

Music 291-ILC: Music and Poetry, Fall 2018 (Preliminary Syllabus)

Class meetings: Mondays, 6:30–9:30 p.m., Campus Hall, Room 104

Instructors: Kathryn Buck (kathryn.buck@wagner.edu), David Schulenberg (email: dschulen@wagner.edu)

Office hours: Buck: TBA

Schulenberg: Tuesdays, 2:40–4:10, and Wednesdays, 3:30–4:30; Campus Hall, Room 110

Cross-listed as GE 291, this course is a team-taught Intermediate Learning Community, exploring the diverse ways in which the combination of poetry and music has created works of great beauty and deep expression over the past five hundred years. Open to all students, the course provides an introduction to the study of both music and one of the great European language traditions.

Focusing on writers and composers from German-speaking Europe, students read examples of poetry (in translation or the original, as able) from the Reformation era to the present, including writings by Martin Luther, Goethe and Schiller, and later nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors. Students are also introduced to basic concepts and terms used in the discussion of music and poetry, applying these to compositions from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Romantic eras as well as more recent works. Musical settings to be discussed include a Bach cantata, songs by Beethoven and Schubert, and selections from opera, with possible excursions to folk song, cabaret and theater (including the Brecht-Weill Threepenny Opera), and more.

Work for the course may include joint projects and presentations on works chosen by students in consultation with the instructors. The course has no prerequisites and does not require any prior study of music or German, although those with some background in either area will have opportunities to use and improve their musical or German literacy.

Course objectives. At the completion of this course, you should be able to:

- recognize and understand various types of poetry
- follow a musical setting of that poetry aurally, understanding aspects of the relationship between words and music
- identify the genres, forms, and historical contexts of various musical settings of poetry
- correctly employ commonly used terminology in writing and speaking about musical settings of poetry.

The course promotes these goals of the College's general education program:

- critical thinking
- an appreciation of different modes of inquiry
- competence in the skills of listening, speaking, and writing
- an appreciation of and sensitivity to the arts
- familiarity with one's own culture and other cultures in a global context.

Work for the course includes reading, listening, two written assignments, a quiz, a midterm, aural presentations, and a final examination.

Reading assigned literature and *listening* to assigned recordings are the most important work of

the course. Please plan to devote several hours each week to reading the assigned texts (poetry and background readings) and then carefully listening to assigned musical compositions. The first paper and the examinations will be based primarily on these listening assignments, which will be accessed through a shared Dropbox folder. For the second paper you will need to purchase classical music CDs or downloads unless you are able to find appropriate recordings online or in the Horrmann Library collection.

The second paper will combine original research and reading about a poem or a poetic work by a recognized literary author, together with its musical setting by a significant “classical” composer. Jazz, musical comedy, popular and commercial music, and other styles or genres of music will not be acceptable topics for this assignment unless they involve a serious poetic text by a significant writer. You will receive additional information about each assignment in class.

Over the course of the semester, each member of the class will participate in one ten-minute *student presentation*. Some presentations will be in connection with regular listening assignments. Others will take place toward the end of the semester, based on final papers. Joint presentations by more than one student on a single topic are possible. Each presentation will include a written outline and illustrative matter distributed to the class or displayed onscreen, and each should incorporate brief audio examples from the music under discussion.

During the semester you will also be expected to *attend at least three classical concerts* or comparable musical performances that involve settings of serious poetry. To receive credit for attending these performances, please bring copies of concert programs, ticket stubs, or other proof of attendance to the final exam. Concert attendance counts as part of your class attendance grade. Many free concerts are given on campus, but at least one of these performances must take place in a professional venue (concert hall, opera house, etc.) in Manhattan. Certain free performances at The Juilliard School and other area conservatories may count toward this requirement, but you must receive permission in advance.

Course policies. The course is conducted as a seminar in which each student is expected to participate in discussions and in the presentation of material. All assignments are due *in class on the dates shown below*. Please come to class prepared to discuss and ask questions about both the reading and the listening or viewing assigned for that day. Absences and work received late will earn a reduced grade unless you have made prior arrangements with me, or in case of a medical excuse or other emergency. Only documents from medical or other appropriate professionals will be accepted as excuses for lateness or absence. Make-up quizzes and exams will not be given; students excused from tests will instead be assigned additional written work.

Email and internet. Please do not submit work as email attachments unless I specifically ask you to do so. Also, please do not send me email messages asking questions about matters discussed in class; I will not respond to such messages. Although you may consult websites and use music and video downloads for some purposes, successful completion of the course requires you to view complete films on DVD (or in some cases in class or in the theater). For papers and presentations you should first seek information from printed books and other hard-copy sources and from scholarly databases available through Wagner’s Horrmann Library. **You must cite your sources for both facts and opinions that are not your own, whether you give these in the**

form of direct quotations, paraphrases, or summaries. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and will result in a failing grade.

Wikipedia and other anonymous websites should not be cited in papers and presentations. [Imdb.com \(the Internet Movie Database\)](http://www.imdb.com) and other commercial websites, such as those for individual films, film makers, and film composers, may be cited if information obtained from them is verified from independent sources (which must be cited as well). The latter include published reviews in recognized journalistic sources (newspapers and magazines) and credits within the films themselves. **See below for more information on acceptable sources and citations.**

Textbooks. Assigned readings are from the following:

David Schulenberg, *Music: A Basic Handbook*, online guide to musical terms and history

Music reference sources. The Horrmann Library possesses reference works on music that will provide assistance with unfamiliar terms and names. The most important for us is *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2d edn., edited by Stanley Sadie, 29 vols. (London: Macmillan, 2001). This is the standard English-language music encyclopedia, especially notable for its biographies of composers, including detailed lists of their compositions. An updated electronic version, *Grove Music Online*, is available through the “Databases” menu on the home page of the [Horrmann Library website](http://www.horrmannlibrary.com). Click on “Databases A–Z,” then on “Oxford Music Online” (or go there directly by [clicking here](#)).

Once you’re in *Oxford Music Online*, enter your search terms in the search window to get a list of possible database entries. If none of the search results seems to be what you’re looking for, try clicking on “biographical article” in the left frame for biographies of musicians (note: you may need to enter the full name of certain people, such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Johann Sebastian Bach). If all you need is a short dictionary-style entry identifying a person or defining a musical term or title, try clicking in the box near the top of the screen to limit your search to the *Oxford Dictionary of Music* or the *Oxford Companion to Music*.

For papers and presentations it is essential to consult scholarly books and articles. Many articles in *Grove* contain useful bibliographies and online links. Additional sources can be found through the library’s [online catalog](#) and through [JStor](#). The latter is accessible (like *Grove*) from the “Databases” menu on the library’s home page. *JStor* must be used carefully, as it is merely a database, not an actual scholarly source. Even scholarly items accessible through *JStor* may be outdated or inaccurate. Recent issues of periodicals with the word *Journal* in the title are likely to be reliable. Reviews, even in reputable publications such as the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker*, generally give only the writer’s opinions and rarely incorporate independent research, but they may be cited for factual matter about film scores or composers.

Online resources outside Wagner must be used with caution. [Wikipedia](http://www.wikipedia.org) can be helpful for getting started on a research assignment, but in general it is *not* acceptable as a reference in a paper or presentation. Articles about specific films on *Wikipedia* can be helpful for learning plots, casts, and other basic information, but **all information taken from *Wikipedia* must be verified from other, more reliable sources.** Information about many films can be obtained from [Imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com),

but this is a commercial site whose primary purpose is to sell videos and music. The information on this site should be considered advertising and may be slanted for commercial purposes. The same is true of the websites that are created for most new feature films, and also of websites for individual directors, composers, and other film professionals. Such sites can provide useful information, but **all information from commercial websites must be verified from reliable independent sources**. Reliable sources include scholarly books and articles as well as national newspapers and other reputable periodicals such as *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*. Movie reviews in local newspapers or in blogs are unlikely to be based on original, verifiable research and should not be cited as sources of information, although the opinions and interpretations of films or film music expressed in them may be useful.

The course calendar below lists assignments and topics, listed by class meeting. The calendar divides each meeting into two sessions, the first focusing on poetry, the second on music. In practice, however, most class meetings will integrate these two topics in a fluid manner. After our first meeting, please be sure to do *all* assignments prior to the date of the class for which they are listed. Readings in the music handbook (signified by page numbers in parentheses) and listening assignments will be available electronically through Dropbox. Additional listening or viewing assignments may be given in class.

Course Calendar

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| 1 | Aug. 27 | Introduction to the course; German compared to English; how to do research |
| 2 | | Musical introduction; melody and pitch (1–6); texture, meter, and tempo; sound (6–14). Listen: examples 1–5 |
| | [Sept. 3] | No class (Labor Day) |
| 3 | Sept. 10 | Follow-up to meeting 1; discussion of assigned readings. |
| 4 | | Musical ideas (15–19). Listen: examples 6–9.
DIAGNOSTIC QUIZ (music) |
| 5 | Sept. 17 | Luther and German language and literature |
| 6 | | Musical settings of Luther's hymns and other writings |
| 7 | Sept. 24 | Bach: Coffee cantata (poem) |
| 8 | | Bach: Coffee cantata (music) |
| 9 | Oct. 1 | Bach: Coffee cantata (continuation) |
| 10 | | Discussion of papers
PAPER DUE |
| | [Oct. 8] | No class (Fall Break) |
| 11 | Oct. 15 | Mozart: Magic Flute (libretto) |
| 12 | | Mozart: Magic Flute (music) |

- 13 Oct. 22 Schiller, Goethe, and German Classicism
 14 Beethoven: Ninth Symphony
- 15 Oct. 29 Introduction to second half of course, including final assignment
 16 MIDTERM EXAM
- 17 Nov. 5 Romantic song: poems by Goethe and others
 18 Songs (lieder) by Schubert and others
 TOPIC FOR FINAL PAPER/PRESENTATION DUE
- 19 Nov. 12 Romantic opera: Wagner's *Die Walküre* (libretto)
 20 Romantic opera: Wagner's *Die Walküre* (selections)
- 21 Nov. 19 Symbolism, expressionism, and atonality: Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*
 22 Poetry and music relating to World War I
 FINAL PAPER OUTLINE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
- 23 Nov. 26 Brecht, Weill, and others (poetry)
 24 Brecht, Weill, and others (music)
- 25 Dec. 3 Music and poetry since World War II
 26 Preparation for final exam
 FINAL PAPER DUE
- Dec. 10 FINAL EXAM/SYMPOSIUM