

# Humanities Seminars Program

## *The Cello*

Fall 2018

Mondays from 1:00-3:00 PM

October 15, 22, 29, Nov. 5

### **Instructor:**

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### **Course Summary:**

This four week course will examine the cello's role as an incredibly expressive and versatile instrument, reflecting the scope and trends of western music history. The lectures will explore the origins of the cello, compare the unique artistries of historic cellists, present movements from the monumental Suites for Unaccompanied Cello by Bach, look through the intimate lens of sonatas and chamber music, and indulge in the expressive and virtuosic brushstrokes of the concerto repertoire. These two-hour sessions will feature live performances by outstanding cellists from the UA Cello Studio. This incredibly rich and revealing repertoire will be framed within the larger context of the constantly changing trends that shape music history and culture.

### **Recommended Readings:**

Chapters and articles will be uploaded to [Box@UA](#). Registered students will receive the link to that site to download the readings closer to the beginning of the course. While these readings are not necessary to enjoy or understand the course content, these sources will help to broaden the course's context.

### **Course Calendar, Readings, and Topics Covered**

#### Oct. 15: Baroque Origins

*Suggested reading before the seminar:*

Piero Weiss "The Baroque" pages 204-206 and pages 210-219

"A Side Trip into Aesthetics" pages 287-298

"Some General Thoughts on Music" 302-304

Dimitri Markevitch's "The Instrument" pages 3-29

- Overview of the entire four week course
- Historical context: 400 years of music in four eras

- Origins of the cello
- Performances of early examples of cello literature including Vivaldi, Gabrielli, and others
- Stylistic comparisons of prominent cellists

#### Oct. 22: Bach!

*Suggested reading before the seminar:*

Eric Soblin pages 3-31

- Introduction to Bach: history, manuscripts, context
- Anatomy of a Bach suite
- Suite 1 as the paradigm: In depth discussion and performance demonstration
- Six preludes viewed from the broader perspective

#### Oct 29: Conversations and Collaborations

*Suggested reading before the seminar:*

Marc Moskowitz "Freedom and Control" pages ix-x, and 125-144

- Structure of early sonatas: Vivaldi to Boccherini
- Overview of Beethoven's five sonatas
- In depth discussion and performance demonstration of Beethoven's *Sonata #4*
- Cello sonatas written by exclusive pianists: Chopin and Rachmaninoff
- Brahms and Debussy: two different styles, each indicative of their respective milieu

#### Nov. 5: Writ Large

*Suggested reading before the seminar:*

Robin Stowell "The Concerto"

- Structure of Concerti
- Cadenzas
- Early concerti: Vivaldi and Haydn discussion and performance demonstration
- In depth discussion and performance demonstration of Dvorak's *Cello Concerto*
- Saint-Saens and Elgar: two unique approaches to form
- Shostakovich: A Concerto for the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Summary and conclusion of the four week course