidelio' and the French Revolution." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 1 (1991): 23-48. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/823647>.

Sacher, Jack. *Opera: A Listener's Guide*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997.

"Tosca – New Zealand Opera." OperaVision, July 29, 2020. (Read "The Story" and "Insights".) <https://operavision.eu/en/library/performances/operas/tosca-new-zealand-opera>.

"Tristan und Isolde - *Tristan und Isolde*." *Tristan und Isolde* (Work - Richard Wagner/Richard Wagner) | Opera Online - The opera lovers web site. Accessed September 5, 2020. (Read synopsis.) <https://www.operonline.com/en/items/works/tristan-und-isolde-wagner-wagner-1865>.

West, Kai. "Confronting 'Porgy and Bess'." Arts & Culture. University of Michigan, January 29, 2018. <https://arts.umich.edu/news-features/confronting-porgy-and-bess/>.

Class Expectations: MUTUAL RESPECT

Communicating with respect:

- In all of our communications, we need to treat each other with respect (including students and your teacher too).
- Music in general – and opera in particular! – can generate strong feelings and opinions.
- Operas are beautiful works of art but they also deal with emotionally charged themes.
- The operas we will study this term deal with such difficult universal themes as power, persuasion, attempted sexual assault, tragic death, murder, gender, class and racial discrimination, blackmail, possible child abuse, and drugs.
- Not only can these stories trigger difficult or potentially painful memories and feelings, they can also elicit strong opinions and debate among students.
- Discussions about these difficult themes can be beneficial to all if we remember to treat each other with respect and conduct ourselves professionally.
- Don't worry: there will be some fun and humorous scenes and operas in our repertoire this term too!
- Sometimes online communications can include comments (in discussion forums, break-out sessions, and video-conferencing) that we would not use in face-to-face conversations. So please think twice or wait until you are calmer to send or voice a potentially hurtful comment.
- If you have experienced any disrespectful behaviour in our class, please contact me.
- The Centre for Teaching Excellence has a helpful guide for appropriate communication practices:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-learning-activities/student-guidelines-communicating-online-professional>

Communicating with your teacher:

- Please keep in touch! I will endeavour to keep the lines of communication open and flowing.
- Please let me know if you are experiencing difficulties in meeting deadlines or managing your workload, or if there is something that I can do to improve your experience.
- You can contact me by email: ljgray@uwaterloo.ca
- You can get in touch with me in WebEx office hours: Tues & Thurs 10am-12pm or by appt at
<https://uwaterloo.webex.com/meet/ljgray>

Privacy and Online Interaction or Recording:

- The course is conducted primarily asynchronously but we will have at least one online interview that will be recorded with invited guests where students are invited to speak and listen live.
- Students will receive ample notice of any other online synchronous or recorded session involving students and will be directed to complete the Notice of Recording template.
- In the case of an online or recorded session, students may choose to disable their cameras and microphones and may choose to provide an appropriate pseudonym to protect their privacy.

- Students will not be disadvantaged by not attending a live session or participating in the recording due to privacy concerns by providing them with suitable alternatives (e.g., watching the recording at a later date with opportunity for questions)
- More information about ensuring privacy during any video recorded sessions can be found at this site: <https://uwaterloo.ca/privacy/about-information-and-privacy/guidelines-frequently-asked-questions/privacy-and-remote-meetings>

Due dates and Penalties:

- Students are expected to submit assignments by the time and day indicated on the class schedule and on each assignment.
- Please submit all assignments in the appropriate folder in the Dropbox on our class Learn site.
- It is best to meet deadlines in your classes but I can be flexible if you get in touch with me ahead of time.
- I understand that most tasks can takes a lot longer to complete online than in on-campus classes.
- Please be proactive and communicate with me about any difficulties meeting deadlines.
- Please see the accommodation for illness and self-declaring illness below if you are feeling unwell.

UW Policies on Academic Integrity & Campus Resources:

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Check the [Office of Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities

The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (NH 1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Chosen/Preferred First Name: If you want professors and interviewers to call you by a different first name, take a minute now to verify or tell us your chosen/preferred first name by logging into [WatIAM](#). Your chosen/preferred first name listed in WatIAM will be used broadly across campus (e.g., LEARN, Quest, WaterlooWorks, WatCard, etc). Note: Your legal first name will always be used on certain official documents. For more details, visit [Updating Personal Information](#).

Accommodation for Illness:

The University has made the *University of Waterloo Verification of Illness* form for students a self-declaration, which means students do not need a doctor's note for accommodation if they become ill. Students are encouraged to contact their professors via email to let them know of their illness. Students should also self-declare on Quest if they want to receive academic accommodations for testing positive. Go to: <https://uwaterloo.ca/quest/help/students/how-do-i/self-declare-my-illness>

The Writing and Communication Centre:

The Writing and Communication Centre is an academic support unit that supports students, staff, and faculty as they build communication excellence at the University of Waterloo. Writing a paper? Designing a portfolio? Giving a presentation? We're here to help you to work through all stages of the communication process. Visit www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health support if they are needed.

On Campus

Due to COVID-19 and campus closures, services are available only online or by phone.

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services

Off campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 ext. 6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online on the Faculty of Arts [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

For more information about the purpose of territorial acknowledgements, please see the [CAUT Guide to Acknowledging Traditional Territory](#).

Academic freedom at the University of Waterloo

[Policy 33, Ethical Behaviour](#) states, as one of its general principles (Section 1), "The University supports academic freedom for all members of the University community. Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base teaching and research on an honest and ethical quest for knowledge. In the context of this policy, 'academic freedom' refers to academic activities, including teaching and scholarship, as is articulated in the principles set out in the Memorandum of Agreement between the FAUW and the University of Waterloo, 1998 (Article 6). The academic environment which fosters free debate may from time to time include the presentation or discussion of unpopular opinions or controversial material. Such material shall be dealt with as openly, respectfully and sensitively as possible." This definition is repeated in Policies 70 and 71, and in the Memorandum of Agreement, Section 6.

MUSIC 261 ONLINE: WEEKLY SCHEDULE: FALL 2020

Week/ Date	Topic & Featured Opera	Reading: PDFs on Learn or accessed via link	Video and Audio Recording & Featured Excerpts (all found on Naxos Audio & Video Library) Naxos Music Library (audio playlist) Naxos Video Library (video playlist)	Due Dates for Quizzes & Assignments All due 11:59pm ET)
Week 1 Sept 8 – 11	Introduction to Opera: “Dramma per musica”	Sacher, 3-10, 20-22 Glossary of Opera Terms		
	The Birth of Opera: Monteverdi, <i>Orfeo</i> (1607)	Parakilas, 95-118 Gardiner, “Monteverdi’s Orfeo,” Guardian	Act II excerpts (Orfeo & Messenger): “Vi ricorda,” “Ahi, Caso,” “Tu se’ morta” Act III (Orfeo): “Possente spirto”	
Week 2 Sept 14 – 18	Opera Seria: Handel, <i>Giulio Cesare</i> (1724)	Sacher, 118-129 & 136-137 Parakilas, 177-182	Act II, sc.1-2 (Cleopatra, Nireno, Cesare): Eseguisti – V’Adoro pupille Act II, sc. 6 (Sesto): “L’angue offeso mi riposa”	
	The Intermezzo & <i>les bouffons</i> : Pergolesi, <i>La serva padrona</i> (1733)	Parakilas, 223-225 Lazarevich, Grove article	Part II (Serpina) Aria: “A Serpina penserete” – (Uberto) Recitative, “Ah, quanto mi sta male” – Aria, “Son inbrogliato io”	
Week 3 Sept 21 – 25	Opera & Persuasion: Mozart, <i>Don Giovanni</i> (1787)	Parakilas, 243-246 Sacher, 174-182	Overture Act I, sc ix, no. 7 (Giovanni, Zerlina): “Là ci darem la mano” Act II, sc. 13, no. 23 (Donna Anna): “Crudele! – Non mi dir”	Tues Sept 22: Quiz on Opera terms due
Week 4 Sept 28 – Oct 2	Opera and Revolution: Beethoven, <i>Fidelio</i> (1814)	Parakilas, 266-271 Robinson, “Fidelio and the Revolution”	Act I, sc. 2 (Chorus of Prisoners): “O welche Lust” Act II, sc. I, no. 11 (Florestan): “Gott! Welch’ Dunkel hier” – “In des Lebens Frühlingstagen”	
Week 5 Oct 5 – 9	Operatic Form & Comedy: Rossini, <i>Il Barbiere di Siviglia</i> (1816)	Opera Vision - Barber	Act I, sc i (Figaro): “Largo al factotum della città” Act I, sc ii (Rosina): “Una voce poco fa” – “Io sono docile”	Tues Oct 6: Listening Quiz #1 Due
Oct 12-16	Reading week: No classes, no assignments due			

Week 6 Oct 19 – 23	Opera: Innocence in a Corrupt World: Verdi, <i>Rigoletto</i> (1851)	Hudson, "Gilda Seduced: A Tale Untold"	Act I duet (Gilda & Duke): “T’amo” - “E il sol edll’anima” - “Che m’ami, deh, ripetimi – “Addio” Act I aria (Gilda): “Caro nome” Act I/ii aria (Rigoletto’s soliloquy): “pari siamo” Act III (Duke): “La donn’è mobile”	
Week 7 Oct 26 – 30	Wagner & Ultimate Opera: <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> (1859/65)	Moss, Guardian article	Prelude Act I, sc v (Tristan & Isolde): “Tristan! Isolde! Treuloser Holder” Act III, sc iii (Isolde): “Mild und Leise”	Tues Oct 27: Written Assignment #1 due
Week 8 Nov 2 – 6	a) class brainstorm: questions for Adrian and Lucia b) Online Class Interview with Guests, Lucia Cesaroni (soprano) & Adrian Kramer (tenor)	Adrian Kramer Lucia Cesaroni	***Interview time/day: TBA with students and guests***	
Week 9 Nov 9 – 13	Opera, Race & Gender: Bizet, <i>Carmen</i> (1875)	McClary, "Images of Race, Class and Gender"	Act I, no. 5 (Carmen): “L’amour est un oiseau rebelle” (Habanera) Act I, no. 7 (José & Micaëla): “Parle-moi de ma mère!” Act IV, no. 27 (José, Carmen & Chorus): “C’est toi!”	Tues Nov 10: Online Opera Review due
Week 10 Nov 16 – 20	Opera, Blackmail & Deceit: Puccini, <i>Tosca</i> (1900)	Opera Vision - Tosca	Act II- end of act II (Tosca, Scarpia): “Vissi d’arte”	Tues Nov 17: Aria Comparison & Critique due
Week 11 Nov 23 – 27	Opera, Violence & the Victim: Britten, <i>Peter Grimes</i> (1946)	Sacher, 437-447	Act I, sc ii (Peter & Chorus): “Now the Great Bear and Pleiades” – “Old Joe has gone fishing” Act III, sc iii: (Peter): “Steady, there you are” (Mad Scene)	
Week 12 Nov 30 – Dec 4	An “American Folk Opera” or Cultural Stereotypes? Gershwin’s <i>Porgy & Bess</i> (1935)	Hendler, "Facing the Music," Forbes West, "Confronting 'Porgy and Bess'."	Act II, sc ii (Sportin’ Life & Chorus): “It ain’t necessarily so” Act II, sc iii (Bess, Porgy, etc): “Take yo’ hans off me” (Bess’s Delirium Scene)	Tues Dec 1: Listening Quiz #2 due
Dec 7	Final Day of Classes: Wrap up			Mon Dec 7: Written Assignment #2 due