An Introduction to Chinese Kunqu and Peking Operas Appreciation

Course Title : An Introduction to Chinese Kunqu and Peking Operas Appreciation
Course Code : GEC345
Recommended Study Year : Unrestricted
No. of Credits : 3 credits
Mode of Tuition : Lecture, Tutorial, Opera Show Attendance
Class Contact Hours : Two sessions per week, 2 hours lecture and 1 hour tutorial
Category : Elective
Prerequisite : None
Teaching Language : Putonghua

Brief Course Description:

Chinese theatre has had a far-reaching influence on shaping Chinese language and culture. Among all 360 traditional Chinese operas and theatre performing arts, Kunqu Opera and Peking Opera have taken the leading positions in the domain. Kunqu Opera was recently awarded “non-material World Cultural Heritage in China” by UNESCO, and Peking Opera is the form which has become the national opera of China. This latter form has surpassed all other types since the 19th century. Influenced primarily by Kunqu Opera, Peking Opera has been able to integrate various kinds of Chinese opera and performing arts. This course introduces a basic knowledge of Kunqu Opera and Peking Opera. Through multimedia materials, students will have the opportunity to appreciate, analyze and practice basic singing in Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera. Students will be required to discuss and present their selected topics during the class. Professionals will be also invited to deliver seminars and demonstrations of various styles of Opera Arts.

In addition to lectures, arrangements will be made to attend theater performances to appreciate Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera performances. Students will also be given opportunities to practice with performers. At the end of term, the students will be required to submit a paper to demonstrate what they have gained.

Aims:

1. To offer an opportunity for students to appreciate musical, social and philosophical trends
over the last 600 years of Chinese history as a background for Kunqu Opera and Peking Opera.

2. To acquaint students with the Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera styles and conventions.

3. To provide students with the opportunity for written communication and commentary on Opera performance.

4. To enable students to recognize the influence of the operatic language on standard Chinese, and improve their basic knowledge of and taste for operas.

5. To help students practice singing of selected fundamental arias in Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera.

6. To arouse their enthusiasm and lead to their ongoing interest in Chinese Opera.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Operatic knowledge
   a) Students will be required to describe, discuss and explain the general history of Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera as well as distinguish the performance modes specific to different genres. They will be required to be able to outline, contrast and classify the fundamental operatic language and performance patterns of Chinese opera.

2) On singing and performance
   a) Students are required to demonstrate the application of theoretic knowledge gained from lectures with theatrical performances.
   b) Students will demonstrate an appreciation of opera by their knowledge of the key thematic and cultural aspects of Chinese Opera.
   c) Students will recognize, recall and demonstrate a knowledge of fundamental arias in Chinese Opera.

3) On language and literature:
   a) Students will be able to recall and state the appropriate verbal vocabulary of operatic language in lyrics and tones in order to demonstrate their understanding of Chinese theater.
   b) Students will be able to articulate the phrasing and rhetoric associated with Chinese Opera using standard Chinese pronunciation.
   c) Students will demonstrate their literary knowledge by an ability to elaborate and articulate sound judgments of quality issues in Chinese Opera.

Indicative Content:

1. Introduction to general background of China’ opera and theatre, and fundamentals to
**Kunqu Opera**

a. The relationship between Putonghua, Chinese dialects and the language of Kunqu Opera
b. The music, wording and dance of Kunqu Opera
c. The historical development and status of Kunqu Opera.

2. Introduction to the appreciation of Kunqu Opera: *A walk in the Garden, The Peony Pavilion* (《牡丹亭·遊園》) (Field trip for viewing the show will be scheduled, if possible)

3. Selected typical examples from Peking Opera repertoire; themes will include but not be limited to: history, politics, ethics and romance.

4. Introduction to the appreciation of Peking Opera: *Selling Water, Flame Colt* (《火焰駒·賣水》) (Field trip for viewing the show will be scheduled, if possible)

5. The performance patterns and representative plays of Peking Opera

6. Fundamental singing practice of Peking Opera: *Arraignment of Su San, Yu Tangchun* (《玉堂春·蘇三起解》)

**Teaching Methods:**

The course will teach fundamentals of the operas. The teaching concept of this course is to impart knowledge, supplemented by practice and appreciation during and outside the class.

1. Theoretical Part: Through an interactive teaching method comprising lectures, AV materials and discussions, students will be able to acquire basic knowledge of the art of Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera and understand the influence of the language of Peking Opera and *Kunqu Opera* on the verbal vocabulary. Such knowledge can motivate them to take the initiative to listen to and appreciate Chinese opera, and even awaken their interest in imitation.

2. In-class appreciation (for illustrative purposes only, the methods being used depends on certain considerations, such as content of the classes):
   a. Asking students to discuss after viewing a video.
   b. Inviting professional performers to demonstrate the basic key styles and dancing techniques in the traditional opera.
   c. Singing arias led by the instructor.
   d. Combining the presentations given by students with the lectures delivered by the instructor.

3. Visiting the theater in following ways:
   a. Attending a private club for opera practice.
   b. Attending one or more performances in theatre(s).
4. Subject to the availability of funding, purchasing audio materials, books, props, costumes and head-ornaments in appropriate quantities, through which students will be able to have an in-depth experience in the particulars and operation of performance art.

**Measurement of Learning Outcomes:**

We will ask students to:

1. complete a survey on prior knowledge of their understanding, expectations and views towards traditional opera at the beginning of the course.
2. undertake quizzes with a focus mainly on fundamental arias in Chinese opera including the general history, different genres and performing styles, and the interactive relationship between lyrics and the spoken language of the time.
3. give a group presentation to demonstrate their appreciation of Chinese opera by providing analysis and evaluation on the key issues such as themes, cultural-historical aspects, performing skills for 2 or 3 on-line opera shows self-selected by students.
4. submit a term paper at the end of the course.
5. attend a live theatrical event and provide brief report on live performance (students will be encouraged to include photos and other multimedia if possible).

**Assessments:**

(Essays and term paper, which should be submitted in duplicate and filed by the instructor)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Presentation (mid-term)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous assessment</td>
<td>10% (including attendance and participation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatrical activities</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that the term paper will be assessed in three stages: (1) students are required to choose a topic from an approved list at the beginning of the course and engage in an initial study with the instructor’s guidance; (2) an oral report about the findings of the topic will be given mid-term, followed by instructor’s comments and suggestions for revision; and (3) final version of the term paper to be completed by the end of the term.

**Required readings, listening and viewing are to be selected among the following in (arranged in alphabetical order):**

1. 王國維：《宋元戲曲史》，台北：商務印書館，1994。
2. 朱昆槐：《崑曲清唱研究》，台北：大安出版社，1991。
3. 洛地：《洛地交集·戲劇卷》，西雅圖：藝術與人文科學出版社，2001。
4. 徐城北：《京劇與中國文化》，北京：人民出版社，1999。
5. 徐振貴：《中國古代戲劇統論》，山東：山東教育出版社，1997。
6. 高新：《京劇欣賞》，上海：學林出版社，2006。
7. 許金榜：《中國戏曲文學史》，北京：中國文學出版社，1992。
8. 陳安娜：《中國戲曲的藝術形式》，香港：文化出版社，1986。
9. 鄭培凱：《湯顯祖與晚明文化》，台北：允晨文化出版公司，1995。
10. 駱正：《大專院校京劇講座》，天津：天津教育出版社，1995。
11. 謝國祥、劉琦：《中小學京劇課本》，天津：天津教育出版社，1995。
12. 《中國京劇音配像》──《空城計》、《將相和》、《坐宮》、《遊龍戲鳳》、《霸王別姬》、《春閨夢》、《失子驚瘋》、《鎖麟囊》。
13. 《浣紗記》、《牡丹亭》、《十五貫》、《長生殿》、《桃花扇》、《帝女花》、《紫釵記》等戲曲影音資料。

Supplementary learning materials:
1. 于丹：《百家講壇·遊園驚夢》DVD，北京：中央電視台出品，中國國際電視總公司發行，2007
2. 武俊達：《昆曲唱腔研究》，北京：人民音樂出版社，1993
3. 陳化玲：《以戲會友——寫在香港京劇研習社北上取經演出之時》，《中國京劇》（北京）1993年4期。
   《鴻雁椰風聲中傳皮黃——記新加坡的京劇活動》，《大雅藝文雜誌》（台灣），1999年6期。
   《略談在高等學府中推廣傳統戲曲》，《大公報》（香港），1999年12月2日。
   《為中國少年京劇藝術團喝彩》，《大公報》（香港），2009年6月29日。
4. 劉吉典：《京劇音樂概論》，北京：人民音樂出版社，1993
5. 盧文勤：《京劇聲樂研究》，上海：上海文藝出版社，1984
6. Zhang Ning：《昆曲（KUNQU OPERA）》，北京：中國文化部
7. 《百年振飛》（紀念京崑藝術大師俞振飛百年誕辰文藝專題片 VCD 系列），上海：上海東方電視台戲劇頻道製作，中國唱片上海公司
8. 《尋夢半世紀——中國昆劇傳承錄》DVD 系列，上海：上海東方電視台戲劇頻道製作，中國唱片上海公司。

Useful reference works:
1. 上海藝術研究所及中國戲劇家協會上海分會編：《中國戲曲曲藝辭典》，上海：上海辭書出版社，1981
2. 何爲、王琴：《簡明戲曲音樂詞典》，北京：中國戲劇出版社，1990
“Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations.”