

**Dartmouth College
Department of Classics**

CLST 2: The Tragedy and Comedy of Greece and Rome

Spring 2004

Room: 60 Carson

Time: MWF 12.30 – 1.35

x-hour Tues.1.00 – 1.50

TA: Meredith Kolar

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Office hours: Tuesday 10-12 and by appt

Course description

2,500 years ago, something remarkable was happening in the Greek city of Athens. Every year in spring, citizens and visitors gathered for a week-long festival in honor of the god Dionysos: they danced, feasted, processed, worshipped, celebrated – and watched dramatic performances. Regarded as the starting point of the Western dramatic tradition, the plays created for the Theater of Dionysos dealt with issues central to the *polis* (city) community: in tragedy, questions about justice, loyalty, the morality of revenge, the power of passion, the role of the gods, the effects of war, for example. Comedy too dealt with some serious themes (how do you create an ideal society? what would happen if women were in charge? how about making love not war?) while also poking irreverent fun at the celebrities of the time and indulging in some riotous, surreal and often obscene fantasy.

In this course we study in translation selected plays of the Athenian playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes and their Roman successors. We will approach them both as texts and as scripts/ librettos, bearing mind that the original performances were more like operas or musicals than modern plays. We will pay particular attention to their performance context, studying such topics as the use of theatrical space and other types of performance which drama imitates: ritual dance, lawcourt speeches, philosophical debate, for example.

Texts (available at Wheelock Books)

Course reader

Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, tr. P. Meineck,*Hackett, 1998

Aristophanes, *Frogs and Other Plays*, tr. Barrett,* Penguin USA Reprint edition (1964)

Euripides, *Bacchae*, tr. C.K. Williams,* Noonday Press, 1990

Euripides, *Hippolytus*, tr. R. Bagg,* Oxford Press, 1992

Euripides. *Electra*, in *Medea and other plays*, tr. P. Vellacott,* Viking Press; Reprint edition (1963)

Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, tr. C. Phillips,* OUP 2003

Soyinka, *The Bacchae of Euripides: a communion rite*, W.W. Norton & Company, 1975

Film: Michael Cacoyannis, *Electra*, 1961

* Alternative translations are not acceptable.

Week one

- Mon. **March** 29 Introduction
- Wed. 31 Euripides, *Bacchae*
- Fri **April** 2 Euripides, *Bacchae* (WORKSHOP)

Week two

- Mon. 5 Aristophanes, *Frogs*
- Tues 6 Aristophanes, *Frogs* (DISCUSSION SECTION 1)
- Wed. 7 Aristophanes, *Frogs* (DISCUSSION SECTION 2)
- Fri 9 Theatre and the city
(read excerpts from Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* in the reader)

Paper topic 1 posted on Blackboard: due Friday April 16th

Week three

- Mon. 12 Aeschylus, *Oresteia*
- Tues 13 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon/ Libation Bearers* (SECTION 1)
- Wed. 14 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon/ Libation Bearers* (SECTION 2)
- Fri 16 Aeschylus, *Eumenides*

Paper topic 2 posted: due Friday April 23rd

Week four

- Mon 19 Sophocles, *Antigone*
- Tues 20 Sophocles, *Antigone* (SECTION 1)
- Wed 21 Sophocles, *Antigone* (SECTION 2)
- Fri 23 Theatre and the law
(read Plato's *Crito* and Aristophanes' *Wasps*)

Paper topic 3 posted: due Friday April 30th

Week five

- Mon 26 Sophocles, *Philoctetes*
Tues 27 Sophocles, *Philoctetes* (WORKSHOP)
Wed 28 Staging Greek tragedy

Week-long residency of Thiasos Theatre Company begins

- Thurs 29 Lecture, *The Transformable Body*, 4.15
Fri 30 Thiasos Theatre Company: class visit

Thiasos-related assignment announced: due Mon. May 10th

CUT-OFF DATE for first paper

Week six

- Mon **May 3** NO DAYTIME CLASS: adaptation of Euripides' *Hippolytos* performed in Bentley Theatre by Thiasos Theatre Company, 7 p.m.
Tues 4 *Hippolytos* dance workshop with Thiasos
Wed 5 Thiasos Theatre Company: class visit
Fri 7 Euripides' *Hippolytos*

Week seven

- Mon 10 Greek New Comedy
Tues 11 Menander, *The Girl from Samos* (SECTION 1)
Wed 12 Menander, *The Girl from Samos* (SECTION 2)
Fri 14 Roman New Comedy

Paper topics 4 & 5 posted: due Friday May 21st

Week eight

- Mon 17 Plautus (guest lecture)

Tues 18 NO CLASS: evening screening of Cacoyannis' *Electra*

Wed 19 NO CLASS

Fri 21 Greek tragedy on the modern stage

Week nine

Mon 24 Euripides, *Electra*

Tues 25 Euripides and Cacoyannis (SECTION 1)

Wed 26 Euripides and Cacoyannis (SECTION 2)

Fri 28 Soyinka, *The Bacchae of Euripides* (WORKSHOP)

Paper topic 6 published: due on the last day of term

Week ten

Mon 31 MEMORIAL DAY – NO CLASS

Wed June 2 Conclusion. **CUT-OFF DATE for second paper**

Sun. 6 Final exam.

Requirements

Theoric credit (1)	10%
In-class quizzes	10%
2 5-page papers (2)	40%
<i>Thiasos</i> -related assignment	10%
Final exam.	30%

- (1) This means showing up at and participating in classes AND other events where applicable. Up to 3 absences may be overlooked; after that your grade will be affected.
(2) There will be a choice of 5 topics posted on the website at the end of weeks 2, 3, 4, (topics 1-3), 7 and 9 (topics 4-6.) You should choose ONE from 1-3, and ONE from 4-6.

Disabilities

If you have a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations, you are invited to speak to me about it. All discussions will remain confidential, apart from any necessary consultation with the Student Disabilities Coordinator.