

# Great Conductors and the Art of Interpretation Syllabus

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**Instructor**

*John Gibbons*

**Quarter:** Summer 2024

**One day course:** June 22

**Session day/time:** Saturday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm CT

**Course Code and Section:** HUAS78045 24U1

**Email**

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**Course Overview**

This course offers an overview of some of the great and frequently notorious conductors of the historical and modern eras. Especially useful for those who collect recordings, this course will educate participants in perceiving the essential characteristics that distinguish different interpreters of symphonic and operatic repertory. The richly anecdotal and highly eccentric nature of the subject will not be ignored, but the enormous difficulties of producing meaningful performances will be examined as well.

**Modality**

In Person One Day Course  
at Gleacher

**Reference Materials**

Video: The Art of Conducting: Great Conductors of the Past

Conductors in conversation: fifteen contemporary conductors ... By Jeannine Wagar

Conducting Technique: For Beginners And Professionals, By Brock McElheran

The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians;  
Erich Leinsdorf on Music, By Erich Leinsdorf

The Furtwängler Record, By John Ardoin, John Hunt

Leopold Stokowski, a profile, By Abram Chasins

The Great Conductors, By Harold C. Schonberg

The Compleat Conductor, By Gunther Schuller

Recording the Classics: Maestros, Music, and Technology, By James Badal

Conversations With Klemperer, Ed. Peter Heyworth

Findings; The Joy of Music, By Leonard Bernstein

Orientations: Collected Writings, By Pierre Boulez, Jean-Jacques Nattiez, Martin Cooper

## Course schedule

Session	Topics
10:00-10:45 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Conductor's Toolbox: Necessary skills and methods; different works, different challenges</li><li>• A brief history of conducting.</li><li>• Opposed titans: Mendelssohn and Wagner</li></ul>
10:45-11:45 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opposed titans: Toscanini and Fürtwängler</li><li>• Classical v. Romantic</li><li>• Objective v. Subjective</li></ul>
11:45am -12:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two Mavericks:</li><li>• Leopold Stokowski and the conductor's mystique</li><li>• Carlos Kleiber and the search for perfection</li></ul>
12:30 – 1:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lunch Break</li></ul>
1:30-2:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• American Renaissance Man: the prodigious career of Leonard Bernstein</li></ul>
2:00-3:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The German tradition: Knappertsbusch, Kraus, Karajan, Böhm, Sawallisch</li></ul>

### Canvas for in-person courses:

All Graham School courses use our Canvas platform. Approximately one week before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the “Get Started” button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts>. Once you've created your Canvas account, you can access any Graham School canvas course for which you are registered at: <https://canvas.uchicago.edu>.

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The University and its faculty are committed to creating a safer and more inclusive learning environment for all students. At the University, all faculty, staff, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants are considered “Individuals with Reporting Responsibilities” and are required to let the University’s Title IX Coordinator know about any disclosures they receive from students about experiences of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment). This includes

disclosures of experiences that happened before their time at the University. This is to ensure that all students who have experienced sexual misconduct receive support, options, and information about their rights and resources. Students are not obligated to respond to this outreach, and this will not generate a report to law enforcement.

For more information, please see [this handout for students](#) as well as the [University's Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment](#). You can also reach out directly for services and support from the [Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support](#) by emailing [titleix@uchicago.edu](mailto:titleix@uchicago.edu).

If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at [zmel@uchicago.edu](mailto:zmel@uchicago.edu).