

LIT 351: Attic Tragedy in Translation

Spring Semester

Course Instructor:

NAME Demetrios Kritsotakis



Hippolytus rides to his death.
Red-figured Apulian crater, ca. 340-320 BC (detail), British Museum

Course Description

This course is intended to introduce the student to the work of the great tragedians of the fifth century BC (Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles). From the end of the Persian Wars to the battle of Aegospotami, the Athenian state flourished in an unprecedented way that marked the history of the western world. It is in this time frame that tragedy emerged as the culmination of the literary tradition of the eighth-sixth centuries BC and the product of the prosperity of the “golden era” of Athens. Thus, the plays of Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles are both a fascinating way into the wider political, social and religious culture of fifth-century Athens and a rich part of and important tool for the study of theater in antiquity and nowadays.

The plays in discussion in this course will be analyzed with respect to each poet’s language and style and in comparison to contemporary authors. At the same time, they will be considered in their literary, cultural, intellectual, and historical contexts, and the following questions will be addressed: what was Attic tragedy; how and why did it emerge; what were the mechanisms of theatrical production in ancient Greece; how did the plays relate to the events of the fifth century; did they reflect social values, and what values were those; what is the impact of ancient tragedy on modern culture; what is its relevance and value in the theater today, and so on. To answer these questions, we will examine closely a number of plays and discuss them with the aid of modern scholarship. No previous knowledge is required, and all texts will be studied in translation.

Course activities

The course consists of lectures, in which the instructor will introduce and comment on various topics, and classroom discussion, in which the students will contribute their own ideas. The lectures will offer background information, close examination of select texts, and identification of important issues in the plays. The discussion will give you the opportunity to do teamwork, to explore, and to compare your own ideas about the text.

As part of our class activities, we will visit and have a class meeting at Herodes’ Odeion or the Theater of Dionysus, where the City Dionysia festival was celebrated and the great tragedians competed!! We will also have a guest lecturer on a topic pertaining to our study material.

Learning Objectives:

The emphasis of this course is on learning to read independently across the whole range of Attic tragedy texts. It will introduce you to the major features, cultural context and evolution of Attic tragedy and, thus, equip you with the background information and critical skills you need to be able to engage confidently with Greek literature in translation. At the same time, it will encourage you to “feel” the spirit of the play and the ethics of its characters, and will promote awareness of the impact and relevance of Attic tragedy today. On completion of this course, you will be able to develop and improve your critical abilities and research skills in the study of ancient drama.

It is very important that you come well prepared to our meetings: read the texts closely, think about the questions raised, and bring your own ideas and questions in class. The more study time put in early on, the less pain and suffering later on. You are encouraged to consult with the instructor on all matters pertaining to the course: difficulties in mastering the texts, complications in proceeding through the materials of the course, and so on.

A selection of study material will be available in the course’s moodle pages, which will be updated regularly.

CYA Syllabus

Course Requirements and Exams

Class Attendance:

CYA regards attendance in class as essential. Therefore, it is highly important that you attend class. You are expected to report for classes promptly. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons, which result in absences should be reported immediately in the Student Affairs Office.

Participation:

Your participation is vitally important to your success in this course. Participation is expected and **graded**. You are expected to have all assignments completed before you come to class.

Do not be afraid to ask questions or volunteer to answer questions.

Exams:

There will be a midterm exam. This exam will consist of short essays and cover the material (plays and scholarship) already discussed in class. **Take-home**.

N.B. MAKEUPS WILL BE GIVEN ONLY FOR VALID EXCUSES.

Play Reports:

Upon completion of a play, you will write and submit a report on the play of a length 1-1 ½ page. In this report, you will highlight and comment on two issues/themes that drew your attention. **This is a take-home assignment.**

Research Paper and Presentation:

Students are expected to write one research paper, of not more than 3000 words (Times New Roman, size 12, double-spaced) excluding bibliography. Students can choose their own topic or select one in discussion with the instructor. Individual titles and bibliography will be agreed after consultation. You are encouraged to discuss research topics with the instructor by **mid-March** (at the very latest).

The paper will be graded on:

- originality of thought
- critical analysis of an aspect or aspects of a tragedy
- clarity of argument and structure
- variety of evidence and bibliography used

Students are also expected to make an oral presentation of their topic in class (see schedule). That should not be more than 15 minutes, and you should be ready to answer questions and discuss issues pertaining to your topic with the instructor and your colleagues.

Those who wish to turn in rough drafts of their papers for consultation are welcomed to do so by **Tuesday, May 8**.

The deadline for the submission of the final research paper is **Thursday, May 17**.

Grading and Evaluation

Your grade for this course will be based on the following distribution:

- 35% Research paper
- 10% Paper presentation
- 20% Midterm exam
- 25% Play Reports
- 10% Attendance-Participation

Grading Scale:

A+ 100-98	B+ 89-87	C+ 79-77	D+ 69-67	F 59-
A 97-93	B 86-83	C 76-73	D 66-63	
A- 92-90	B- 82-80	C- 72-70	D- 62-60	

Please note: in the name of fairness to all students, there will be no extra points awarded, even if you are very close to a higher letter grade.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

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

Texts

In order for students to gain a good understanding of the variety and evolution of Attic tragedy, it is necessary that they read closely a selection of plays from all major tragedians of 5th c. Athens. These plays are:

Aeschylus

The Eumenides

The Suppliants

Sophocles

Antigone

Oedipus the King

Euripides

Hippolytus

Medea

The Suppliants

As the course proceeds, discussion will be more and more comparative in focus, and for this reason passages from other plays and modern scholarship will be addressed.

Class Schedule

Class Week	Day/Date	Meetings/Assignment/Topics	Other Events
1	Jan 29-Febr 4	1. Introduction 2. From viewer to reader: “Reading” a tragedy on stage	
2	Febr 5-11	3. Origins and cultural context of dramatic festivals in Athens 4. Theatrical space and staging	Optional Trip: Venice, Ravenna (Febr 9-11)
3	Febr 12-18	5. The development of Attic tragedy in the 5 th century. 6. The art of acting	
4	Febr 19-25	7. Music in Ancient Drama 8. Dance and the Evolution of the chorus	Clean Monday: Holiday (Feb 19)
5	Feb 26-Mar 4	9. Aristotle’s <i>Poetics</i> and its relevance to 5 th c. tragedy	Field Trip: Peloponnese (Febr 27-Mar 3)
6	Mar 5-11	10. Drama, kingship, and Democratic Sentiments 11. Democratic Sentiments and Social Values	
7	Mar 12-18	12. Gods and Men: hybris and ethos 13. Midterm Exam (March 15)	Optional Trip: Barcelona (Febr 16-18)
8	Mar 19-25	14. Divine Will and Self-Determination 15. Act like a man, behave like a woman: representation of women in tragedy	
9	Mar 26-Apr 1	16. The portrayal of stereotypes, and rebel women 17. Greek Drama and Roman Space	
10	Apr 2-8	NO CLASS	Spring Recess (Apr 2-9)
11	Apr 9-15	18. Visit to the Theater of Dionysus or the Herodes’ Odeion 19. The Impact of Attic tragedy on medieval literature and drama	
12	Apr 16-22	NO CLASS	Field Trip: Northern Greece-Thessaloniki (Apr 17-21)
13	Apr 23-29	20. The perception of Attic tragedy in modern drama 21. Echoes of Greek tragedy and myth in cinema	Optional Trip: Crete (Apr 27-29)
14	Apr 30-May 6	22. Paper presentations	May Day: Holiday (May 1)
15	May 7-13	23. Paper presentations 24. Paper presentations - Deadline for submission of paper draft: Tuesday, May 8	

Deadline for submission of final paper: Thursday, May 17

NB: *Class schedule, in terms of subjects and readings, may be subject to change to benefit student learning and in keeping up to date with current research*

General Bibliography

- Arnott P.D. (1965), *An Introduction to the Greek Theatre*. New York
- Arnott P.D. (1989), *Public and Performance in the Greek Theatre*. London & New York
- Bieber M. (1971), *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater*. Princeton
- Carter D.M. (2007), *The Politics of Greek Tragedy*. Bristol
- Croally N.T. (1994), *Euripidean Polemic: the Trojan women and the function of tragedy*.
Cambridge & New York
- Csapo E. & Slater W. (1995), *The Context of Ancient Drama*. Ann Arbor
- Dillon J.M & Wilmer S.E. (2005), *Rebel Women: staging ancient Greek drama today*. London
- Duncan A. (2006), *Performance and Identity in the Classical World*. Cambridge & New York
- Easterling P.E. (ed.) (1997), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge
- Easterling P.E. & Hall E. (2002), *Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession*.
Cambridge & New York
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& London
- Ehrenberg V. (1954), *Sophocles and Pericles*. Oxford
- Else G.F. (1967), *The Origin and Early Form of Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge, Mass.
- Fergusson F. (1961), *Aristotle's Poetics*. New York
- Foley H.P. (1991), *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*. Princeton & Oxford
- Garland R. (2004), *Surviving Greek Tragedy*. London
- Gentili B. (1990), *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece: from Homer to the fifth century*.
Baltimore & London
- Goldhill S. & Osborne R. (1999), *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy*. Cambridge &
New York
- Goldhill S. (2007), *How to Stage a Greek Tragedy Today*. Chicago
- Gregory J. (1991), *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians*. Ann Arbor
- Grube G.M.A. (1958), *Aristotle: On Poetry and Style*. Indianapolis & Cambridge
- Haigh A.E. (1889), *The Attic theatre: a description of the stage and theatre of the Athenians, and of
the dramatic performances at Athens*. Oxford
- Hall E. et alii (2004), *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*.
Oxford
- Hall E. (2006). *The Theatrical Cast of Athens: interactions between Ancient Greek drama and
society*. Oxford
- Jones J. (1962), *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy*. Oxford
- Lawler L.B. (1964), *The Dance in Ancient Greece*. London
- Ley G. (2007), *The Theatricality of Greek Tragedy: playing space and chorus*. Chicago & London
- McClure L. (1999), *Spoken like a Woman: speech and gender in Athenian drama*. Princeton
- McDermott E.A. (1989), *Euripides' Medea: The Incarnation of Disorder*. Penn State Univ. Press
- Michelini A.N. (1987), *Euripides and the Tragic Tradition*. Madison
- Pickard-Cambridge Sir A. (1968), *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*. Oxford
- Podlecki A.J. (1999), *The political background of Aeschylean tragedy*. London
- Rabinowitz N.S. (1993), *Anxiety Veiled: Euripides and the Traffic in Women*. Ithaca
- Rehm R. (1992), *Greek tragic theatre*. London & New York
- Rehm R. (2003), *Radical Theater: Greek Tragedy and the Modern World*. London

CYA Syllabus

- Storey I.C. & Allan A. (2005), *A Guide to Ancient Greek Drama*. Malden, MA
- Syropoulos S.D. (2003), *Gender and the Social Function of Athenian Tragedy*. Oxford
- Taplin O. (1977), *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy*. Oxford
- Taplin O. (1983), *Greek Tragedy in Action*. London
- Vernant J.P. & Vidal-Naquet P. (1990), *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*. New York
- Walton J.M. (1984), *The Greek Sense of Theatre: tragedy reviewed*. London
- Webster T.B.L. (1969), *An introduction to Sophocles*. London & New York
- Webster T.B.L. (1970), *Greek Theatre Production*. London
- West M.L. (1994), *Ancient Greek Music*. Oxford
- Wiles D. (1997), *Tragedy in Athens: performance space and theatrical meaning*. Cambridge
- Wiles D. (2000), *Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction*. Cambridge
- Wilson P. (2000), *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia: the chorus, the city, and the stage*. Cambridge
- Winkler J.J. & Zeitin F.I. (1990), *Nothing to do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context*. Princeton
- Winnington-Ingram R.P. (1990), *Sophocles: An interpretation*. Cambridge
- Zelenak M.X. (1998), *Gender and Politics in Greek Tragedy*. New York
- Zuntz G. (1955), *The Political Plays of Euripides*. Manchester
- Zyl Smit B. v. (2016), *A Handbook to the Reception of Greek Drama*. Chichester, West Sussex

N.B.

The use of cell phones is prohibited during class time. You may use your computers but only for class-related purposes.

Food is not allowed in classrooms. Beverages are permitted, but be sure to clean up any mess you make.