STAGING GENDER AND POLITICS IN 5TH CENTURY BCE ATHENS

Section 01: Tues./Thurs., 2:00-3:20 pm (L 345)

COURSE OVERVIEW. This course is an introduction to the study of classical Greek drama. It is designed for students who are not English majors and counts as one course toward the Core requirement in either Literature/Fine Arts or Foreign Language/Foreign Culture. Our approach will be both literary and historical. We will read and discuss several plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes and attempt to situate these important texts of classic Greek culture and of the western cultural tradition within their literary, historical, and social contexts in fifth century BCE Greece, specifically Athens, and within our own.
Syllabus

Dr. Norman Boyer: N427, (773) 298-3233
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Course Objectives

-- to become familiar with several Greek plays or 5th Century BCE Athens
-- to investigate the role of gender and politics in these plays and to consider what those roles tell us about the cultural, social, and political contexts in which the plays were written and originally performed.
-- to gain analytical skills for interpreting literary texts
-- to further the development of informed habits of thought, discussion, and writing

Texts:  Aeschylus, The Oresteia, translated by Robert Fagles (Penguin)
        Sophocles, The Three Theban Plays, translated by Robert Fagles (Penguin)
        Euripides, Medea and Other Plays, translated by James Morwood (Oxford UP)
        Euripides, The Trojan Women and Other Plays, translated by James Morwood (Oxford UP)
        Euripides, Bacchae and Other Plays, translated by James Morwood (Oxford UP)
        Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated by Sarah Ruden (Hackett)
        Thomas R. Martin, Ancient Greece (Yale UP)

Course Policies

1. Class attendance is required. If you must miss, email me first. You have one “free” absence; more–without prior consultation with me-- will result in the lowering of the final grade. However, up to five absences can be made up by submitting a 2-page paper on some aspect of the work being discussed for each class that you miss. Retellings of the work are not acceptable; you must discuss an issue related to the work. Use the study questions and our major general themes for ideas.
2. Class begins promptly at 2:00 and ends at 3:20. You are expected to be here on time and remain for the entire period. Leaving the classroom during class is extremely rude and insulting to the instructor and your classmates.
3. No late work will be accepted after 4 pm Tuesday May 8, except for late final exams, which will not be accepted after 4 pm Friday May 11.
4. I will give incompletes only by student request and only for verifiable illnesses or other personal or family emergencies at the end of the semester.
5. Plagiarism (failing to give credit for the words, ideas, or images of others) will not be tolerated. You will fail the paper and most likely the class. Your case may also be sent to the department and/or the University for possible further disciplinary action, which can be as severe as expulsion from the University.
Course Grade

- 20% project/paper
- 40% two take-home midterm essay examinations (20% each)
- 30% take-home final essay examination
- 10% short informal writing assignments (generally brief in-class writing); class participation—individual and collaborative; perhaps occasional discussion leading

Project/Paper

You have two options: you may either do a performance, teaching, internet, performance, or staging project or write a paper. The project may be as creative as you want to make it—artwork, music, poetry, etc. or combinations of these; also, you will be required to write a 1-2 page artist’s statement (commentary) about your project. The second option is to write a critical essay (4-5 pages) on one (or more) of the texts we are reading in the course or on a related topic approved in advance by me. I will give you specific choices for both possibilities. Be sure to consider the possibility of discussing gender and/or political issues.

Schedule of Readings (listed) and Major Assignments (underlined and bold):

1 1/9 Introduction: What is Greek Drama and Why Study It?
   1/11 The Trojan War in Context: Read *Ancient Greece* pp. 1-50.

2 1/16 The Development of Classical Greece and Athens: Read *Ancient Greece* pp. 51-113.
   1/18 The Place of Drama in Fifth-Century Athens: Read the Goldhill handout.

3 1/23 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* (first play of *The Oresteia*), lines 1-1031.
   1/25 *Agamemnon*, lines 1032-1708.

4 1/30 Aeschylus, *The Libation Bearers* (second play of *The Oresteia*), lines 1-633.
   2/1 *The Libation Bearers*, lines 634-1077.

5 2/6 No class–Professional Development Day
   2/8 Aeschylus, *The Eumenides* (third play of *The Oresteia*), lines 1-571.

6 2/13 *The Eumenides*, lines 572-1057. To replace *The Oresteia*’s missing satyr play *Proteus*, read its probable source, *The Odyssey* Book 4 lines 391-659 (handout).
   Pericles and the Athenian Golden Age: Read *Ancient Greece* pp. 113-146.

7 2/20 *Antigone*, lines 701-1470.

8 2/27 *Medea*, lines 824-1420. **First take-home midterm exam due (Oresteia).**
3/1 Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, lines 1-997. 
The Peloponnesian War and the Plague in Athens: Read *Ancient Greece* pp. 147-156.

9 3/6 *Oedipus the King*, lines 998-1684.
3/8 *Oedipus the King*. Also read Aristotle, *The Poetics* (handout selections).

**Spring Break**

The Sicilian Expedition: Read *Ancient Greece* pp. 156-159 and the Melian Dialogue from Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (handout).

3/22 *Trojan Women*, lines 859-1332.

11 3/27 *Trojan Women*. Endgame for the Peloponnesian War: Read *Ancient Greece* pp. 159-166.

12 4/3 *Lysistrata*, lines 706-1320. **Second take-home midterm exam due (Antigone, Medea, Oedipus the King).**
4/5 **No Class – Easter Holiday**

4/12 *Bacchae*, lines 913-1392.

4/19 *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 801-1629.

15 4/24 Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*, lines 1-1192

16 5/1 The Legacy of Greek Drama. From Drama to Philosophy: Read *Ancient Greece* pp. 166-173
5/3 **Paper/Project due:** “show and tell” and hand in artist’s statements and projects, or critical essays. Evaluations.

**Final Exam:** **Take-home final exam due at N427 by 4 pm Tuesday May 8 (plays since spring break plus a general question covering all the plays).**