

MUS 209  
Western Music History: Classical to Contemporary  
3-3-0

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

An exploration of the music and culture of Western civilization from 1750 to the present, with an emphasis on the Western Art tradition. Students will study both the sacred and secular music of these eras including (but not limited to) opera, church music, song, symphony, sonata, concerto, and chamber music. The music and careers of several composers will be examined in some detail. Musical works will be examined on the basis of their intrinsic characteristics as well as in connection with the aesthetic, social, philosophical, political, and economic environment in which they were created. Students will be expected to have a basic understanding of standard musical notation.

**REQUISITES:**

*Previous Course Requirements*

- ENG 010A Basic Writing or ENG 011 Basic Writing II or ESL 011 ESL Basic Writing II
- REA 011 Fundamentals of College Reading or REA 017 Vocabulary and Reading Comprehensive Development II

*Previous or Concurrent Course Requirements*

None

**COURSE COMMENT(S):**

MUS 120 (Music Fundamentals) is *recommended* but not required as a prerequisite. Spring Semester Only.

LEARNING OUTCOMES Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	EVALUATION METHODS
1. Identify and describe the musical characteristics of major genres from the Classical era through the 20 <sup>th</sup> century to the present.	Readings Discussion Listening Assignments Score Study Research Project	Written Essays Written Objective Tests, Quizzes, and Homework Assignments In-Class Discussion
2. Connect the cultural environment of the Enlightenment and	Readings Discussion Listening Assignments	Written Essays Written Objective Tests, Quizzes, and Homework

its impact on developments in Classical music.	Score Study Research Project	Assignments In-Class Discussion
3. Associate the impact of culture in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century to musical developments in the Romantic era.	Readings Discussion Listening Assignments Score Study Research Project	Written Essays Written Objective Tests, Quizzes, and Homework Assignments In-Class Discussion
4. Relate the cultural environment of the prewar period, the later 20 <sup>th</sup> century, and the early 21 <sup>st</sup> century to developments in contemporary art music.	Readings Discussion Listening Assignments Score Study Research Project	Written Essays Written Objective Tests, Quizzes, and Homework Assignments In-Class Discussion
5. Identify major figures in Western Classical and art music and explain their importance.	Readings Discussion Listening Assignments Score Study Research Project	Written Essays Written Objective Tests, Quizzes, and Homework Assignments In-Class Discussion

At the conclusion of each semester/session, assessment of the learning outcomes will be completed by course faculty using the listed evaluation method(s). Aggregated results will be submitted to the Director of Educational Effectiveness. The benchmark for each learning outcome is that *70% of students will meet or exceed outcome criteria.*

#### SEQUENCE OF TOPICS:

1. Music and society in the late Baroque
2. General characteristics of mid-18<sup>th</sup> century music and society
3. Vocal music in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century
4. Instrumental music in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century
5. The later 18<sup>th</sup> century
6. The transition to the 19<sup>th</sup> century
7. Post-Beethoven
8. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century
9. Music and society and the transition to the 20<sup>th</sup> century
10. Between the wars: The ongoing “classical” tradition
11. Music after WWII
12. The Twenty-First Century

#### LEARNING MATERIALS:

*Required*

Burkholder, J. Peter, Donald Grout, and Claude Palisca. (2019). *A History of Western Music* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: W.W. Norton.

*Recommended*

Burkholder, Peter, and Claude Palisca. (2019). *Norton Anthology of Western Music: Volumes 2 and 3*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Other learning materials may be required and made available directly to the student and/or via the College's Libraries and/or course management system.

COURSE APPROVAL:

Prepared by: Jill Meehan

Date: 10/2025

VPAA or designee Compliance Verification:

Date: 11/19/2025



*This course is consistent with Montgomery County Community College's mission. It was developed, approved, and will be delivered in full compliance with the policies and procedures established by the College.*