A little ways into the second act of Mozart’s *Magic Flute*, Sarastro accuses the Queen of the Night of scheming “durch Blendwerk und Aberglauben das Volk zu berücken” (to bewitch the populace through delusion and superstitition). A passage like this opens up onto an Enlightenment where areas that scholarship has often regarded as distinct are in fact deeply intertwined: theater and religion; opera and the spoken stage; and, more broadly, ecclesiastical and secular activities and modes of thought. Indeed, Sarastro has, willy-nilly, stated a central contention of reformers of the stage: that a Baroque, ceremonial, visual culture had corroded rather than advanced public piety. That such a concern appears in a stage work itself, and one that is musically ravishing, to boot, simultaneously speaks to a different potency that the Enlightenment discerned in the stage—a sensuous power that could be harnessed toward the cause of virtue, to make the stage, as the refrain went, into a school of morals for a nation.

The purpose of this seminar is to understand more clearly these eighteenth-century dynamics, and to see how they might shape our understanding of the repertory, including the operas of Mozart.

Students from a range of disciplines are welcomed to contribute to the work of the seminar, and musical expertise will not necessarily be a requirement. A (non-exhaustive) list of topics for further exploration includes education in the eighteenth century (in which theater had a big part, especially among the Jesuits); different stage repertories (court v. suburban; Jesuit drama; theater in Spain, France, or Italy, among other places); pertinent theological debates; institutional histories; the influence of Rousseau’s anti-theatrical treatise (which generated hundreds of responses); poetic theories (including neo-classicism or the grotesque, as well as allegory); the reception of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century (where myth, history, religion, and farce sometimes collide); and germane political developments.

We will approach this topic through primary sources and some important critical literature. Among the required projects will be a brief paper and presentation on a contemporary theatrical treatise in a language other than English. The other requirements, along with weekly reading and discussion, will be a term paper and a presentation based on that.

This course will take place online but synchronously.

**Requirements**

1. Presentation and commentary (ca. 1,000 wds) on contemporary theatrical treatise  
   25%
2. Participation  
   15%
2. Report on term paper  
   15%
3. Term paper  
   45%

The term paper will have the following components: 1) a working thesis and bibliography, due 21 Oct. 2) an in-class oral presentation based on your research; 3) the completed paper, due December 22d.

**Tentative Schedule**

9 Sept. Introduction. (Please do the reading in advance of class.)  
16 Sept. The Austrian Enlightenment

23 Sept. Religion, the stage, and Austria’s Counter-Reformation legacy

30 Sept. The Enlightenment and feminism. Guest symposiarch, Catherine Coppola, Hunter College, CUNY
   Readings, listening TBA

7 Oct. Project on theatrical treatises

14 Oct. Rousseau

21 Oct. *Don Giovanni* and the popular stage

28 Oct. *Don Giovanni* and Kierkegaard

4 Nov. Reading week.

11. Nov. Two *Figaros*

18 Nov. *Figaro* as Allegory?

25 Nov. Presentations or optional session.

2 Dec., Presentations.
Materials
Most readings will be available as electronic media or digitized. I recommend purchasing your own score to *Don Giovanni* and *Figaro*; as well, have available a good translation (Auden’s of *Don Giovanni* is great, but it’s not literal). Below are ISBNs of recommended or longer texts, in case you want to purchase them.

ISBN: 0801490715

**Accommodation for Medical Illness:** In order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student’s overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the office of the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), not to the course instructor. Students with special learning needs or other circumstances are asked to inform the instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be considered.

**Statement on Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic offence, as found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

**Statement on Health and Well-Being:** Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.

**Online Etiquette:** Nuance gets lost in email, so at a minimum please observe basic formalities and use proper spelling and grammar. That said, I want the class to feel free to test out ideas and would rather err on the side of too much liberality than too much censoriousness.