

Syllabus

Department of Humanities, the New School
Spring 2011

Masterpieces of Ancient Greek Drama

Online Course

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A. Description

Ancient Greek drama is one of the most astonishing bodies of work in world literature. It provides a window on a culture both \near to and far from our own, as well as providing the foundations of theatrical forms still practiced today. But, most importantly, Greek drama conveys a convulsive range of emotion, ranging from hymns of praise to Dionysian howls of pain, from the embrace of consolation to the satiric jeer. This online course, taking full advantage of the visual and textual resources available on the Internet, will survey major works of ancient Greek drama, exploring their reverberations with respect to theatrical history, performance, philosophy, psychology, and literary theory. We will read the three tragic playwrights of ancient Greece, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, as well as the comic master Aristophanes. Aeschylus's *Oresteia* enacts both the struggle for revenge and the quest for justice; Sophocles's Theban plays (*Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Antigone*) display the pride and suffering of humanity at its fullest; in *The Clouds*, Aristophanes mocks others moral standards while implicitly unfolding his own; Euripides shows us the fracturing of rationality in *The Bacchae*, yet also promises restitution and forgiveness in *Iphigenia In Tauris*.

B. Requirements:

Three eight-page papers total 24 pp.

Full and extensive participation (three posts a week) in online class discussion

Commenting in class on each of the plays we study

Required reading:

Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, tr. Slavitt, University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sophocles, *The Theban Plays*, tr. Slavitt, Yale

Aristotle, *Poetics*. Tr. Malcolm Heath.

Aristophanes, *The Clouds*. Tr. Alan Sommerstein. Penguin
Euripides, *The Bacchae*, online translation by Ian Johnston.
Euripides, Iphigenia in Tauris, online transition by Robert Potter.

Texts are available at Shakespeare and Company

Shakespeare & Co. 716 Broadway @ Washington Place Phone: 212.529.1330 Fax:
212.965.9684

C. Grade Breakdown

35% on first paper (to deal with the Oresteia and justice)

35% on second paper (to deal with 'Oedipus and his insufficiently extended family'
or 'how Aristophanes and Euripides took Greek Drama in a new direction'.

D. Order of Discussion;

TOPIC: HISTORY OF GREEK DRAMA

January 24-28 Introduction

TOPIC: AESCHYLUS

January 31-February 4 Aeschylus, *Oresteia*

February 7-11 Aeschylus, *Oresteia*

February 14-18 Aeschylus, *Oresteia*

TOPIC: SOPHOCLES

February 21-25 Sophocles, *The Theban Plays*;

February 28-March 4 Sophocles, *The Theban Plays*. First paper due on March 4.

March 7-11 Sophocles, *The Theban Plays*.

March 14-18 Mid-semester break

TOPIC: ARISTOPHANES AND COMEDY

March 21-25 Aristophanes, *The Clouds*

TOPIC: EURIPIDES

March 28-April 1 Euripides *The Bacchae*

April 4-April 8 *The Bacchae*. Second paper due.

April 11-April 15 Euripides, *Iphigenia In Tauris*

April 18-April 22 Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*

TOPIC: THEORY OF TRAGEDY

April 25-April 29 Aristotle on Greek epic and drama; Greek epic, drama, and philosophy.

May 1-May 5 Week 15. Conclusion; wrap-up. Third paper due May 5. .

E. Other Important Information

Attendance

The New School adheres to a Zero Tolerance Policy regarding absences and requires all credit students to attend every class. Any unexplained absence will adversely affect your grade.

Plagiarism

The New School adheres to a Zero Tolerance Policy regarding plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in an F in the course at the discretion of the instructor and in accordance with the University's policy on plagiarism (see Student Handbook). Students should purchase *A Writer's Reference* by Diana Hacker, available at most book stores, for information on proper citation format.

Incompletes

- A grade of Incomplete ("I") indicates that your instructor has granted you an extension to complete outstanding work for a course. The grade of Incomplete will not be assigned automatically. It will only be assigned at the request of the student **by the last day of class. Incomplete grades cannot be granted for students who are graduating seniors.**
- If circumstances require you to request a grade of Incomplete—and the instructor

approves your request—the terms of the Incomplete should be agreed upon in writing, using the “Request for a Grade of Incomplete” form (http://www.newschool.edu/forms/registrar_incomplete_grade.pdf). This ensures that both the student and the instructor understand the exact nature of the required work, the manner in which it is to be submitted, and the date by which it must be submitted.

- Your instructor will determine the deadline for submission of outstanding work. Students with a grade of Incomplete who do not complete their work by the agreed-upon deadline will receive a grade of Withdrawal/Failure (“WF”). Students who complete outstanding work according to the terms of the Incomplete will receive a letter grade. (The “I” will be converted to a letter grade after your instructor submits a Change of Grade form on your behalf.)

Students with Disabilities

In keeping with the University's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations should contact the office of Student Disability Services. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to meet with Jason Luchs in the office of Student Disability Services, who will conduct an intake, and if appropriate, provide an academic accommodation notification letter. Mr. Luchs's office is located at 79 5th Avenue on the 5th floor. His direct line is 212.229.5626 x3135. You may also access more information through the University's web site.