

Music 9550. *Don Giovanni*: Texts and Commentary

Winter 2025  
Edmund J. Goehring  
Office hours: W 3:30–5:00 and by appointment

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This course will explore one of the mainstays of the operatic repertory, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Although the ultimate content of the seminar will vary according to student interest and background, the focus will go on using musical and literary analysis, as well as reception, to contend with the opera's many perplexities.

We will approach this topic as much as possible through primary sources. Among the required projects will be a brief paper and presentation on a passage from a Don Juan tale 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.

You must purchase a score and bring it to class. If you are not willing to make this investment, please do not take this class. The most scholarly piano-vocal score is from Bärenreiter, and here is the ISBN, in case you want to order it on your own and perhaps save some money: 979-0006450459. An acceptable and more affordable option is the Schirmer edition: ISBN: 978-0793512317.

	Requirements
Participation	20%
Presentation, translation, and commentary (ca. 1,000 wds) on a Don Juan tale	20%
Report on term paper	10%
Term paper	50%

The term paper will have the following components: 1) a working thesis and bibliography, due 12 March; 2) an in-class oral presentation based on your research, on April 3rd; 3) the completed paper, due the last day of the semester.

Schedule

Thurs. 9 January. Introduction. On Italian versification.

Listening: Come prepared to talk about *Figaro*'s 3d-act sextet in light of the readings below.

Reading: Charles Rosen, "Comic Opera," in *The Classical Style*, 288–325; Robert Anthony Moreen, "Integration of Text Forms and Musical Forms in Verdi's Early Operas" (Ph.D. diss. Princeton, 1975), 9–22; Tim Carter, "Verse and Music in *Le nozze di Figaro*," in *W. A. Mozart. "Le nozze di Figaro,"* 75–87.

Thurs. 16 January. Arias.

Listening: Choose two arias from *Don Giovanni*, including from the Viennese version. Analyze the prosody and organization of their texts. Diagram their musical and textual organization. Consider them in light of the various perspectives discussed in the reading.

Reading: Bruce Alan Brown, "Leporello's 'Catalogue' Aria: The French Connection," in *Quinto seminario di filologia musicale: Mozart 2006*, ed. Giacomo Fornari, 135–75; Carl Schachter, "The Adventures of an F#. Tonal Narration and Exhortation in Donna Anna's First-Act Recitative and Aria," in *Unfoldings: Essays in Schenkerian Theory and Analysis*, 221–35; Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, on "Ah fuggi il traditor," 235–38.

Thurs. 23 January. Ensembles.

Listening: “Ah chi mi dice mai”; “Non ti fidar”; “Ah taci ingiusto core”; the second-act sextet  
Reading: John Platoff, “Operatic Ensembles and the Problem of the *Don Giovanni* Sextet,” in *Opera buffa in Mozart’s Vienna*, 378–405; Tim Carter, “Mozart, Da Ponte and the Ensemble: Methods in Progress?,” in *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on His Life and His Music*, 241–49.

Thurs. 30 Jan. The Finales.

Listening: The two finales  
Reading: Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture*, 275–325.

Thurs. 6 Feb. Spectacle and the Enlightenment.

Reading: James van Horn Melton, “From Image to Word: Cultural Reform and the Rise of Literate Culture in Eighteenth-Century Austria,” *The Journal of Modern History* 58, no. 1 (March 1986): 95–124; R. J. W. Evans, “Culture and Authority in Central Europe, 1683–1806,” in *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs: Essays on Central Europe, c.1683–1867*, 56–74; Y. E. Yates, *Theatre in Vienna*, 1–24; Friedrich Schiller, “Theater Considered as A Moral Institution” (1784); Johann Schink, Review of *Don Giovanni*, in Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, 353–57.

Thurs. 13 Feb. Presentations on a Don Juan tale. Please take a passage from a Don Juan tale—or something in its orbit, like Faust—in a language other than English. Your presentation should do the following: translate an excerpt from the play or opera, and briefly discuss the questions this passage raises about translation and interpretation.

Thurs. 27 Feb. *Don Giovanni* before Mozart.

Reading: Nino Pirrotta, “The Traditions of Don Juan Plays and Comic Operas,” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 107 (1980–81): 60–70; Edward Forman, “Don Juan before Da Ponte,” in *W. A. Mozart. “Don Giovanni,”* 27–44; Zehentner, “Leontius” (typescript); Molière, *Don Juan*.

Thurs. 6 March. *Don Giovanni* at the time of Mozart.

Listening: Gazzaniga, *Il Don Giovanni*  
Reading: Cremeri, *Der steinerne Gast* (typescript), libretto to Bertati/Gazzaniga; Goehring, “Of Theologians and Libertines: An Apology for Theater from the Austrian Enlightenment,” in *Mozart in Prague*, 313–41.

Thurs. 13 March. *Don Giovanni* after Mozart.

Listening: Chopin, Variations on “Là ci darem la mano”; Liszt, *Réminiscences de Don Juan*  
Reading: Thomas S. Grey, “The Gothic Libertine: The Shadow of Don Giovanni in Romantic Music and Culture,” in *The Don Giovanni Moment* (Columbia, 2006), 75–106; Mark Everist, “Enshrining Mozart: *Don Giovanni* and the Viardot Circle,” *19th-Century Music* 25 (2001): 165–89.

Thurs. 20 March. Term-paper workshop. Please bring about a page from your term paper for discussion.

Thurs. 27 March. *Don Giovanni* as myth.

Listening: “Champagne” Aria.  
Reading: Julian Pitt-Rivers, “Honour and Social Status,” in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, 21–35; Dallas Pratt, “The Don Juan Myth,” *American Imago* 17/3 (Fall 1960): 321–35; Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*, chap. 2, “Imagining Purgatory,” 47–101; Mladen Dolar, *Opera’s Second Death* (London, 2002), 45–58.

Thurs. 3 April. Term-paper presentations.

Grading scale: A 80 – 100%; B 70 – 79%; C 60 – 69%; F 00 – 59%

**Enrollment restrictions.** Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Music, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student’s home program.

**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, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

For purposes of this course, the use of AI constitutes an academic offence.

**Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence.** Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html) To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

**Accessible Education Western.** Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

**The use of AI is forbidden in this course.**

**Mental Health & Wellness:** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.