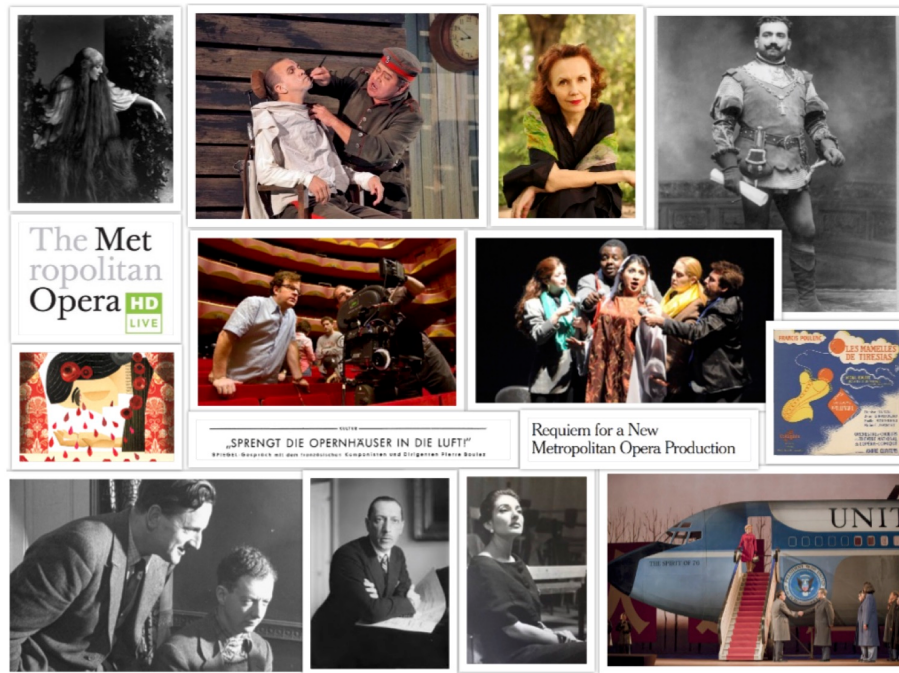


MUCH 495: Twentieth-Century Opera

Spring 2017



Class Times and Location:
MWF, 10:00-10:50am, Bishop Hall C309

Instructor

Dr. Erin Brooks
Email: brooksem@potdam.edu
Phone number: x2759
Office: Schuette Hall A102

Office hours:
Wed 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Fri 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
(or by appointment)

Course Description and Objectives:

MUCH 495 is a survey of operatic styles and topics from the beginning of the 20th-century through the early 21st century. Our goals in this course include acquiring significant familiarity with a selection of representative works of this period; developing approaches to listenership that will be of use in opera listening; and taking account of the various ways in which opera as a genre works in contemporary culture. As we listen, view, and discuss 20th-century opera, we will explore the intersections of opera with politics, gender, sexuality, nationalism, social class, and race. This course provides opportunities to hone intellectual skills such as close listening, score analysis, interpretation of original historical documents, critical thinking, and writing that requires synthesis.

Students who successfully complete MUCH 495 should be able to:

- Recognize vocabulary, styles, genres, forms, and individual works from 20th & 21st-century operas, as well as the impact of individual composers, patrons, teachers, scholars, and musicians
- Analyze primary sources, current scholarship, and notated scores and apply listening skills to recordings in order to trace historical change in composition and performance practice
- Think creatively about how history influences 21st-century relationships with music and music education
- Demonstrate facility with resources for music history research, frame a research question, identify appropriate sources for exploring your question, critically read primary and secondary literature related to your research question, leading to a polished final project
- Enhance critical thinking through writing, presentation, and editing skills, including communicating your ideas to classmates at various points in the research and writing process and engaging in peer review (learning how to provide constructive feedback)

Additional resource:

<https://www.potsdam.edu/academics/Crane/MusicTheory/Music-History-Page>

Course Requirements

Note: Students enrolled in this course should have taken MUCB 202, 203, and 204. It will be advantageous for you to have taken (or be concurrently enrolled) in MUCB 323, but not required. If I ascertain that you are particularly weak on 20th century music concepts, I may require that you meet with me or a tutor. If you have questions about enrollment, please see me.

Reading/Listening Assignments

There are no required texts for this course—all readings and recordings for this course will be available to you through Moodle. Visit <https://moodle.potsdam.edu> for your course resources.

There is one supplemental resource that is on reserve in the library.

1. Cooke, Mervyn, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Readings and listening assignments are **required: reading or listening assignments listed for a specific day should be completed prior to coming to class**—please come to class prepared and ready to ask and answer questions. For each class, log on to Moodle: each day's module on Moodle will contain the exact assignment page numbers, PDFs, and links for each class. Given the pace of this course, keeping up on all assigned reading and listening in advance of every class is essential. SUNY guidelines assume at least 2 hours of study time per hour of class time or credit. For this 3-credit class, which meets 3 hours/week, expect to spend at least 6 additional hours a week **outside** of class (studying,

listening, reading). Please feel free to come to my office hours for guidance on how to organize your studying and reading time most effectively

It is your responsibility to make sure that you can access the class materials; please let me know as soon as possible if you are having any problems. I cannot troubleshoot issues involving your personal computer. Please understand that if you cannot access course materials through your own computer, you must work with computers on campus. The number to the Computing & Technology Services (CTS) helpdesk is 315-267-4444 or helpdesk@potdam.edu

For additional help with your assignments, the Crane Music library has a vast variety of resources. The url <http://www.libraries.potdam.edu/resources-subject/music.html> will take you to a page with several resources that will be useful, such as audio/visual resources and reference databases.

Course Evaluation

Grading will be based on in-class quizzes, attendance & participation, serving as discussion leader for two classes, one short viewing/writing assignment, one midterm take-home essay, and a cumulative semester project (which is divided into multiple parts).

In-class Quizzes – 5%

Course lectures & discussion will expand on material presented in required readings, offering additional perspectives and musical examples. We will also work through musical examples in class to build listening skills. Due to these factors, attendance is essential. To help emphasize this fact, brief unannounced quizzes covering course material (generally material covered in the readings, listening, and/or lecture) will be given **in class**. The **averaged** quiz scores will be worth a total of 5% of the course grade.

- The quiz questions may be fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, or occasionally, a 5-minute **freewrite** on a question from the course material.
- **No make-up quizzes will be given.**
- There will be absolutely no exceptions to this rule.

Attendance/Participation – 5%

This class will be most successful if it becomes an active learning community. In an effort to work towards that goal, you are required to become active participants in course activities and discussion. In order to stimulate participation, you may periodically be asked to prepare short activities or writing prompts before coming to class.

- Each week, I will track attendance and participation. For participatory activities, you are expected (at minimum) to contribute fruitfully to the discussion once per session. **Simply being present is not enough.**
- You can miss **three** classes for whatever reason with **no** penalty.

- If you miss more than three, your participation grade will be docked by 1/2 a letter grade for **each** additional absence.
- Only required university-sponsored events count as “excused absences;” if you think this applies to you, you must have a conversation with the instructor prior to the absence in question (at least one week). In most cases, these events require written verification from the Dean. For any such absences, you must still do the relevant course readings for that class date, and I reserve the right to assign you alternate assignments.
- If you have a religious observance during the semester, any missed coursework during that particular class will not count against you. However, you must inform me before the relevant absence (at least one week ahead of time), you must still do the relevant course readings for that class date, and I reserve the right to assign you alternate assignments.
- If you have a medical condition or emergency, you are encouraged to discuss it with the instructor; be aware, however, that only under **extraordinary** circumstances will this result in your absence being excused.

Response Questions / Serving as Discussion Leader—15%

You will choose two class dates to serve as discussion leader on a particular article or articles. As discussion leader, you are responsible for submitting a response/reflection paper for each class date. This response paper should consist of about 700 words. Your paper should address content or ideas you find intriguing, confusing, problematic, helpful, and/or contradictory in the assigned reading. These paper should be typed, thoughtful responses written in complete sentences with proper grammar. Each response should be submitted to me via email by 9pm on the day before our class meeting. **Please end your response/reflection papers with at least two questions for class discussion**—I will draw upon your questions to help facilitate class discussion later in the week. You will be expected to serve as a discussion leader during the class period your response paper is due. Your presentation as discussion leader should be between 5-10 minutes long, and should detail the argument, evidence, and analysis of the assigned article.

Opera Viewing and Response Paper Assignment—10%

We will all attend the *Met Live in HD* broadcast of Dvorák’s *Rusalka* (1901): you may attend **either** the premiere performance on Saturday, Feb. 25 (12:55 pm) or the encore performance on Sunday, Feb. 26 (6:30 pm). Run time for the opera performance is approximately 3 hours, 40 minutes.

The screenings take place at the Roxy Theatre in Potsdam. You can buy tickets ahead of time at the Community Performance Series box office in the PAC, or at the movie theater (I’d suggest purchasing ahead of time). Ticket purchase for this opera tends to be around \$12 a ticket for students; if anyone has a financial hardship in purchasing this ticket, please let me know. You can find more information here: <http://www.cpspotsdam.org/eventpgs/methd.html>

If you cannot make one of these screening dates, please let me know by Feb. 17 and I will arrange for you to view a DVD performance of the opera. There will be no makeups arranged after the opera screenings.

I will provide you with a writing prompt to complete on this performance; the response paper will be about 700-1000 words in length.

Midterm Exam - 15%

The midterm essay, will comprise a take-home, open-note essay question.

Writing / Research Assignment – 50%

There will be one cumulative project over the course of the semester. While the project will culminate in a final research paper, there are smaller scaffolded steps along the way (coming up with a topic, providing some research sources, short writing assignments, etc) that will count towards this overall grade. Please see separate sheet for additional details.

Here is the guide/breakdown to this assignment:

Opera Choice and Bibliography (due Fri Feb 10):	5%
3 brief writing assignments on your opera—each around 2 pages in length:	
• Musical Style (due Fri Feb 24):	5%
• Staging & Visuality (due Wed Apr 5):	5%
• Performers & Performing (due Wed Apr 19):	5%
Paper Abstract and Outline (due Fri April 28):	5%
Final In-Class Presentation (May 8-12):	5%
Final paper (due Wed, May 17, 11:59 pm):	20%

For your writing assignments (particularly the research project), you are **strongly** encouraged to make an appointment with the Writing Center. If I identify significant problems with your writing style, I may request that you use the Writing Center resources to help improve your style. I am happy to meet with you to read drafts or help improve your writing.

Course Policies

Office Hours / Emails

I will respond to emails in a timely manner (generally within 24 hours of receipt). I do not always have time to respond to emails over the weekend, so weekend emails may potentially only be answered on Monday morning. Please feel free to come to office hours to discuss papers and questions, or to talk through general problems or concerns. During the busy periods at midterm/end of semester, I suggest you schedule an

appointment to maximize the use of your time. Please make sure to check your campus email regularly—I often send updates or class comments via email.

Course Materials/Slides

A few friendly note-taking suggestions: during some classes, I will use slides and audio examples to illustrate examples from the readings and to introduce new concepts and material. Tests will cover material from the readings, viewing/listening, *and* in-class content, so it's essential to do the readings **and** attend class.

Everyone assimilates information differently, but I **strongly encourage** that you take notes during class. In particular, it will help you the most to focus on ways of jotting down important **verbal** content from lecture and discussion (i.e. material beyond just copying down any information directly from a slide).

If I use slides in lecture, I will post slides them on Moodle, usually by the end of the week. Please do not email me to ask when slides will be posted—I will always post them, but emails will not speed up the process.

Classroom Conduct

In lecture and discussion sections, it is inevitable and important that we will disagree with points in the readings, critical approaches, and with each other. Critical engagement is essential to the central questions of this class, and is often the way we all learn the most. It is important to be considerate in the ways we conduct these discussions, and this class thus necessitates an open mind, respect for different viewpoints, and the ability to listen thoughtfully and compassionately to each other.

I am happy for you to use technology in the classroom (particularly to jot down notes, use online resources, and revisit specific selections in the readings). This will not work, however, if you are using your devices inappropriately or for non-class purposes. This particularly applies to **texting** during class, which is completely outside of acceptable classroom resources, as are Facebook and other social media sites. **Anyone abusing use of technology will lose participation points** or may be asked to speak with the instructor about revising their personal technology access.

Grading

All grades will be determined on the following scale:

4.0: 95-100	2.7: 82-84	1.3: 68-71
3.7: 92-94	2.3: 78-81	1.0: 65-67
3.3: 88-91	2.0: 75-77	0.0: 0-64
3.0: 85-87	1.7: 72-74	

Please note that passing grade is 75% or above.

Grade Appeals

If you have questions about a grade, please speak with me (in person) first. Please note that the Undergraduate Catalog, p. 45, includes the specific criteria upon which you are allowed to appeal a course grade. If we cannot come to an informal resolution, you would then complete a formal Grade Appeal Form and we would consider if additional resolution is necessary. Details about the specific steps and timelines for this process are located on pp. 45-46 of the Undergraduate Catalog.

Notes About Timeliness

Late Written Work

No late work will be accepted without penalty. **Late written assignments will lose 5% for each day they are late. Assignments will not accepted more than three days late.** If you believe you will have difficulty meeting a particular deadline, you must talk with me at least *three days in advance of the due date*.

Make-Up Quizzes and Exams

For in-class quizzes, no makeups will be given—this includes lateness, absence, or illness. If you are absent due to an officially excused Crane absence with proper advance written notification from the Dean's office, you will be excused from the quiz (but you will not 'make it up'). In those cases only, after your absence I will provide you with the quiz content for study purposes, but the missed quiz will be dropped from your grade.

Per New York State Law, any student with a conflict between an academic requirement and any religious observance should be given an alternative for meeting the academic requirement. If you have a conflict with a class meeting due to a religious observance, please let me know well in advance (at least two weeks). You will not be penalized for missing class material, but you will have to makeup your class material at an alternate time.

Accessibility

In order to fully include all students in this course, it is essential to provide reasonable accommodations or program modifications for anyone with a disability. Please let me know **during the first week of classes** if you need any accommodations in curriculum, instruction, or evaluation. For most test-taking accommodations, you should have a registration on file with Accommodative Services (<http://potsdam.edu/support/oas>), located in Sisson Hall Room 111. If you're already working with Accommodative Services, or have worked with them in previous semesters, please inform me immediately. Any test-taking accommodations or modifications require advance notice, so make sure to work out these details with me well in advance.

School-Sponsored Absences

If you know that you will be missing class for a school-sponsored activity (such as an off-campus performance), you should inform me as soon as possible. While I may also

receive a memo about your absence from the Dean's Office, it is ultimately your responsibility to check in with me about your absence before the scheduled event. You are always expected to make up work missed due to travel, but you and I will need to find specific accommodations for each absence (depending upon activities missed).

Academic Honesty

This class will strictly follow SUNY Potsdam's policies on academic integrity. Please consult the Student Conduct & Community Standards Academic Honor Code website (<http://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/studentconduct/honorcode>) or pp. 35 & 36 of the Undergraduate Catalogue for more information regarding your responsibilities as a student. In general, academic misconduct includes acts in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation. Examples include (but are not limited to):

1. Cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation.
2. Paraphrasing from the web or written texts without crediting the source.
3. Using notes in an exam when such use is not allowed.
4. Using another person's ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one's own.

I encourage you to study together for exams, and to discuss class readings and listening with each other inside and outside of class. For tests or writing assignments, however, no consultation with other students is permitted. Using classmates' responses during the exam, consulting notes without permission, or disguising words written by others as your own undermines the academic community here at SUNY Potsdam. If you have any questions about this, don't hesitate to ask me. For specific questions on intellectual property and proper citation techniques, advice is available both at SCCS and the Writing Center.

Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, falsification and other academic honor code violations are taken very seriously. Any suspicious situations will be dealt with through proper judicial channels and may result in serious consequences. For more information about academic misconduct procedures, see the processes and procedures at <http://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/studentconduct/codeofconduct>