SYLLABUS

COURSE: MUS 1104
SEMESTER: Fall 2012
TIME: TR 9:35-10:50
LOCATION: Phillips B-120

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Laura Youens, Professor of Music
OFFICE: B-136 Phillips Hall
TELEPHONE: (Office) 202-994-9044; (Home) 301-779-6906 (not after 9:00 p.m.)
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OFFICE HOURS: 11-12 TR, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is devoted in its entirety to one giant figure in the history of music---Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). A child prodigy who could play fortepiano, organ, violin, and viola wonderfully, he began composing at the age of 5 (what were you doing at age 5?). There was no type of late-18th-century music at which he did not excel: you will be listening to symphonies, concertos, entertainment music, chamber music, choral works, and operas.

When the late Victor Borge presented one of his inimitable evenings of music and humor at Lisner Auditorium in the fall of 1995, he told the audience, “In Heaven, there is a special building for the great composers. They all live together in one great space in this splendid edifice, all except Mozart, who has his own room.” On first thought, how fitting: Mozart, set aside in Heaven for special privileges. But then one reads Mozart’s letters, learns about his life, and decides that he probably would not like that. He would want to be exchanging music, ideas and stories with Bach, Handel, Monteverdi, Palestrina, Josquin, Corelli, Schumann, Beethoven, Brahms Schubert, Dufay, Mahler, Liszt, Stravinsky, Ellington, Haydn (who was, in real life, a friend of his), and lots of other composers whose names I am not omitting intentionally. He would also probably be inveigling them into playing billiards with him.

Mozart was a complicated man. There are numerous interpretations of his character, many of them distorted. Myths abound. We will start this semester by watching that awful movie Amadeus (I’m not hiding my prejudice) with a list of questions to sharpen your focus and attention. How factually accurate is it? In defense of the movie, it is visually gorgeous, shot in Prague, that most eighteenth-century of European cities, and many of the musical performances are compelling. At the end of the semester, you will turn in the answers to my questions (see Calendar of Classes for the due date). We will finish the semester with Mozart’s unfinished last work, a mass for the dead. More myths swirl around this piece than any other of his compositions.

Mozart loved the theatre. His operas, particularly those of the last decade of his life, show how thoroughly he knew how to bring characters to life on stage. (This innate ability eluded Beethoven, who struggled with his one and only opera.) We will devote a great deal of time in this course to four of Mozart’s operas, one with German words and three, with Italian. They are cornerstones of the operatic repertory: many opera houses routinely schedule a Mozart opera each year. This 2012-2013 season, Washington National Opera is performing...
Don Giovanni in September and October. Student tickets are available on the Washington National Opera website. Please be aware that nothing vocal you hear will have English words, although the DVDs I show will be provided with English subtitles, and I will put a book of English translations of the libretti in the Department of Music library.

I have decided against a chronological march through Mozart’s works, even though I will conclude with that last, unfinished Requiem. Instead, I will be moving from genre to genre, sometimes leaving one only to return to it later in the semester. Yes, the majority of my examples come from the last decade of 1781 to 1791 in Vienna, even though there are many marvelous compositions from the earlier years. I am unabashedly choosing what most listeners regard as the iconic works.

Listening posted on iTunesU in Blackboard

This syllabus, the calendar of classes, the Amadeus questions, translations of Latin texts for the sacred music, and synopses of the operas are all available on Blackboard.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
1. You will learn about the life and times of one of western music’s greatest composers.
2. You will learn the terminology that is crucial to music from the Classical era.
3. You will listen closely to assigned listening selections posted on iTunes U in Blackboard.
4. It is hoped that by the end of the course, your understanding of this music will be greatly increased, and you will have found works you will love for the rest of your life.

GRADING:
Your grade will be based upon two written exams (each 25%), four listening exams (25%), and the written answers to the Amadeus questions (25%). For each written exam, you will be given a review sheet of essential terms and names, and I will hold a review session for students who want to brush up on their knowledge. If you fail both written exams, you will fail the course.

Peter Gay’s book is an engagingly-written short biography, which I would like you to read early in the semester. There will be test questions drawn from it; some examples might be “Which chamber music works does Peter Gay single out for special praise?” or “What instrument does Gay say that Mozart disliked?”

On each listening exam, you will be asked to identify 10 excerpts from the assigned listening. You will hear at least a full minute of each excerpt. Warning: I’m not necessarily going to start at the beginning. If you put the listening off until the night before the exam, you will find yourself in serious trouble. Don’t do it.

I expect you to research the answers to the movie questions thoroughly, to provide bibliographical citations, and to write in full sentences and proper English. Grammar and spelling count. I will provide you with a bibliography of books on Mozart in English. Bibliographical citations can be given in social sciences format----author’s last name and page number(s) in parentheses. I want you to consult books: I will frown on a bibliography of solid Internet citations. I have an excellent library at home and own most, if not all, of these books, so be honest in your citations----I will check. These answers are due on the last day of class, so you will have 13 weeks to work on it. Again, please don’t put it off until the last minute.

CLASS POLICIES:
I take attendance. More than 3 absences and your final grade will be negatively affected. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be counted absent for that day.

I allow make-up exams for one of only two reasons: illness so severe that a doctor has given you a note on his/her prescription page, or the death of an immediate family member (documentation required). If you are ill, you must notify me at least one day before the exam. I will not give an early exam or a make-up if you have scheduled your return trip home in December before the scheduled exam date, so check the exam schedule before you make travel reservations.

I will give an Incomplete only if I am convinced that your reason for requesting one is worthy. You may not receive an Incomplete if you are not passing the course at the time of the request. You will fill out a contract with me, agreeing to make up the necessary work by a date agreed upon by both you and me. If that date passes without the work having been completed, I will turn in a grade of F.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM:

Disability Support Services (DSS):

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. If you need special accommodations, I need to know that right away----you will bring me a letter from DSS. For additional information please refer to http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

University Counseling Center (UCC) 202-994-5300.

The University Counseling Center offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

• crisis and emergency mental health consultations
• confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

http://gwired/gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

SECURITY:

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.