

LIT/THE 325 *Greek Theater: Ancient and Modern* **FALL 2023**

Instructor: Nina Papathanasopoulou

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Class Meetings: **TR 1.45-3.20pm**

Office hours: Available by appointment

Course Description

This course will study and interpret ancient Greek drama both in its original context and as it is adapted and performed around the world today. The course will examine the origins and cultural context of Greek drama, as well as the performative aspects of the plays: theatrical space, stagecraft, music, and dance. It will also focus on key issues that the plays are concerned with, especially gender conflict, personal and communal identity, human violence, human and divine justice, self-sacrifice, political ambition, and the roles of women, slaves, and foreigners. In addition to studying the ancient texts, students will explore the relevance of these plays in later times, from the renaissance to today and will examine contemporary adaptations and projects based on these plays, especially ones that focus on identity, women, immigrants, veterans of war, and violence.

This is primarily a discussion class. I expect you to come to class having carefully read the assigned reading and having prepared any assigned questions related to the readings. We will spend time on close reading of key passages in the plays and discussing their performative aspects. The class will also include field trips to the Theater of Dionysus in Athens, as well as trips to contemporary performances of Greek drama.

Learning Goals

This course will primarily teach students to:

- Analyze the language, structure, and major themes of Greek tragedy
- Think about Greek tragedies as plays and pay attention to their performative aspect
- Explain why Greek tragedy developed in 5th century Athens and how it is related to the cultural and political context in which it emerged
- Identify key values and ideas of the Ancient Greeks and make connections to modern values
- Understand, appreciate, and identify key differences between the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides
- Explore how different media (theater, opera, dance) treat the same story and what their effect is in doing so
- Recognize the value of Greek tragedy and its influence on contemporary culture

Course Requirements

- **Attendance, Class Contribution, and Moodle posts 20%** – Attendance at all scheduled meetings is required. Class Contribution includes physical and mental presence in the classroom, arriving on time, preparation, participation in class discussions, and posting occasionally on the moodle forum. Reading assignments are to be completed before each class session. CYA regards attendance in class and on-site (in Athens or during field study trips) as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons which result in absences should be reported immediately to the Student Affairs Office.
- **Midterm 20%** – Identification of key terms and figures related to Greek theater; analysis of passages; short essay questions.
- **Oral Presentations 30%** – Two short and one longer oral presentation on modern adaptations of ancient tragedies.
- **Final Research Paper 30%** – Topics and instructions will be given in advance. About 2500 words.

Class contribution is one of the most important factors for determining your grade for the semester. I expect all of you to come prepared, engage in our discussions, ask questions, and voice your opinions in class. If you are extremely uncomfortable speaking in front of a large group of students, you may send your opinions or afterthoughts in writing via email. If you never participate in class and do not send any thoughts by email, your contribution grade will be low.

Details about assignments and exams will be given in advance. I will accept no late assignments or make-up exams unless discussed with me in advance. If you are unable to come to class, please let me know beforehand.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is literary theft. As such, it is a serious offense which will not be tolerated either at your home institution or at CYA. Plagiarism on an examination or in a paper will result in an F for the course. You must cite the author of any and all ideas that you use that are neither common knowledge nor your own idea. If you are in doubt, it is safest to cite the source. (Check the Student Handbook, pg. 7).

Academic Accommodations

If you are a registered (with your home institution) student with a disability and you are entitled to learning accommodation, please inform the Office of Academic Affairs and make sure that your school forwards the necessary documentation.

Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is permitted if this facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up references, etc. Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if devices are not used for class-related work.

Required Texts:

All Greek tragedies and scholarship that we'll be studying will be available on Moodle.

FALL 2023 – Tentative Schedule (to be modified based on course enrollment and tragedies performed in Athens in Fall 2023)

Sept. 5th – Introduction to the Course; Historical and Geographical Background

Sept. 7th – What is Greek Tragedy; Origins of Greek Theater; Myth and Drama
Reading: Aristotle, *Poetics* 1-16, Hall (2010), *Greek Tragedy: Suffering Under the Sun*; Papanthanasopoulou (2023), "Myth and Theater: Greek Tragedy's Engagement with Greek Myth"

Sept. 12th – The Cult of Dionysus; Theatrical Space and Staging
Reading: Cartledge (1997), "'Deep Plays': theatre as process in Greek civic life"; Seaford (2006), *Introducing Dionysus*; Wiles (1997), 'The Theatre of Dionysus'

***SITE VISIT: THE THEATER OF DIONYSUS - MEET AT THEATER OF DIONYSUS ENTRANCE AT 1.45PM**

Field Trip to Crete (Sept. 13-16)

1.SOPHOCLES' OEDIPUS TYRANNUS: A PARADIGMATIC TRAGEDY

Sept. 19th– Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*

Reading: Dodds (1966), "On Misunderstanding Oedipus Rex"; Kovacs (2019) "On NOT Misunderstanding Oedipus Rex"

Sept. 21st – Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*

Reading: Nooter (2019), "Oedipus and Agency"; Freud (1900), "The Interpretation of Dreams"; Levi-Strauss (1963) from "The Structural Study of Myth"

Sept. 26th – Oedipus onstage after antiquity

Reading: Burian (1997), "Tragedy adapted for stages and screens"; Macintosh (1997), "Tragedy in Performance: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Productions"

Sept. 28th – Oedipus onstage after antiquity | Student Short Oral Presentations

TRIP TO MODERN PERFORMANCE of Sophocles' *Oedipus* – DATE TBA

Oct. 3rd – Greek Tragedy in Dance and Theater: Martha Graham's *Night Journey* and *Oedipus Tyrannus* in Iasmos' 2023 Contemporary Performance

Reading: Papathanasopoulou (2023), "Jocasta's Last Hours: Identity, Responsibility, and Violence in Martha Graham's *Night Journey*"

2. EURIPIDES' HIPPOLYTUS: WOMEN-ADULTERY-COMING OF AGE

Oct. 5th – Euripides' *Hippolytus*

Reading: Ebbott (2016), 'Hippolytus'

TRIP TO MODERN PERFORMANCE of Euripides' *Hippolytus* – DATE TBA

Oct. 10th – Euripides' *Hippolytus*

Oct. 12th – Hippolytus TODAY: The National Theater of Greece 2023 performance | Student Short Oral Presentations

3. EURIPIDES' TROJAN WOMEN: WOMEN-SLAVES-FOREIGNERS

TRIP TO MODERN PERFORMANCE of Euripides' *Trojan Women* – DATE TBA

Oct. 17th – Euripides' *Trojan Women*

Reading: Rabinowitz (2016), 'Trojan Women'

Oct. 19th – MIDTERM EXAM

Oct. 31st – Euripides' *Trojan Women*

Nov. 2nd – The Trojan Women TODAY: Queens of Syria Project and National Theater of Northern Greece 2023 performance

Field Trip to Peloponnese (Nov. 7-11)

4. THE MYTH OF AGAMEMNON: ANCIENT AND MODERN

Nov. 14th – Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and excerpts from Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis*

Recommended: Zeitlin (1978), The Dynamics of Misogyny: Myth & Mythmaking in *Oresteia*; Torrance (2016) 'Iphigenia at Aulis'

Nov. 16th – Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*

Reading: Seaford (2023), 'Aeschylus and Subversion of Ritual'; Nooter (2023), 'Inscribing Justice in Aeschylean Drama'

Nov. 17th – Sophocles' *Electra*

Reading: Dunn (2012), 'Electra'; Griffiths (2012), 'Electra'

Nov. 21st – NO CLASS

Nov. 28th – Euripides' *Electra*

Reading: Roisman (2016), 'Electra'

Nov. 30th– Myth into Opera: Richard Strauss' *Elektra*

Reading: Ewans (2007), "Chapter 5: Elektra in Opera"

Dec. 1st – Myth into Dance: Martha Graham's *Clytemnestra*

Reading: Papathanasopoulou, "Justice, Honor, and Gender Dynamics in Martha Graham's *Clytemnestra*"

Dec. 5th – MYTH AND THEATER TODAY: **Student Oral Presentations**

Dec. 7th – MYTH AND THEATER TODAY: **Student Oral Presentations**

Dec. 14th – 9.30am – FINAL PAPER DUE

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