

Midterm Essay Question:

- For **your chosen topic**, provide an answer of **around 550-700 words**
(For reference, using Times New Roman and 12 point double-spaced font, 550-700 words is about 2 to 2.5 pages).
- Please supply your answer in a single typed Word, Pages, PDF or RTF document and email it to me **no later than Sunday, October 28, 11:59 p.m.**

Please note that in your answers for this midterm, you should only discuss works up to the immediate post-World War II era of the early 1950s, which is: Stravinsky (*The Rake's Progress*) and Britten (*Turn of the Screw*)

(i.e. please don't focus on works we haven't covered in class yet)

There are eight eligible operas for this assignment (you'll pick two of these):

Debussy, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902)
Strauss, *Elektra* (1909)
Berg, *Wozzeck* (1925)
Ravel, *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (1925)

Shostakovich, *Lady Macbeth* (1934)
Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess* (1935)
Stravinsky, *The Rake's Progress* (1951)
Britten, *Turn of the Screw* (1954)

Question Prompt:

Please choose **ONE** broad organizing idea about opera from 1900 to the early 1950s—an idea to discuss might be one of the headings on Moodle (such as psychology, sexuality, or politics), or you could think about something such as gender, nationalism, or another over-arching broad concept.

If you're not sure what to choose, you could revisit the essay on "20th century" opera from *Oxford Online*, which might be helpful as well. Ask me if you have concerns.

Now that you've got your organizing idea, please write a short essay where you:

- Frame your essay with an strong opening paragraph—use this paragraph to explain what your chosen overarching theme has to do with 20th century opera generally **[introduction]**
- Next, analyze **TWO** examples from our class. As you analyze, explain how your two chosen operas relate to your overarching idea—what does each of these operas demonstrate about contemporary ideas about psychology, for example? You should have at least one strong, detailed paragraph on each example. You should use your class notes and class readings, as well as concepts gleaned from our class discussion and the in-class viewings. **[body paragraphs]**
 - In each of your two examples, make sure to provide **specific** details, including **musical** details as well as contextual ones. Feel free to reference the assigned course readings by name or include short quotes to strengthen your argument. If you choose to directly quote from any of the readings, please use proper citation methods (i.e. use quotation marks and provide either a footnote or an in-paragraph citation for your source).
- Include a brief **conclusion**