San Diego State University

Classics 330 — Classical Drama
MWF 10–10:50 — AH 4144

Dr. Brad Cook, office AL 632
off. hrs. MF 11 & MW 2
and by appointment (ask/phone/e-mail)

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COURSE CONTENT & GOALS: We read and often recite (revive?) ten plays from ancient
Athens and Rome, seven Greek tragedies, one Greek comedy, and two Roman comedies.
Every day we review and discuss a third or so of a play, learning the mythic background,
envisioning the original performance, and analyzing the dramatic, social, and political issues
surrounding the production of the play. We incorporate scholarly discussion from
journals and books as we assess the original production and lasting relevance of these dramas
as they have influenced drama through the millennia. We watch, compare, and critically
review some modern productions and versions of these ancient plays.

(Can be used, if upper division standing has been attained, for GE credit. IV. Explorations, C. Humanities)

TEXTS: n.b. (nota bene -> Lat. Note well) Buy/acquire/use only these translations.
Aeschylus, Agamemnon, The Libation Bearers, The Eumenides, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of
Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, trans. Ian McAuslan and Judith Affleck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
Sophocles, Antigone, trans. David Franklin and John Harrison; intro. P. E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge

DAILY STUDY (to achieve course goals): As we study the plays, it is essential to learn the characters and plots for
each play, both to assess that specific play as well as to compare plays with one another. Identify, list, and analyze
pithy (= "precisely meaningful") passages. So,
1. Schedule/Find/Invent a minimum of two hours of study time to read the texts and take notes on the assigned
part of each play before each class meeting.
2. Create your own outline of the plot with line/page numbers.
3. Compile your own list of characters with line citations of their key utterances.
4. Come to class with texts, notes, questions, and ideas. Class will consist of lecture—by me—and questions
and discussion—by all of us. Thorough, daily reading and notes made in advance of each class are essential for
each class meeting to be a success.

WRITING PROJECT #1: a 321- to 347-word review of the 6th and Penn performance of the Oresteia that we will
see in late March or early April. The review is to be written as if for a (quality) newspaper, informing the reader of
the play's content and its performance, special attention being given to the decision to merge the three plays into a
condensed, shorter version of the trilogy; a clear statement of your thoughtful, clearly justified opinion of the
performance must conclude the review. DUE 4/18.

WRITING PROJECT #2: an 1897-word (min.) expository essay that:
1. presents your study and analysis of a major issue surrounding one of our plays, such as the playwright's
handling of plot or character, a performance issue, relationship to an ancient social or political issue, standing of this
play to similar or related plays, influence of play in the dramatic tradition;
2. incorporate the assessments of at least three modern scholars from journal articles and/or book chapters;
3. follow the formatting and referencing guidelines on the course website.
DUE 5/7 (optional: I will read and respond to your introduction (1/2 page) and one paragraph of body: due 4/27.)

QUIZZES & EXAMS: There are daily reading quizzes through which you may prove that you are thoroughly
studying the texts; a sample quiz will be given next class. There will be two exams and a final (Wed., May 16, 8-10
am) for which you: 1) complete brief sentences with proper names of figures, places, etc.; 2) identify, describe, and
discuss pithy passages from the plays; 3) write a brief essay on a major topic from the previous five weeks of class.

GRADE: quizzes (17), written work (4, 23), exams (17, 18), final (21)
ATTENDANCE POLICY: Civil, conscious attendance is required; all electronic devices are to be turned off and stowed. If you miss class, come see me during an office hour or schedule an appointment (after class or by phone, i.e., NOT by e-mail) immediately to discuss the missed material: it is your responsibility to speak with me about missed material. Absences can be excused for documented medical and/or family emergencies. If unexcused absences exceed a week’s worth of class (three days) your grade for the course will be lowered 3.33% per absence.

N.B. all work is to be your own; cheating and/or plagiarism will result in an F for the assignment, test, or the course.

F 1/19 Syllabus
M 1/22 Sophokles' Oedipus the King 1
W 1/24 Sophokles' Oedipus the King 2
read: ll. 216–862
F 1/26 Sophokles' Oedipus the King 3
read: ll. 863–1185
M 1/29 Sophokles' Oedipus the King 4
read: ll. 1186–1530
W 1/31 Sophokles' Oedipus the King, analysis
available on JSTOR (see course website for link)
F 2/2 Sophokles' Antigone 1
read: pp. vii–viii, 104–107, ll. 1–432
M 2/5 Sophokles' Antigone 2
read: ll. 433–908
W 2/7 Sophokles' Antigone 3
read: ll. 909–1326
F 2/9 Euripides' Medea 1
read: pp. vii–viii, 102–105, ll. 1–256
M 2/12 Euripides' Medea 2
ll. 257–802
W 2/14 Euripides' Medea 3
ll. 803–1205
F 2/16 Euripides' Medea 4
ll. 1206–1401
M 2/19 Exam #1
W 2/21 Aeschylus, Oresteia overview
read: pp. 1–31
F 2/23 Aeschylus, Agamemnon 1
read: ll. 1–474
M 2/26 Aeschylus, Agamemnon 2
read: ll. 475–810
W 2/28 Aeschylus, Agamemnon 3
read: ll. 811–1330
F 3/1 Aeschylus, Agamemnon 4
read: ll. 1331–1673
M 3/5 Aeschylus, Libation Bearers 1
read: ll. 1–267
W 3/7 Aeschylus, Libation Bearers 2
read: ll. 268–718
F 3/9 Aeschylus, Libation Bearers 3
read: ll. 719–1076
M 3/12 Aeschylus, Eumenides 1
read: ll. 1–396
W 3/14 Aeschylus, Eumenides 2
read: ll. 397–733
F 3/16 Aeschylus, Eumenides 3
read: ll. 734–1047
M 3/19 Oresteia Discussion
reading TBA
W 3/21 Exam #2
F 3/23 TBA
Spring Break
M 4/2 Euripides' Bacchae, part 1
read: pp. vii–viii, 94–95, ll. 1–346
W 4/4 Euripides' Bacchae, part 2
ll. 347–770
F 4/6 Euripides' Bacchae, part 3
ll. 771–1216
M 4/9 Greek and Roman Comedy Intro
W 4/11 Aristophanes, Lysistrata 1
read: pp. 12–29
F 4/13 Aristophanes, Lysistrata 2
read: pp. 30–49
M 4/16 Aristophanes, Lysistrata 3
read: pp. 49–68
W 4/18 recite or watch
TBA
F 4/20 recite or watch
TBA
M 4/23 Plautus, Mostellaria 1
pp. 346–371
W 4/25 Plautus, Mostellaria 2
pp. 371–392
F 4/27 Plautus, Mostellaria 3
pp. 393–412
M 4/30 Terence, The Self-Tormenter 1
pp. 422–441
W 5/2 Terence, The Self-Tormenter 2
pp. 441–461
F 5/4 Terence, The Self-Tormenter 3
pp. 461–484
M 5/7 Conclusions
TBA
FINAL, Wed., May 16, 8:00–10:00