

History of Opera

Code: 100655
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Musicology	OB	3

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

Musical knowledge, equivalent to having completed A-level/High level of of Conservatoire studies, is required and can be achieved in the 1st year courses "Musical Language I and "Musical Language II".

Objectives and Contextualisation

The objective of the lessons is to study the opera as complex phenomena, with different kinds of languages: music, literature, theatrical sources and visual art. These are connected with social functions, which change according to the historical context, and that generate different uses and consumption according to their development. It is necessary to correctly place aspects such as social representativity, systems of performance production, or conceptual changes in the theater and regarding the treatment of the human voice, as well as dominant literary models.

Competences

- Know and understand the historical evolution of music, its technical, stylistic, aesthetic and interpretative characteristics from a diachronic perspective.
- Recognise the role of music in current society, its function in performances, its relationship with audio-visual culture, technology and informatics, and with leisure and cultural enterprises.
- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
- Students must have and understand knowledge of an area of study built on the basis of general secondary education, and while it relies on some advanced textbooks it also includes some aspects coming from the forefront of its field of study.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analysing ideas about an artistic phenomenon in a given cultural context.
2. Analysing the creators of an artistic phenomenon in a specific cultural context.

3. Analysing the recipients of an artistic phenomenon in a specific cultural context.
4. Correctly interpret the existing links between text and music, from a literary, structural and semantic viewpoint.
5. Define the processes of periodisation and stylistic classification and usual typology in the historical conceptualisation of the musical fact.
6. Distinguish between the main models of opera composition, in its double literary and musical facets, in each period of history.
7. Distinguish between the main principles of scene direction for different periods of history.
8. Historically define the different periods of opera as a musical genre.
9. Identify and classify the different types of voice and voice therapy/use of the voice.
10. Identify the existing links between different lyrical genres in each of the periods of history and understand the mechanisms of musical transit and influences between said genres and subgenres.
11. Indicate the elements that make up the operatic performance from a double perspective: synchronic and diachronic.
12. Integrate knowledge acquired in the production of clear and concise appropriate to the academic and specialist communication.
13. Present knowledge about the history, art or other cultural movements.
14. Produce correct, precise and clear argumental and terminological writing of knowledge acquired, both in the area of musical specialisation and dissemination.
15. Recognise the different scenographic models of the lyrical genre throughout history.
16. Relate the process of creation of repertoire to the different agents participating in opera consumption, both today and in different periods of history.
17. Relate the production of opera librettos with the main literary trends of their time in history.
18. Relating elements and factors involved in the development of historical processes.
19. Solve problems of a methodological nature in the area of musicology.
20. Summarising acquired knowledge about the origin and transformations experienced in its several fields of study.
21. Use specific vocabulary related to lyrical repertoire.
22. Use the vocabulary of musicology related to each period of history.
23. Value and understand the influence of technical innovations in the conception of opera as a theatrical performance, beyond the musical fact.
24. Value lyrical creation as a result of the social manifestations of each period and distinguish between the different types of social function that they fulfil.

Content

1. Constitutional elements of the Dramatic genre:

The voice and vocality;

Changes regarding the concept of "opera", social and cultural spaces, Theatrical action vs. performing and musical action; Musical form and conventionalisms

A language for the lyrical world

Musical consumption. From judiciousness to operatic outburst

Between divisiveness and the hooligans

2. Precedents: from the Florentine *intermezzi* and humanistic court celebrations, to the first operatic performances by Claudio Monteverdi, dramaturgy, "precepts" and theater.

3. Baroque opera in Italy: stylistic diversifications and social use; dissemination of the opera in Europe: from adaptations to the negation of the model. Women in baroque opera.

4. The opera during the French Revolution: Quarrels and aesthetical and ideological spaces of power.

5. **Opera buffa** versus **Opera seria**: Vocal and thematic loans, reforms against conventionalisms; The good, the bad and the ugly of Italian opera in the United Kingdom: Händel and *Beggar's opera*; Metastasio and libretto conventions, beyond the topics.
6. Classicism, Illustration and Opera: Mozart and others: Piccini, Paisiello, Galuppi and Cimarosa; The French Revolution: new public, political propaganda.
7. The muse named G. Rossini.
8. Theatre and the bourgeois city during the XIX century: The romantic melodrama, new audiences, new sonorities and new thematics beyond bel canto. Divisiveness and the treatment of genre.
9. **Risorgimento** and Verdi. Interpreted from Italy and from abroad.
10. In search of identity: The persecution of the national operas in romanticist Europe; the idea of German music from the opera: Carl Ma. von Weber and German theatres; Bohemian opera; *Una inutile precauzione*, national opera in Spain
11. The French romantic prototype: Grande Opéra, operette, opéra lyrique. Musical models and spaces of social influence.
12. The Art work for the Future: Wagner. Performance space, allegoric space, sound space. The symbol.
13. Italy during **fin de siècle**: from crisis to the success of verismo.
14. Discovering Russian and Slavic opera.
15. Operatic Symbolism: itineraries from Strauss to Korngold, through Debussy; The libretto, the voices, the orchestra and scenography of postwagnerism.
16. New forms of operatic expression: Berg, Schönberg, Schrecker, Stravinsky. The crisis of the opera?
17. A Cry for freedom in the post-war period: dodecaphonism, experimental opera.
18. Languages for an "informed" contemporary audience: Britten, Henze, Menotti, Poulenc.
19. Reflexions regarding the crisis of the seventies. New spaces, new companies, new concepts.
20. The New century and contemporary opera: Messiaen i Zimmermann.
21. The phenomenon of the **Régisseur de scène** and regietheater. Currents paradigms: visuality, performance action, actualization, the media and new voices.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lesson	15	0.6	2, 3, 1, 11, 14, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 12, 4, 15, 16, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
Practical sessions	5	0.2	2, 3, 1, 11, 14, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 12, 4, 15, 16, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
Seminaries	19	0.76	2, 3, 1, 11, 14, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 12, 4, 15, 16, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

Type: Supervised

Tutorial	11	0.44	2, 3, 1, 11, 14, 5, 8, 7, 9, 13, 12, 4, 15, 16, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24
Type: Autonomous			
Check and analysis scores	20	0.8	2, 3, 1, 11, 14, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 12, 4, 15, 16, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
Opera visualize	26	1.04	2, 3, 1, 11, 14, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 12, 4, 15, 16, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
Study	30	1.2	2, 3, 1, 11, 14, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 12, 4, 15, 16, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

The course will be articulated through lectures with text commentaries and previous readings, problem-solving seminars (ABP) around different operatic titles,

and comments around viewings/listenings of operas.

The syllabus will be presented following, as a guiding thread, plot themes related to operas from different periods

The arguments and thematic axes will be updated on the Virtual Campus, and proposals such as the following w

- "Superb":

L'incoronazione di Poppea

Rinaldo

Ladu Macbeth of Mtsensk

L'italiana in Algeri

Lucia di Lammermoor

Rigoletto

Lohengrin

Othello

Gianni Schichi

Ariadne auf Naxos

- "Magic":

- "Lust":

- "Empowered women":

- "Folly":

- "Anger":

- "Envy": Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg -

- "Jealousy":

- "Greed":

- "Against adversity":

<i>Die tote Stadt</i>	- "Overcoming":
<i>Wozzeck - Madama Butterfly</i>	- "Victim":
<i>La voix humaine</i>	- "Abandoned":

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Evaluation of hearings	20 %	2	0.08	2, 3, 1, 5, 9, 10, 18, 24
Evaluation of the activities of the Seminars, realización de una History sobre un título	20 %	18	0.72	2, 3, 1, 11, 14, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 12, 4, 15, 16, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
First exam	30 %	2	0.08	2, 3, 1, 11, 14, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 12, 4, 15, 16, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
Second exam	30 %	2	0.08	2, 3, 1, 11, 14, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 12, 4, 15, 16, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

A continuous evaluation system is proposed based on the assessable activities carried out in the Seminars.

The activities of the Seminars will consist of practical analyses, based on scores, librettos and stagings.

The assessable activity of the seminars will consist of the realization of a

designed in a video format, lasting 5 minutes, on a title of an opera that is not necessarily in the repertoire.

The work will be done in groups, and a list will be proposed on the Virtual Campus.

There will be two partial exams, each of which will include half of the cou

Its content and type will be indicated on the Virtual Campus.

An assessment will be made using music examples, based on a list that

Students who participate in the preparation of an opera commentary,

for the 2025-26 G. T. del Liceu handbook, will not have to take the music examples exam or the History.

In order to be evaluated, all evaluation evidence must be completed.

The student who has not completed all the assessment evidence will be considered "Not assessed".

At the time of carrying out each assessment activity, the teacher will inform the students (via Moodle) of the proc

In order to be able to access the re-evaluation, the students must have p

Seminars cannot be re-evaluated. In order to pass the course in case of failure, it will be necessary to resit the as

It is understood that the course is approved when the average of all the evidence gives at least a 5.

In the event that the student commits any irregularity that could lead to a

this assessment act will be graded with 0, regardless of the disciplinary process that may be instituted.

Single Assessment

Those students who decide to take the single assessment must do the fo

1. Written exam (test type) on subject content (45%)

2. Examination on music examples from the list published on the Virtual

3. Commentary and analysis of a short fragment of an opera that will be v

In the event that several irregularities occur in the evaluation acts of the same subject, the final grade for this sub

Use of Artificial Intelligence:

For this subject, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is allowed exclusively in support tasks, such as bibliographic or information searches, text correction or translations. The student must clearly identify which parts have been generated with this technology, specify the tools used and include a critical reflection on how these have influenced the process and the final result of the activity. The lack of transparency in the use of AI in this assessable activity will be considered a lack of academic honesty and may lead to a partial or total penalty in the grade of the activity, or greater sanctions in serious cases. If there is no critical reflection that contrasts the suitability, or not, of the information found, it will be subtracted from the grade obtained.

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General Bibliography

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Alier, Roger. *Guía universal de la ópera*. Teià-Barcelona, Ma non Troppo, 2007, 1040 p.

Annunziata, Filippo; Colombo, Giorgio Fabio. *Law and Opera*. Springer, 2018 (consultable on-line: <http://link.springer.com/openurl?genre=book&isbn=978-3-319-68649-3>)

Baker, Evan. *From the score to the stage: an illustrated history of continental opera production and staging*. Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2013.

Basso, Alberto. *Musica in scena*. 6 vols Torí, UTET, 1995-97.

Bianconi, Lorenzo; Pestelli, Giorgio. *Opera on Stage (The History of Italian Opera. Part II)*. University of Chicago Press, 2002.

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Gänzl, Kurt. (ed) *The Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre*. New York, Schirmer Books, 2001.

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Kerman, Joseph. *Opera and the morbidity of Music*. New York Review Books, 2008.

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Lacombe, Hervé (ed). *Histoire de l'opéra français. Du Consulat aux débuts de la IIIème République*. Paris, Fayard, 2000.

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Pedrell, Felip. *Por Nuestra Música*. Barcelona, ed Henrich, 1891 (reed. Bellaterra, Servei de Publicacions de la UAB, 1991).

Radigales, Jaume. *L'Òpera: música, teatre i espectacle*. Barcelona, Pòrtic, 1999.

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Snowman, Daniel. *La ópera. Una historia social*. Madrid, Siruela, 2016 (2ª ed)

Suárez García, José Ignacio; Sobrino, Ramón; Cortizo, María Encina (eds). *Música lírica y prensa en España (1868-1936): ópera, drama lírico y zarzuela*. Oviedo, Ediciones de la Universidad de Oviedo, Hispanic Music Series, 2018.

Warrack, John; West, E. *The Oxford dictionary of Opera*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992.

1st Theme

Barthes, Roland. *Image, musique, texte*. London, Fontana Press, 1977.

Beauvert, Thierry. *Opera Houses of the World*. London, Thames and Hudson, 1996.

Bianconi, Lorenzo (ed). *La drammaturgia musicale*. Bologna, Il Mulino, 1994.

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Miscevic, Pierre. *Divas: la force d'un destin*. Paris, Hachette, 2006.

Rosselli, John. *Singers of Italian Opera*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Theme 2: The precedents

Cotticelli, Francesco; Maione, Paologiovanni. *Storia della musica e dello spettacolo a Napoli: Il Settecento*. Napoli, Centro di Musica Antica Pietà dei Turchini, 2020.

Palisca, Claude Victor. *The Florentine Camerata. Documentary Studies and Translations*. Yale University Press, 1989.

Theme 3: Italian opera

Baldacci, Luigi. *La Musica in italiano: libretti d'opera dell'Ottocento*. Rizzoli, 1997.

Bruni, Francesco. *La maschera e il volto: il teatro in Italia*. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 2002.

Cotticelli, Francesco; Maione, Paologiovanni. *Storia della musica e dello spettacolo a Napoli: Il Settecento*. Napoli, Centro di Musica Antic Pietà dei Turchini, 2009.

Fabris, Dinko. *La circolazione dell'opera veneziana del seicento nel IV centenario della nascita di Francesco Cavalli*. Napoli, Turchini Edizioni, 2055.

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Rosand, Ellen. *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice. The Creation of a Genre*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991.

Wilbourne, Emily. *Seventeenth-Century Opera and the Sound of the Commedia dell'Arte*. Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2016.

Theme 4: Opera in the French Illustration

Bauman, Thomas; Petzolt McClymonds, Marita (eds). *Opera and the Enlightenment*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Fabiano, Andrea. *Histoire de l'opéra italien en France (1725-1815) : Héros et Héroïnes d'un roman théâtral*. « Sciences de la musique - Séries Études », CNRS Éditions, Paris 2006.

Wood, Caroline; Sadler, Graham. *French Baroque Opera: A reader*. eBook, 2017.

Theme 5: Opera seria, opera bufa. England

Farrell, Joseph (ed). *Carlo Goldoni and Eighteenth-century theatre*. Lewiston, Mellen, 1998.

Kimbell, David. *Handel on the Stage*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Laterza, Guido. *Metastasio e il teatro del primo settecento*. Laterza, 1974.

Theme 6: Opera and Classicism

Del Donna, Anthony R. *Opera, Theatrical Culture and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples*. Oxon, Ashgate, 2012.

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Woodfield, Ian. *Performing opera for Mozart: impresarios, singers and troupes*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Theme 7: Rossini

Osborne, Richard. *Rossini: his life and works*. Oxford, Oxford university Press, 2007.

Vitoux, Frédéric. *Rossini*. París, Ed. du Seuil, 1986 [Trad. castellana: Madrid, Alianza Música, 1989].

Theme 8: The theater and city in the 19th century

Abbate, Carolyn. *Unsung voices: opera and musical narrative in the nineteenth century*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991.

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Theme 9: El **Risorgimento** and Verdi

Budden, Julian. *Verdi*. Londres, Dent & Sons, 1985 (reed 2008).

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Theme 10: In search for identity

Alier i Aixalà, Roger. *L'òpera a Barcelona. Orígens, desenvolupament i consolidació de l'òpera com a espectacle teatral a la Barcelona del segle XVIII*. Barcelona, Institut d'Estudis Catalans-Societat Catalana de Musicologia, 1990.

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Theme 11: French romantic models

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Theme 12: Wagner

Adorno, Theodor W. *Essai sur Wagner*. Paris, Gallimard, 1966 (trad. original del 1962).

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Theme 13: Italy during *fin de siècle*

Baldacci, Luigi. "I libretti di Mascagni". *NRMI*, nº 3, 1985.

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Wilson, Alexandra. *The Puccini problem: opera, nationalism and modernity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Theme 14. Discovering Russian and Slavic opera

Campbell, Stuart. *Russians on Russian Music (1830-1880). An Anthology*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Clapham, John. *Dvorak*. London, Newton Abbot, 1979.

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Tyrrell, J. *Czech Opera*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Theme 15: Operatic Symbolism

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Theme 18: Languages for an "informed" audience

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Recommended reading

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[també a: [http://imslp.org/wiki/Dialogo_della_musica_\(Galilei,_Vincenzo\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Dialogo_della_musica_(Galilei,_Vincenzo))]

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Web resources and electronic books

- "Opera glass", pàgina amb llibrets i resums d'algunes òperes de repertori. <http://opera.stanford.edu/>

- "Drammaturgia". <http://www.drammaturgia.it/index.php>

- International Musical ScoreLibrary Project. <http://www.imslp.org>

- Llibrets d'òpera italians a partir d'edicions d'època. <http://www.librettidopera.it/>

- Arxiu de la Societat del G. T. del Liceu:

<http://www.bib.uab.cat/human/arxiusocietatliceu/publiques/indexcat.php>

- **Monteverdi: 400 aniversari del naixement de l'òpera:** <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/24772>

- Facos, Michele. *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Art*. John Wiley, 2019. Accés: <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.are.uab.cat/doi/book/10.1002/9781118856321>

- Davies, David. *A Philosophy of the Performing Arts*. John Wiley, 2011. Accés: <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.are.uab.cat/doi/book/10.1002/9781444343458>

Software

No specific software required.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed