

Division of Humanities
Tentative Course Syllabus

Course Code: HUMA 2101
Course Title: Enjoyment of Western Opera
Course Offered in: Spring 2026
Course Instructor: Dr. Isaac Droscha

Course Description: An examination of the historical development of western opera, and selected western operas with their related literary texts. This course will also put some emphasis on works that are related to Asian cultures, and operas that will be performed in Hong Kong. No previous knowledge of opera is required.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

1. describe the development of the genre of western opera, and elements of Orientalism in western opera
2. identify the interrelationship between music, literature, drama and culture
3. analyze the structure of scenes and critique the production quality

Course Outline:

- I) Opera is only for “OLD” people?
 - Opera and Pop Culture
- II) The Creation of Opera (1600s)
 - Monteverdi’s L’Orfeo – Why opera was created?
- III) An unique example in England during 17th century
 - Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas – Updated productions vs. Traditional productions
- IV) A curious case in the 18th century
 - Castrato and Handel’s Opera – Singing is more important than MUSIC and DRAMA?
- V) The genius – Perfect balance between music and drama!
 - Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro
 - Gluck’s Orfeo ed Euridice
- VI) Operatic Singing Technique – The golden age of singing in the 19th century
 - Bel Canto
- VII) The Structure of Romantic Opera – How music reinforce drama?
 - Rossini’s The Barber of Seville
 - Donizetti’s The Elixir of Love
- VIII) The Inspiration – Literature and Opera, totally different?
 - Dumas’ The Lady of the Camellias and Verdi’s La Traviata

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- Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and Gounod's Roméo et Juliette
- IX) The Asian effect – Use of exotic elements in operas
- Puccini's Turandot and Madama Butterfly
- X) Romantic German Opera and Beyond – What happen after the golden age of opera?
- Wagner
- Berg's Wozzeck

Planned Assessment Tasks:

Exam	30%
Mid-term	20%
Concert Report	15%
Group Presentation	15%
Special Group Project	10%
Attendance	10%

Three Samples of Readings:

- *L'Orfeo* (DVD, M1500.M66 O752 2002)
- *Dido and Aeneas* (DVD, M1500.P87 D53 2008)
- *Farinelli* (DVD, PN1997.A122 F3742 1995a)