Graham School of General Studies

The University of Chicago

**Mozart’s Life and Works**

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**Course Description:**   
This course will examine Mozart’s precociousness, his impressive assimilation of Italianate and Germanic styles, and his relationship to the turbulent social transitions of his time. Divided between biographic study and music analysis, the course will discuss seminal masterworks including the operas *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, the piano concertos, and the Jupiter Symphony. *Music literacy is not required*.

**Week 1**

* Leopold Mozart
* Mozart the prodigy
* “The Grand Tour”

**Week 2**

* Travels to Italy · assimilation of Italian opera
* Early operas
* Early career in Salzburg
* The violin concertos; early piano sonatas

**Week 3**

* Mozart in Paris
* Mozart’s first lover, Baesle
* Death of Mozart’s mother
* “Trouble in Paradise” (Maynard Solomon)

**Week 4**

* Early maturity
* “Jeunehomme” concerto
* Mozart leaves Salzburg · rift with Leopold
* Freemasonry
* Religious music: masses, etc.

**Week 5**

* Mozart the family man
* Journeys to Prague and Berlin
* “Prague” Symphony; string quintets

**Week 6**

* Complete mastery: Six quartets “dedicated to Haydn”
* Mozart’s reputation and relationship with contemporaries
* Mature piano concertos

**Week 7**

* The Da Ponte operas: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Cosi fan Tutte*
* Mozart and the politics of his time
* *Don Giovanni*  as autobiography
* Transformation of operatic styles

**Week 8**

* The last symphonies
* Requiem
* The Magic Flute
* Mozart’s death
* Mozart’s legacy

**Recommended Reading:**

The biographies of Eric Blom and Alfred Einstein are very good, but are older and do not reflect current scholarship.

The Cambridge Companion to Mozart

Peter Gay, Mozart

Cuthbert Girdlestone, Mozart and His Piano Concertos

Spike Hughes: Famous Mozart Operas

H.C. Robbins Landon, 1791: Mozart’s Last Year

Paul Henry Lang, ed., The Creative World of Mozart

Hans Mersmann, ed., Letters of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Charles Rosen, The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven

Maynard Solomon, Mozart