

This is a syllabus that I designed for the “Public Health in Classical Music” class that I intend to teach in the future. This is an elective course designed for public health students with the goals of enriching their education with a music appreciation style course that is based on themes from public health, divided into specific modules. Examples include infectious disease, mental health, climate change, etc.

I designed this course with the idea of minimizing exams and maximizing classroom discussion time. The weekly reading reflections are meant to facilitate course discussion and to make sure students keep up with weekly readings. Attendance, as mentioned, is critical for such a course and is particularly stressed. Unfortunately, listening quizzes are probably the most effective tool for assessing listening assignments and will be used, but it will only constitute a small portion (20%) of course grades. The concert report is meant to give students a hands-on experience at putting together a musical critique in a NYT-style music review. Finally, the final paper/presentation provides flexibility for students to research any topic they choose and put together their findings in a literature review format, giving public health students a new take on a research method that they are already familiar with in another field.

Public Health in Classical Music

Course Objectives

- Develop listening skills and vocabulary necessary to communicate attributes of music in different historical periods
- Review core concepts of public health relevant to the course
- Identify masterpieces of Western classical music and articulate their unique connections to public health
- Learn how to appreciate classical music from musical, historical, and public health perspectives
- Navigate and explore the incredible richness of musical life in New York City

The course is meant to parallel the Music Humanities course at Columbia College but with a public health focus. With that in mind, this is still largely a music appreciation course but woven together using themes of public health (infectious disease, mental health, etc.) My end goal in this course is for students in a school of public health to develop a lifelong appreciation for classical music while learning how it is closely related to the field they study. My intended modes of assessment for this course are listening quizzes, short response assignments, a final presentation exploring any relationship between public health and classical music that we did not cover in the class, and attending a live concert/opera performance as a class.

Assessment Plan

There will be five graded components of the course. They are:

1. **Attendance and participation** – this course is built upon classroom discussion. As such, attendance is critical and constitute a significant portion of the course grade. Attendance will be taken daily, and students are allowed a maximum of three absences. Every subsequent absence will result in a one percent deduction from final course grades. All students are expected to have read and listened to all assigned materials prior to class and take part in discussion.
2. **Weekly reading reflections** – students are responsible for submitting a two-page reflection based on the reading assignments for the week. Students will be provided with a number of “Questions for Contemplation” that are meant to guide, not restrict, the student’s thought process. The purpose of these reflections is to ensure students complete the reading assignments each week and serve as talking points to facilitate classroom discussion.
3. **Listening quizzes** – at the end of each module, there will be a listening quiz for music covered in listening assignments and during lecture. These will be 15 to 30 second segments selected from the listening assignments, and students will be responsible for identifying the name and composer for the piece. A study guide will be provided to students prior to each quiz.
4. **Concert report** – students are responsible for writing a four-page concert report after the live performance attended as a class. The purpose of this report is for students to review and critique the performance and reflect their own thoughts on technical aspects of the performance that they enjoyed. Some guidance questions will be provided, but again this is meant to assist, not restrict, the student’s thought process.
5. **Final paper and presentation** – at the end of the course, students will have the opportunity to choose their own topics on any relationship between public health and classical music that they would like to research, and present their findings in a literature review and present their findings to the class. Detailed guidelines for this assignment will be provided later in the semester.

Grading

Your course grade will be based on:

Attendance and participation	15%
Weekly reading reflections	25%
Listening quizzes	20%
Concert report	10%
Final paper and presentation	30%