Raritan Valley Community College  
Academic Course Outline  

MUSC 201 - Music History & Literature I

I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title:  MUSC 201: Music History and Literature I

B. New or Modified Course: modified

C. Date of Revision: Semester: Fall Year: 2014

D. Sponsoring Department: Visual & Performing Arts

E. Semester Credit Hours: 3

F. Weekly Contact Hours: Lecture: 3 Laboratory: 0

G. Prerequisites: MUSC112 Music Theory II, and MUSC114 Musicianship II

Note: Recommended co-requisites: concurrent enrollment in MUSC211 Music Theory III and MUSC213 Musicianship III

H. Laboratory Fees: None

I. VAPA Chair: Dennis Russo, Co-Chair, Performing Arts  
(908) 526-1200 x8391, drusso@raritanval.edu

II. Catalog Description

Prerequisites: Music Theory II (MUSC112) and Musicianship II (MUSC114). Recommended co-requisites: concurrent enrollment in Music Theory III (MUSC211) and Musicianship III (MUSC213).

This course is for music majors and others with adequate background. It is the first of a two-semester survey of Western art music from ancient times to 1750. The course traces styles and techniques of vocal and instrumental music, the major composers, and the musical forms of the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque periods. The course emphasizes analyzing and listening to representative compositions as well as gaining an historical and socio-cultural perspective.

Note: Music History & Literature II may be taken before Music History & Literature I.
III. Statement of Course Need

A. This course complements the four-semester sequence of Music Theory and Musicianship, and is a standard course in all baccalaureate music curricula. As it is the chronological study of the literature, forms and composers in the history of what is termed Western “Art Music”, its content is part of every musician’s knowledge base. The two semesters of Music History are offered as second year or sophomore courses.

B. Based on evaluations by the njtransfer.org website, Music History and Literature I and II transfer to most colleges as equivalent program requirements for Associate and Bachelor degree programs in Music.

IV. Place of Course in College

A. Free elective

B. The course serves as a program requirement for AFA Music.

C. To see course transferability for New Jersey colleges and universities, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; for other colleges and universities, go to the individual college website.

V. Outline of Course Content

A. Our musical heritage from antiquity.


C. The early Middle Ages: medieval monophony and Gothic polyphony (11th-13th centuries).

D. Middle and late Medieval music: Ars antiqua and Ars nova: Machaut, Dunstable, (13th and 14th centuries)

E. The transition to renaissance style: duFay, Binchois (15th c.)

F. The Renaissance: Franco-Netherlands composers—Ockeghem, Obrecht, Josquin, et al. (15th-16th centuries.)

G. The rise of regional styles: Italy, France, England, Germany, Spain (16th c.)

H. Reformation and Counter-Reformation: Luther, Byrd, Palestrina, Victoria, Lassus (16th c.)

I. Renaissance instrumental music; the Venetian school: Gabrieli (16th c.)

J. The Baroque era: two practices, three styles (from 1600).

K. Baroque vocal music: monody, opera, Monteverdi, oratorio, Schutz, cantata.

L. Baroque instrumental music: types, instruments, keyboard music, ensemble music.

M. Eminent composers of the 18th century: Vivaldi (Italy), Telemann (Germany), Rameau (France), J.S. Bach (Germany), Handel (England).

VI. General Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes

A. General Educational Goals
The student will:
demonstrate orally and in writing a critical understanding of the development and
culture of Western art music, from ancient times to 1750. (G.E. 1, 6, 7, *)

B. Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to:
1. identify the major composers of the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque
   periods and give examples of significant works of each composer.
2. compare and contrast the musical styles of different historical periods or
   of different composers within a single period.
3. characterize the elements of musical style
   found in the Medieval,
   Renaissance, and Baroque periods with examples from the literature.
4. trace the evolution of our musical language and the development of forms
   through the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods.
5. apply an historical perspective, showing the relationships between music, the
   the other arts and other human conditions from the early Christian era to 1750.

(* embedded critical thinking)

VII. Modes of Teaching and Learning

   A. Lecture/discussion
   B. Small-group work
   C. Student oral presentations and researched projects
   D. Independent study
   E. Recorded musical examples of stylistic performances
   F. Attendance at live concerts
   G. Possible guest lecturers and/or performers
   H. Possible student performances

VIII. Papers, Examinations, and other Assessment Instruments

   A. Research essays
   B. Portfolios (style analyses of works studied)
   C. Examinations: aural and written

IX. Grade Determinants

   A. Examinations
   B. Detailed stylistic formal analyses of selected works
   C. Completion and presentation of researched materials on selected topics
   D. Attendance and classroom participation
X. Texts and Materials

Text(s): (such as)
1. A Brief History of Western Music (based on the latest Grout-Palisca), Barbara Russano Hanning, W. W. Norton (latest edition), with Study and Listening Guide (Burkholder)
2. Primary score and music source: Norton Anthology of Western Music, with accompanying CD set

(Please note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

XI. Resources

A. Sound proof Music Classroom with piano
B. Stereo and media systems
C. Marker-board with musical staff lines
D. Library of recorded and videotaped performances
E. Library of music scores