

GMLI 551-01/MUSC 425-01: Topics in Music History and Literature

Fall 2017: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony

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Office Location: Room 208, School of Music

Office hours: informal or by appointment

Location of Class Meetings: Room 107, School of Music

Time and Date of Class Meetings: Tuesdays 5:15-6:55 pm

Credits: Two

Prerequisites: Graduate Status, or MUSC I-IV

Course Description

There is perhaps no work of greater consequence in the history of Western music than Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. It is ubiquitous and unavoidable, like a mountain casting a shadow over the last two hundred years. "We live in the valley of the Ninth – that we cannot help," the musicologist Joseph Kerman once wrote. And yet Beethoven's Ninth continues to raise difficult and important questions that do not admit of easy answers. For example, is it still possible to believe in the symphony's vision of universal brotherhood? In this course, we will explore the Ninth from every possible angle and come to our own conclusions about its meaning, impact, and significance, both in historical contexts and for the present day. We will delve deeply into the score, guided in our critical listening by a wide range of musicological and theoretical writings. We will examine the symphony through the lenses of politics, philosophy, aesthetics, and social history. Finally, we will consider the long and complex artistic reception of Beethoven's Ninth, not only in the realms of musical composition and performance, but also those of poetry, literature, film, ballet, popular culture, and more.

Course Objectives

The objectives for this course fall into two main categories. The first can be summarized as an attempt to answer this question: what do we want from Beethoven's Ninth? Ever since the symphony was given its premiere performance in 1824, it has been regarded as a compelling statement of tremendous significance with the ability to make a real impact on the world. Yet because the piece has been used in so many different contexts to say so many different things and for so many different purposes, it's hard to figure out what its message really is, or why it continues to be so important to such a wide variety of people. Political regimes of all stripes trot out the symphony to celebrate themselves and the people they govern, but just as often, the symphony is invoked to critique and even inspire rebellion against those very same regimes. The Ninth lends credence to

philosophical positions; it sanctions dominant forms of social organization, or it inspires visions of new societies; it justifies artistic movements; it triggers powerful ideas and feelings in movies and TV shows; it sells products. In a word, Beethoven's Ninth has the power to change the world – or at least we seem to think it has this power, or ought to have it. Why do we return to the Ninth Symphony over and over again? What do we want it to accomplish, and why? By reflecting extensively on these sorts of questions, we will also be able to think critically about the issue of whether or not art can influence society, and if it can, how that process actually works. We will explore these matters by examining the Ninth Symphony in its own historical, political, and intellectual context, as a performed artwork at the center of a variety of social and cultural rituals, and as an enduring but mutable symbol in the artistic imagination and the larger public sphere, all for better or worse.

The second basic objective of the course is to develop the skill of knowing and understanding a single piece of music as deeply as possible. You will become very familiar with this work both aurally and analytically, so that you are able to work with the piece conceptually and situate it within important debates in musicology, history, and philosophy. Ultimately, you will come to your own informed conclusions about the symphony's meaning and message.

Learning Outcomes

Here are some of the things you will do or should be able to do by the end of the semester:

- Articulate your own informed interpretation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony from analytical, historical, and cultural perspectives
- Either by ear or by looking at a score, recognize and accurately analyze important passages from the symphony
- Situate the Ninth Symphony within musicological, political, and ideological debates
- Describe and critique some basic aspects and highlights of the political, artistic, and cultural reception history of the Ninth Symphony
- Reflect productively on the ways in which works of music impact the real world, especially in the political sphere

Course Materials

You are responsible for having a copy of the score of Beethoven's Ninth with you for all class meetings. We will be using the *Eulenburg edition* of the score, which is available in PDF form on IMSLP (www.imslp.org) or from various online retailers for about \$18. I strongly suggest you use a hard copy of the score for classwork and studying, but you are welcome to use a digital copy if you so choose. Just make absolutely sure that you are using the Eulenburg score.

NB: One of the benefits of the Eulenburg score is that it already has measure numbers. One of the downsides, however, is that the Eulenburg edition divides the last movement into sections and numbers the measures of each section separately, whereas most writings on the Ninth Symphony refer to measure numbers that span the entire last movement, with no separate sections. *So you will need to ADD measure numbers for the last movement*, beginning with the first measure and counting consecutively all the way to the end. I wouldn't erase or cross out the Eulenburg numbers, however – occasionally an author will use those numbers instead.

All other materials (other scores, recordings, readings, videos) will be distributed in class, posted online (on E-Res or Blackboard), and/or held on reserve behind the circulation desk at Gumberg Library. Your assignment sheets will always give precise information about the location of all necessary materials.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class meeting. You are responsible for reminding me of your attendance if you are late; if you don't, you may be marked absent. Latecomers will be recorded as such; persistent or egregious lateness will be penalized at my discretion.

Absences from class are either excused or unexcused, and *only verified excuses will be accepted*. Valid excuses for missing class are limited to illness (verified by a note from a professional health-care provider), pre-existing commitments (e.g. performing ensemble tour or paid professional engagement, verified by a printed program), family emergencies (verified by Karen Kriss), mental health emergencies (verified by the Counseling Center or other health professional) and religious holidays not otherwise specified in the Duquesne calendar. You must inform me of pre-existing commitments and religious holidays as soon as possible. If you fail to do so, I may not accept the excuse. While I will hold to these guidelines, I reserve the right to determine whether or not an excuse is valid.

All unexcused absences will result in a deduction of 50 points from your final grade. Excused absences will not be penalized, provided that you make up the work you missed. The makeup assignment I give you will probably consist of a written summary and critique of the materials we had discussed for the class you missed, but it may consist of other activities as well. You need to complete the makeup assignment in order to avoid the 50-point penalty, and your performance on the makeup assignment will be counted as your preparation and participation for the class you missed (see info on preparation and participation grade below). If your excused absence was foreseeable (e.g. a concert tour), you must turn in the makeup assignment by the beginning of the class meeting you are missing (or, at my discretion, at some other specific time, depending on the nature of the assignment). If your excused absence was not foreseeable (e.g. illness), the makeup assignment is due by the beginning of the following class meeting.

Graded Assignments

Please note: more information about all of these assignments will be distributed later in detailed assignment sheets.

1. For the most part, this will be a discussion-based, workshop-style seminar course, supplemented by active lectures. Therefore, a significant portion of your final grade will be determined by the level of your **preparation and participation** in class. At the beginning of every class meeting, I will distribute an assignment sheet dictating what you are expected to read, listen to, analyze, study, think about, and generally do or be ready to do before our next meeting. Your preparation and participation grade will be based largely on how well you are able to demonstrate during our discussion that you have done this assignment. Your grade is also dependent on active, engaged, creative, thoughtful, and constructive participation in our discussions, both in terms of quantity and quality. Be aware that sparse, insubstantial and/or non-existent participation will likely result in a very low participation grade.

Shortly before the midpoint of the semester, I will send you a report to let you know how you are doing in the area of preparation and participation. I will give you a sense of what grade you would receive in that area if the class were already over. However, please keep in mind that this will only be an approximate indication of where your grade currently stands, not an actual grade.

Also, portions of your preparation and participation grade may be covered by more specific **small assignments** contained within the larger assignment for the week. For example, I may ask you to give a brief oral summary of an article, or to complete a short creative project. The point totals for these small assignments (roughly between 10 and 30 points) will come out of this larger portion of the final course grade.

2. For 12 of our class meetings, you will have the opportunity to submit a **response paper** as part of that week's assignment. At the end of each week's assignment sheet, I will explain what you need to do in this paper. Generally speaking, a response paper is a document of no less than 600 words (approx. 2 pages, double-spaced) in which you briefly summarize the material I've specified and offer your own critique and ideas in response to it, according to the stated instructions. These papers are intended to help you organize your thoughts before we meet, so that we can get right into the discussion with the questions, concerns, and ideas that you've already formulated. Papers are due on Blackboard by the beginning of class and should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents.

You need to complete 6 response papers by the end of the semester, which means you can skip 6 weeks of papers. It is your responsibility to keep track of this, however, not mine. Papers will be graded largely on how well they demonstrate that you've read and/or studied the material and made some substantial progress in

coming to understand it. I also expect you to follow the instructions given in the assignment sheet about what you need to discuss in these papers. Your prose need not be perfect, but it should be clear enough for me to understand what you're trying to say.

3. To help you structure your study of the Ninth Symphony, you will be responsible for creating a personal **annotated score** of the piece over the course of the semester. Using PDFescape (free online software available at www.PDFescape.com), Adobe Acrobat Pro, or any other PDF annotation tool, you will compile your notes from class discussion, readings, and other sources in a PDF copy of the score, primarily by using the "sticky note" function. You should place each sticky note next to the relevant moment in the symphony; if the note is in reference to the movement as a whole, place the note at the beginning of the movement at the top of the page. Feel free also to use any other annotation tool, perhaps including drawings and text boxes that point out specific aspects of the score. I will evaluate your annotated score at various points throughout the semester to make sure you are staying on track with your notetaking. More information about the annotated score project will be distributed separately.

4. At the end of the semester, during the final exam period for the course (Tuesday 12/12, 5:15-6:55 pm), you will take the **final exam** for the course. This exam will primarily consist of audio clips from the symphony which you will need to identify, analyze, and comment upon. For each clip, you will need to indicate the movement, situate the clip within the formal structure of that movement, and make a few comments that help to explain the meaning of the passage in question, drawing upon class discussion, readings, and other sources we covered this semester. You will also be given a few short answer questions focusing on topics from the readings. More information about the final exam will be distributed separately.

5. Lastly, you will write a **final reflective paper** that articulates your interpretation of the Ninth Symphony, making extensive use of material that we have studied in class to support your views. You will give an analysis of the symphony, explain and defend your understanding of the work's ultimate meaning, and reflect upon the relevance and purpose of the symphony in today's world. You will also be encouraged to work on the paper steadily throughout the semester, with opportunities for feedback on preliminary drafts. The paper must be a minimum of 2500 words (approximately 8 pages, 12 pt font, double-spaced). More information about the paper will be distributed separately.

Other Information About Graded Assignments

I will not accept any late assignments in this course. All late/missed assignments receive a grade of 0. I will allow you *one extension* during the term, provided it is justified. The earlier you request an extension, the more likely I am to authorize it. An extension may only be used for any stage of the annotated score project, the final

reflective paper, a response paper, or any of the small assignments given as part of the preparation and participation grade.

Please note that all written assignments must be submitted in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx) to Blackboard, following the instructions given on the assignment sheet.

Grading Scheme

Preparation, participation, small assignments	250
Response papers:	150 (6 X 25)
Annotated score	200
Final exam	200
Final reflective paper:	200
Total:	1000

Scale For Final Grades

At the end of the semester, you can add up all the points you've earned to determine your final grade:

A 930-1000 A- 900-929 B+ 870-899 B 830-869 B- 800-829 C+ 770-799
C 700-769 D 600-699 F Below 600

Academic Integrity

All violations of the Duquesne University Academic Integrity Policy (<http://www.duq.edu/academics/university-catalogs/2015-2016-undergraduate/academic-policies/academic-integrity>) will be handled with the utmost severity, according to the procedures explained in the policy. Please review the policy in detail. If you witness an integrity violation, you must inform me about it immediately. If you are an accomplice to an integrity violation, you will be prosecuted along with the principal perpetrators. I will be on the lookout at all times for integrity offenses, and I encourage you to do the same. Our learning environment is not a police state, of course, but it should be a place of the highest ethical standards, where respect and concern for the academic process and for one's colleagues is paramount.

Please understand that, in general, you can help one another outside of class in getting a better handle on course material and assignments. However, when it comes to the actual specific execution of any graded assignment – the response papers, the small assignments, the annotated score, the final reflective paper, and the final exam – you must do all your own work and follow my specific instructions. I strongly encourage you to contact me at once if you have any questions or

concerns about a possible academic integrity issue, so that we can maximize your ability to help one another and minimize the chances of an unintended violation.

Students With Documented Disabilities

All students who have documented disabilities (physical, psychological, or otherwise) must meet with me during the first two weeks of class to arrange for appropriate accommodations. This must be handled through the Office of Disability Services. For more information, please see the office website at <http://www.duq.edu/life-at-duquesne/student-services/disability-services>.

Office Hours and Extra Help

Please knock on my door at any time if you would like my help with anything whatsoever relating to the course. If I'm free, I'll be happy to meet with you. I can also make a specific appointment with you to meet at a particular time; just send me an e-mail or ask me in class.

Course Schedule:

Please note: This schedule is a general guide to the semester; topics and activities may change slightly depending on our progress and preferences. Look to the schedule for planning purposes, but refer to the assignment sheets for all specific assignments. If any changes are made to assignments after the sheet has been distributed, I will let you know via e-mail and the Blackboard announcements page. (NB: All Blackboard announcements are duplicated as e-mails, so if you lose track of your e-mail for some reason, you can always check Blackboard for any updates you may have missed.)

Class No. 1 (Tuesday 8/22) – Introduction

Introduction and course mechanics
Beethoven's life and career – a musical, political, and ideological timeline
The premiere of the Ninth Symphony
Review of sonata form

Class No. 2 (Tuesday 8/29) – First impressions

Your first reactions to the symphony in 2017
The critics' first reactions to the symphony in 1824
Understanding Schiller's "An die Freude" [Ode to Joy]
Begin analysis of first movement

Class No. 3 (Tuesday 9/5) – First movement

Analysis of first movement continues

Class No. 4 (Tuesday 9/12) – Second and third movements

Analysis of second and third movements

Class No. 5 (Tuesday 9/19) – Fourth movement part 1
Analysis of fourth movement

Class No. 6 (Tuesday 9/26) – Fourth movement part 2
More analysis of fourth movement

Class No. 7 (Tuesday 10/3) – The big picture
Narratives, programs, and analyses of the symphony as a whole
What is the form of the last movement? And why does it matter?

Class No. 8 (Tuesday 10/10) – Understanding the ideology of the Ninth in its own time
Kant and Schiller on freedom, aesthetics, and education
Enlightened and Romantic perspectives
Beethoven's other political music and the message of the Ninth
The Ode to Joy and the rise of the national anthem

Class No. 9 (Tuesday 10/17) – The political history of the Ninth Symphony
Political uses and interpretations of the Ninth Symphony
Can a symphony change history?

Class No. 10 (Tuesday 10/24) - Performance
Problems and questions surrounding the performance of Beethoven's Ninth
Survey of recordings (Furtwängler, Toscanini, Norrington, others)
What do different performances of the Ninth say about the piece? How do they make us interpret the piece differently?

Class No. 11 (Tuesday 10/31) – The Ninth as artistic rite
The evolution of Wagner's views on the Ninth
Nietzsche's writings and the concept of Dionysian art
The Vienna Secession's 1902 Beethoven exhibition (Klimt, Klinger, Mahler)
Maurice Béjart's Ninth Symphony ballet and the idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk

Class No. 12 (Tuesday 11/7) – The Ninth in film
A Clockwork Orange
Die Hard
Immortal Beloved
Copying Beethoven
The use of the Ninth in popular cinema

Class No. 13 (Tuesday 11/14) – Dystopian visions
Is the Ninth Symphony affirmative or critical?
How universal and humanistic is the Ninth Symphony, really?
Looking at the Ninth from a female point of view

NO CLASS Tuesday 11/21: Thanksgiving Break

Monday 11/27: Annotated score due

Class No. 14 (Tuesday 11/28) - The future of the Ninth

Recent uses and abuses of the Ninth Symphony

The Ninth in the digital age

The Ninth in pop culture

Will the Ninth survive?

NO CLASS Tuesday 12/5: classes meet according to Wednesday schedule

Final paper is due on this date

Tuesday 12/12: Final exam (5:15-6:55 pm, room 107)