

Dr. Alberto Nones

“Power in Music: Patriotism and Nationalism in Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner”

Course description and educational objectives

What is patriotism, and what is nationalism? Can the artistic means of music help us in understanding their foundations?

Two will be the main paths of knowledge and human experience that our inquiry will follow: on the one hand, a history of political thought examination of the sentiment of political attachment; on the other hand, by combining history of political thought and aesthetics of music, an analysis of Giuseppe Verdi’s and Richard Wagner’s opera, meant to illuminate otherwise abstract ideas with concrete examples of patriotic and nationalistic expression.

The course has a political science focus, but the integration of the study of political ideas with the exposure to works of art intends to broaden the scope of the course toward interdisciplinary and novel scholarship. On occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Italian unification, the final goal of the course is to invite students to reconsider two main traditions of political thought, patriotism and nationalism, and discuss their potential to bind people(s) or reiterate conflict today.

Course topics

- Patriotism and the republican tradition of political thought (from Machiavelli to Mazzini, 6 lecture hours)
- Reflections and refractions of patriotism in Verdi’s opera
- Nationalism and the romantic tradition of political thought (from Fichte to Nietzsche, 6 lecture hours)
- Reflections and refractions of nationalism in Wagner’s opera
- Power in music today as opposed to the nineteenth century (3 lecture hours)

Course format and policies

This is an advanced interdisciplinary course in the History of Political Thought, 15 lecture hours / 5 office hours. Attendance is required and active class participation is expected. Students will be evaluated through a research paper and a final exam.

Course materials

Readings (excerpts):

- Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*
- Hegel, *The German Constitution*
- Machiavelli, *The Discourses*
- Mazzini, *The Duties of Man*

Course Syllabus, E-84, Political Science / History of Political Thought

- Milton, *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* and *Paradise Lost*
- Rousseau, *The Social Contract*
- Nietzsche, *Nietzsche contra Wagner*

Background literature and references:

- Adorno, T., *In Search of Wagner*
- Adorno, T., *Aesthetic Theory*
- Adorno, T., *Philosophy of Modern Music*
- Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*
- Anegehl, N., *Patriotism Under Three Flags: A Plea for Rationalism in Politics*
- Ashcraft, R., *Revolutionary Politics & Locke's Two Treatises of Government*
- Benjamin, W., *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*
- Benjamin, W., *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*
- Burke, E., *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*
- Croce, B., "Una parola desueta: L'amor di Patria", in *L'idea liberale: Contro le confusioni e gl'ibridismi*
- Gellner, E., *Nations and Nationalism*
- Hegel, "The German Constitution", *Political Writings*
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1992. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*
- Janowitz, M., *The Reconstruction of Patriotism: Education for Civic Consciousness*
- Kantorowicz, E. H., "«Pro patria mori» in Medieval Political Thought", in *Selected Studies*
- Kateb, G., *Patriotism and Other Mistakes*
- Kivy, P., *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music*
- Macintyre, A., "Is Patriotism a Virtue?" in Beiner, R. (ed.), *Theorizing Citizenship*
- Mayall, J., *Nationalism and International Society*
- Mazzini, G., *The Duties of Man*
- Mila, M., *Lettura del Flauto Magico*
- Nussbaum, M.C (ed.), *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism* Rousseau, *Discourse on Political Economy*
- Plato, *The Republic*
- Poggi, G., *The State: Its Nature, Development and Prospects*
- Primoratz, I., (ed.), *Patriotism*
- Rousseau, *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*
- Rousseau, *Dissertation sur la musique moderne*
- Smith, A., *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*
- Bock, G., Skinner, Q. and Viroli, M. (eds). *Machiavelli and Republicanism*
- Van Gelderen, M. and Skinner, Q. (eds.), *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*
- Vico, *La Scienza Nuova*
- Viroli, M., *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism*

Primary sources:

- Verdi's operas (a selection)
- Wagner's operas (a selection)