

MUS 402B: GREAT COMPOSERS & MUSIC MASTERPIECES NONCREDIT FOR OLDER ADULTS

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2026
Units:	0
Hours:	4 lecture, 3 laboratory per week (84 total per quarter)
Degree & Credit Status:	Non-Degree-Applicable Non-Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Non-GE
Transferable:	None
Grade Type:	Non-Credit Course (Receives no Grade)
Repeatability:	Unlimited Repeatability
Formerly:	NCAL 410C

Student Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate detailed knowledge of Western music as a reflection of its societal and historical context.
- Demonstrate self-managed learning.
- Discuss, with insight and understanding, the social and personal implications of the ways music can be a powerful tool for communicating our common humanity across history and within the context of diverse cultures.
- Distinguish between musical styles from these historical periods based on structural characteristics related to melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, and form, as well as think critically as you analyze, compare, and contrast this repertoire.

Description

This noncredit course is targeted towards older adults. Introduction to the great composers and music masterpieces of Western culture. Includes composer biographies with emphasis on how composers synthesize or transform the aesthetic ideals of their time. Examines how composers' music reflects their own lives as well as mirrors contemporary social, political, and religious events. Historical periods include the Classical period up through early Romanticism. Composers include Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Weber.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the historical development of musical style in Western culture in relation to the political, economic, social, and religious developments of the time.
2. Apply knowledge of musical style, historical periods, and genres from Western culture to representative examples of music.
3. Compare and contrast repertoire of concert music through familiarity with a broad sampling of works, composers, styles, and genres.

4. Critique good performance from bad, from the perspectives of artistic quality and appropriate historical performance practice.
5. Discuss, with insight and understanding, the social and personal implications of the development of musical style in Western culture.
6. Demonstrate self-managed learning in a comprehensive journal, in which they reflect upon, evaluate, and describe their own learning process.

Course Content

1. Music fundamentals: melody, rhythm, harmony, texture, timbre, ornamentation
2. Style, characteristics, and function of music, from the beginning of the Classical period through the works of Beethoven
 - a. Vocal music (opera, masses, lieder)
 - b. Instrumental music forms (theme and variations, minuet and trio, scherzo, rondo, sonata-allegro)
 - c. Composer biographies (Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Weber)
3. Compare and contrast to music of other world cultures
4. Identification of major themes of the culture at each period in history (divine authority, redemption, freedom, artistic creativity and originality, political, social, religious ideologies, gender roles), their definition in other periods in Western culture, and their parallels in other world cultures

Lab Content

Laboratory activities are provided for students to practice and apply their theoretical knowledge regarding each topic area's structural characteristics (rhythm, melody, form, instrumentation, and harmony), style, genre, and important composers. Activities consist of online laboratory worksheets correlated with listening examples. Examples for Classical era music and transition into Romanticism illustrate the quantity and quality of music examples provided.

Representative listening examples for Classical era:

1. Sonata in D Major, K. 492 (ca. 1750?), Domenico Scarlatti
2. Symphony in D Major, Op. 3, No. 2, first movement (ca.1752-1755), Johann Stamitz
3. Sonata in D Major, Op. 5 No. 2, first movement (1766), Johann Christian Bach
4. Piano Sonata in C Minor, Hob. XVI:20, first movement (1771), Joseph Haydn
5. String Quartet in C Major, Op. 33, No. 3 (1781), Joseph Haydn
6. Symphony No. 103 in Eb Major, first movement (1795), Joseph Haydn
7. Piano Concerto in D Major, K. 107, No. 1, first movement, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
8. La serva padrona: "Aspettare e non venire" (1733), Giovanni Battista Pergolesi
9. Orpheo ed Euridice, Excerpts (1762), Christoph Willibald Gluck
10. Piano Concerto in C Major, Op. 21, all movements, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
11. Symphony No. 40 in G Minor, K. 550, all movements, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
12. Don Giovanni, K. 527, Act 1, Scenes 1-5 (1787), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
13. Requiem, K. 626 Introit (1791), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Representative listening examples for transition into 19th century and early Romantic era:

1. Symphony No. 3 in Eb Major ("Eroica"), Op. 55, all movements (1803), Ludwig van Beethoven
2. Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58, second movement (1806), Ludwig van Beethoven
3. Piano Sonata in C Major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein," first movement) (1804), Ludwig van Beethoven
4. Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125, fourth movement, Ludwig van Beethoven
5. Three Lieder, Franz Schubert
 - a. Erlkönig, D. 328
 - b. Prometheus, D. 674
 - c. Wanderers Nachtlied, D. 769
6. Two Settings of Goethe's "Kennst du das Land"
 - a. Kennst du das Land (Mignons Gesang), D. 321 (1814), Schubert
 - b. Kennst du das Land (Mignon) (1849), Robert Schumann
7. Der Freischütz, Op. 77, J.177, excerpts (1921), Carl Maria von Weber

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. Classroom with piano, computer, and audio/video equipment.
2. Access to comprehensive digital music library for representative listening examples.
3. When taught via Foothill Global Access: ongoing access to computer with email software and capabilities, email address.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

The student will demonstrate detailed knowledge of the historical development of musical style in Western culture in relation to the political, economic, social, religious developments, and values of the time in module/chapter-level quizzes and a comprehensive examination. The student will demonstrate ability to apply knowledge of musical style, historical periods, and genres from Western culture to representative examples of music in module/chapter laboratory worksheets and quizzes.

The student will demonstrate ability to compare and contrast repertoire of concert music in module/chapter-level quizzes and a comprehensive examination.

The student will demonstrate ability to critique good performance from bad, from the perspectives of artistic quality and appropriate historical performance practice through participation in on-campus and/or online discussions.

The student will demonstrate ability to discuss, with insight and understanding, the social and personal implications of the development of musical style in Western culture through participation in on-campus and/or online discussions and in brief essays posted in a comprehensive journal (see below).

The student will demonstrate self-managed learning in a comprehensive journal, in which they reflect upon, evaluate, and describe their own learning process by writing two reflections on each module/chapter-level topic area: a pre-reflection that includes what the student already knows about the topic and a post-reflection in which students summarize what they learned and want to remember, clarify, or pursue in more depth.

For the face-to-face class, students will also demonstrate the above through a portfolio of lecture notes and summaries of discussion in conjunction with in-class quizzes.

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

The student will listen to (on-campus) or read (online) lecture information. The student will listen to representative examples of music that illustrate concepts related to the historical/social context, stylistic categories, structural characteristics, and important composers for the varied topic areas.

The student will participate in discussion (on-campus and/or online).

The student will complete laboratory worksheets that provide additional information, as well as ask application questions correlated with listening examples.

The student will learn from feedback on quizzes, examinations, discussion postings, and comprehensive journal writing delivered via email or Canvas.

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Barkley, E., and R. Hartwell. Great Composers and Music Masterpieces of Western Civilization. 2023.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Reading assignments: Textbook chapters.
2. Writing assignments: Comprehensive journal, in which students first reflect upon what they already know about the topic, and then after they have completed all the learning activities associated with that topic, summarize what they have learned, what they need to clarify, and what they wish to pursue in more depth.
3. Participation in formal threaded discussion, that includes written responses to prompts for each topic.
 - a. Example: Biographies offer quite a lot of insight into why a composer's career evolved as it did, why certain pieces were composed or commissioned, and so forth. Before we get too comfortable connecting biography to musical compositions or musical preferences, what might be some pitfalls of interpreting music based on the composer's biography?
 - b. Example: Upon hearing of his death, Mozart's great contemporary Franz Joseph Haydn commented: "posterity will not see such a talent for a hundred years." To which musicologist H. C. Robbins Landon adds: "Posterity has not seen it in two hundred." Do you agree with Landon's comment? Why or why not. Who in the contemporary music field (from any genre) do you believe has as much (or is closest) to Mozart's musical talent. Explain your choice.
 - c. Discussion postings are assessed on the following criteria:
 - i. Appropriateness: Did the student "answer" the question and address all components of the question?
 - ii. Thoughtfulness and accuracy: Does the posting include correct information and demonstrate that the student is thinking about and understanding the material?

- iii. Overall organization: Does the student's posting form a coherent paragraph with main statements, support statements, conclusion, and so forth?
- iv. "ESWE" (edited standard written English): Does the student's posting contain correct grammar and spelling?

Discipline(s)

Music