

OLLI at DU On Campus Syllabus – Spring 2024

The Operas of Puccini

Tuesday Afternoons Online; Six weeks

Instructor: Gordon Williams

RECOMMENDED BOOKS OR MATERIALS: None

The main focus each week will be Puccini's work, but we will also use that opportunity to explore a few related topics

- **Session #1** – Manon Lescaut (and an introduction to 'verismo' (Italian realism) and its composers, comparing with another verismo opera set in 18th century France, Giordano's Andrea Chénier)
- **Session #2** – La bohème (and why it has supplanted Leoncavallo's version of the same tale)
- **Session #3** – Tosca (and how Puccini and his publisher, Ricordi, dissuaded Franchetti from setting Illica's libretto)
- **Session #4** – Madam Butterfly (and European views of the 'East', such as Mascagni/Illica's Iris, also set in Japan)
- **Session #5** – The Girl of the Golden West (and John Adams' Girls of the Golden West) & Il rondine (Puccini's response to Viennese operetta)
- **Session #6** – Il trittico, 'Puccini's women' & Turandot (and the problem of an incomplete opera) + a more recent opera also set in China, The Dream of the Red Chamber

From time to time, we will consider great exponents of Puccini's repertoire.