

Fall/Winter 2018-2019

AP/EN 3192 6.0A (Y)
AP/HUMA 3014 6.0A (Y)

Tragedy in Western Literature

Course Director:

Marcia Blumberg

Office hours: Wed, Thurs. 12.30 – 1.30pm + by appointment at 344 Stong College

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Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Seminar: Wednesday 2:30-5:30pm

Description:

This introduction to Tragedy begins with the examination of tragedy as a genre and the important writings on Tragedy by Aristotle and other theorists. We briefly analyze the context of Ancient Greece and the manner in which these tragedies were staged. Choosing five significant tragedies, *Aeschylus Oresteia*, Sophocles *Antigone* and *Oedipus The King*, Euripides *Medea* and *The Bacchae*, we study each ancient text followed by a cluster of modern or contemporary revisionings of these plays utilizing Adrienne Rich's definition of that term, 'the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering a text from a new critical direction.' In doing so we traverse a trajectory of texts from Ancient Greece, where tragedy portrayed the fate of famous men and women and their relationship to the gods, to recent plays that represent the crises associated with ordinary men and women and their positionings in many different worlds. These latter texts will be situated in a range of countries and cultures including Argentina, Ireland, Italy, Nigeria, Germany, Poland, Scotland, South Africa, Britain, USA and will offer new insights into the Ancient Tragedies utilizing many theatrical forms.

The course analyzes cultural and political contexts, specificities of time and place, aspects of race, class, gender and power differentials, in order to interrogate theatrical, formal, thematic, and theoretical issues. Interpretations of the Greek Tragedies and the twentieth-century plays emphasize theatre as a dynamic medium that uses language and bodies in diverse stagings and contexts; they also empower us with a heightened awareness to see with fresh eyes.

Category:

B

Historical Requirement:

Period I (pre-1700) 3 credits/ Period II (1700-1900) 3 credits

Requirements:

Assignment 1 Theatre review (3-4 pages) = 10% Due Oct 17, 2018
Assignment 2 Comparative essay (7-8 pages) = 15% Due Nov 14, 2018
In-class Test = 15% on Nov 28, 2018
Assignment 3 Theatre Review (3-4 pages) = 10% Due Feb 13, 2019
Assignment 4 Comparative research essay (9-10 pages) =20% Due Mar 20, 2019
Final In-Class Test = 20% on Apr 3, 2019
Class participation 10%

Reading List:

Greek Tragedy: 3 Plays (includes Sophocles, *Antigone*, Euripides, *Medea* and, *The Bacchae*) (Nick Hern); Aeschylus, *Oresteia II* trans. Grene, Lattimore (Chicago Press 2013); Steven Berkoff, *Greek**; Bertolt Brecht, *Antigone* trans Judith Malina (Applause); Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats* (DPS); Caryl Churchill and David Lan, *A Mouthful of Birds**; Rita Dove, *The Darker Face of the Earth**; Maureen Duffy, *Rites**; Yael Farber, *Molara* (Oberon); Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona, *The Island in Statements**; Griselda Gambaro, *Antigona Furiosa**; Janus Glowacki, *Antigone in New York* (Samuel French); Tony Harrison, *Agamemnon**; Heiner Muller, *Medea Material**; Eugene O'Neill, *Mourning Becomes Electra in Three Plays* (Vintage); Franca Rame and Dario Fo, *Medea Prologue* and *Medea in Orgasmo Adulto Escapes from the Zoo**; Sophocles, *Oedipus The King* trans. Robert Bagg (Harper Perennial 2004); Wole Soyinka, *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite**; Oscar van Woensel, *MedEia**
Texts marked * will be available in a course kit.

Open To:

YR 3, 4