Semester: Fall 2015
Class code: CORE-UA9731001
Instructor Details: Tony Ackerman, Ph.D.
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Office hours by arrangement

Class Details: Expressive Culture: Prague Music Field Study
Wednesdays, 1:30 - 4:20
Location to be confirmed.

Prerequisites: No prerequisites; the course is intended as an enrichment course for those with any level of musical experience.

Class Description: This is a chance to immerse yourself in the musical culture of Prague. You will attend five music performances together with the class and two on your own. Each of the concerts will be in a different style, and performed in a different sort of venue. Each concert will be preceded by a lecture/listening session, often involving the actual performers; you will also be assigned a reading excerpt relevant to the music you will hear. The concerts, scheduled about once every two weeks on evenings between Mondays and Thursdays, will be supplemented by architecture walks and film showings, which will usually take place during class time.

In addition, you will undertake a “Personal Connection Project”, in groups of two or three, in which you will choose a local genre, performer or composer to research. The research will include reading relevant contextual material, attendance at a live concert or rehearsal, and an interview with a performer. You will share your project with the class in an oral presentation, which will take place at the end of the semester. after which you will submit your conclusions in a final paper, in lieu of a final exam.

As a Core Course, this experience may be the first in-depth experience of music for you, but it is also suitable for music majors and those with a long experience of music; we address the relationship of music to the surrounding culture, and ask big questions concerning the role of music (and all the arts) in human life.

Desired Outcomes:
- to experience Prague in depth through its music and unique spaces
- to widen your range of experience in hearing diverse musical genres
- to draw conclusions about the relationship of the arts to their surrounding culture
- to develop your ability to talk and write about music
- to attain a deeper understanding of the unique power of music in human life

Assessment Components:
- 2 Oral presentations (5-10 minutes per person: 15%)
  - PCP Concert Report
  - Final PCP Presentation
- Quizzes, reading checks (10%)
- 8 short papers and concert reflections (1-2 pp. each: 40%)
- Final paper on Personal Connection Project (media script, 2000 words, 15%)
- Class participation, effort, progress (20%)

Note: the above percentages are guidelines only.

Assessment Expectations: Grade A: Student makes excellent* progress towards understanding and expressing the course concepts
Grade B: Student makes good progress towards understanding and expressing the course concepts
Grade C: Student makes some progress towards understanding and expressing the course concepts
Grade D: Student makes little progress towards understanding and expressing the course concepts
Grade F: Student makes no progress towards understanding and expressing the course concepts

Instructor will provide rubrics for graded work to help the student understand the criteria for assessing students’ progress.

Percentages are not applicable in this course; see above note.

Attendance Policy
Absences only for medical reasons and for religious observance will be excused. To obtain an excused absence, you are obliged to supply either a doctor’s note or corroboration of your illness by a member of the housing staff (either an RA or a Building Manager). To be excused for religious observance, you must contact the instructor and the Associate Director via e-mail one week in advance of the holiday. Your absence is excused for the holiday only and does not include days of travel associated with the holiday. Unexcused absences will be penalized with a 2% percent deduction from your final course grade for every week of classes missed.

Late Submission of Work Policies will vary according to the nature of the assignments.

Plagiarism Policy
According to the Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook, plagiarism is defined as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work as though it were one’s own. More specifically plagiarism is to present as one’s own a sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another writer, a paraphrased passage from another writer’s work; facts or ideas gathered, organized and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student’s intention, it is crucial that acknowledgment of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism.

The College of Arts and Science’s Academic Handbook defines plagiarism similarly and also specifies the following:

“presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written), writing a paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea without a reference to the source of the idea, or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both teachers have given their permission in advance).

Receiving help on a take-home examination or quiz is also cheating – and so is giving that help – unless expressly permitted by the teacher (as in collaborative projects). While all this looks like a lot to remember, all you need to do is give credit where it is due, take credit only for original ideas, and ask your teacher or advisor when in doubt.”

“Penalties for plagiarism range from failure for a paper, failure for the course or dismissal from the university.” (Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook)

Instructor will distribute or post relevant readings each week. Below are some of the sources from which short excerpts will be chosen:

- The Music Instinct, by Philip Ball
- Prague in Black and Gold by Peter Demetz
- Listen, by Joseph Kerman
- The Joke, by Milan Kundera
- The Bass Saxophone, short story by Josef Skvorecky
- The Buchta Theory and the Perina Syndrome, article in New Presence by Tony Ackerman
- Czech Fairy Tales, K.J. Erben,

Concerts and other events outside of class time will be indicated in bold. In addition to the five “group” concerts and weekly reading and short writing excerpts, you will be expected to attend two concerts on your own, which you will choose with assistance from the professor. Please be advised that the following schedule is a draft, and that any detail may change according to concert opportunities that come up.
Session 1
Wednesday
September 2
- INTRODUCTION to Course: syllabus, concerts, assignments, grading, questionnaires, etc.
- PRELUDE: Jazz performance by Ackerman/Kratochvil/Zangi trio at Golem Club

Session 2
Wednesday
September 9
- Lecture/Discussion: Why Make Music?
- Present and discuss Personal Connection Projects

Work due:
- read: The Music Instinct, by Philip Ball, pp. 1-31
- write: 24-Hour Music Log + Concert questions

Architecture walk #1, Wednesday, Sept. 9, 19:00: The Old Town, Gothic to Baroque

Session 3
Wednesday
September 16
- Lecture: Writing About Music: Introduction to musical elements, instructions for Concert Reflections
- Guest lecture/performance by Marta Topferova

Work due:
- read: music reviews, TBA, + excerpts on Roma and Moravian music TBA (due 21/9)
- write: Reflections/questions on architecture walk

Concert #1, Monday Sept. 21: Milokraj at Atrium na Zizkove, 19:30

Session 4
Wednesday
September 23
- Architecture walk #2: Mala Strana and Hradcany: The Baroque in Prague, with organ demo/performance in Loreta Church by Marek Valasek

Work due:
- read: Art for Travellers: Prague by Deanna McDonald, pp. 16-22
- write: Concert Reflection #1 (Milokraj)

Session 5
Wednesday
September 30
- Guest lecture/performance by Jiri Stivin
- Museum visit: Old Czech Art at the St. Agnes Monastery

Work due:
- read Listen, by Josef Kerman, Chapter 8: “The Late Baroque Period”

Concert #2, Thursday Oct. 1: Jiri Stivin at St. Agnes Monastery, 19:30

Session 6
Wednesday
October 7
- Lecture: The Baroque in Music
- Groups work on Personal Connection Projects
- write: Concert Reflection #2 (Jiri Stivin)

Session 7
Wednesday
October 14
- Architecture walk #2: 19th century, Art Nouveau, Art Deco (during class time)

Work due:
- read: excerpt on Art Nouveau/Art Deco styles TBA
- prepare concert presentations
- Mid-Term PCP Concert Presentations

Session 8
Wednesday
October 21
- prepare Concert presentations
- write PCP Concert Reflection

Fall Break
October 26-31
(No classes)

Session 9
Wednesday
November 4
- Guest lecture: Dvorak and the Opera Rusalka, Prof Dita Hradecka
- Field trip: Tour of National Theater

Work due:
- read: The Water Sprite, fairy tale by K.J. Erben

Concert #3, Monday Nov.9: Dvorak’s opera Rusalka at the National Theater, 19:00
Session 10
Wednesday
November 11
• Discussion: Rusalka, live and filmed
• Lecture: Gustav Mahler’s Symphony #4 (pt. 1)
work due:
• view Rusalka film (by Nov. 9)
• write: Concert Reflection #3 (Rusalka)

Session 11
Wednesday
November 18
• Lecture: Gustav Mahler’s Symphony #4 (pt. 1)
• Group work on PCP
work due:
• Listen: Mahler Symphony #4, movements 1 + 2

Concert #4: Wednesday, Nov. 18, 19:30: Czech Philharmonic w. Magdalena Kozena, Mahler Symphony #4, Rudolfinum

Session 12
Wednesday
November 25
• Film showings by Petr Kolar + discussion on Czech culture
work due:
• read: The Buchta Theory and the Perina Syndrome, by Tony Ackerman (article in New Presence, Summer 2000)
• write: Concert Reflection #4 (Mahler)
• Final project: PCP Presentations Group A

Session 13
Wednesday
December 2
• Prepare final presentations and paper

Session 14
Wednesday
December 9
(last day of classes)
• Final project: PCP Presentations Group B
work due:
• Prepare final presentations and paper

Session 15
December 16
Final exam
• Closure: Discussion: Why Make Music? (Pt. 2)
work due:
• Final paper: Media script on PCP

Classroom Etiquette
Let us be guided by common courtesy, respect for others, and the will to maintain a focused learning environment. The following guidelines will help:
• Please arrive on time – your active participation is necessary from the beginning.
• The class meets from 1:30 - 4:20. When possible, there will be a short break in the middle when you can have a snack, otherwise please ask permission if you need to eat during the class. Water is allowed at all times. You may leave to go to the restroom at any time without asking.
• Please do not open laptops or look at cell phones unless expressly asked to by the professor.
• Please do not pack up your things before the class actually ends.
• If for any reason you need to be late or have to miss a group event scheduled outside of class time, please send the professor a text message as soon as possible.

Required Co-curricular Activities
Concerts and other cultural events will be required, both during the class time and on other evenings. Four evening “group” concerts are listed in the class schedule; one more is still TBA. In addition, you will attend two events outside class time on your own, connected to the PCP.

Suggested Co-curricular Activities
Interesting concerts and other events will be posted on the NYU Music Facebook page, and it is highly recommended that you partake of the “Kulturama Praha” offered by NYU Prague.