CLASS 350 Classics and Cinema

Spring 2006
M W F 10-10:50 (SH-149)
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CLASS 350
CLASSICS AND
CINEMA

COURSE DESCRIPTION
OBJECTIVES
CLASS FORMAT/INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS
REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS
GRADING POLICY
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION
EXAMINATIONS
PAPERS

SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS

In this course we will read literary works from ancient Greece in translation, watch and analyze films adapted from these works, and explore scholarship designed to help us better understand ancient literature in its own right as well as through the prism of modern cinema. We will also watch films more directly based upon ancient sources (such as "Troy," "Oedipus Rex," and "Antigone"), and determine how faithful they are to their originals and, when they are not, whether or not we believe this poetic license to be justified.

If you wonder how we can legitimately characterize a movie as "tragic" despite the fact that tragic drama was originally performed by men in costumes and masks on stages in fifth-century Athens rather than in plain clothes projected onto screens in cineplexes throughout the world; if you wonder how accurately Hollywood depicts the society of the ancient Greeks in their movies and, just as important, whether we should care in the first place; in short, if you are intrigued by the prospect of identifying (and finding meaning in) connections between ancient and modern narratives—then this course is for you.

This is primarily a cinema course, and will thus consist mainly of watching movies, discussing them, and writing about them. You will also be required, however, to do quite a bit of reading to prepare for the movies, and you will be expected to demonstrate your understanding of the
readings when you discuss and write about the movies.

back to top

Anouilh, Antigone

Corrigan, Classical Tragedy Greek and Roman (Applause 2000)

Lombardo, The Essential Homer (Hackett 2000).

Russell and Winterbottom, Classical Literary Criticism (Oxford 1998)

back to top

Your final grade for the course will be determined by 1) two 4-6 page response papers (15% each), 2) three non-cumulative exams (15% each), and five quizzes throughout the semester testing your grasp of the reading assignment for the day in question (5% each; no make-ups).

back to top

Attendance and participation are essential for success in this course. Although you will not be graded on attendance per se, your exams will test your knowledge of both what we say in class and of what you read, and they do not always coincide. Also, if you are absent you take a chance of missing a quiz, for which there is no makeup. So attend class regularly!

back to top

The three exams in this course (make-ups require a letter from a dean or a physician) will consist of short answer and essay type questions, based upon subjects covered and visual information encountered in class lectures/discussions, viewings, and readings.

back to top

You are also responsible for two 4-6 page response papers (due on 2/27 and 4/17; no late papers accepted) on a topic of your choice pertaining to the literary and cinematic works read and watched in class during the most recent course unit. These are not research papers, so express your own thoughts about these issues rather than the thoughts of others. You will be graded, not on whether I agree with your opinions or not, but rather on how deeply you go into your thought process and how well you express your thesis. You will also be graded, however, on technical matters such as formatting (use typewriter or printer; white, 8 1/2 x 11" paper; include a separate title page), grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc., so be sure to craft a clear, well-organized paper and to proofread it carefully before handing it in.

back to top
Plutarch: *On the Study of Poetry* (have the entire work read by the time you take the third exam)

1) Wednesday (1/18/06): Introduction to the course

**UNIT ONE: HOMER'S ILIAD AND ODYSSEY**

**PRIMARY OBJECTIVE:** To compare two modern treatments of the *Iliad* narrative, with special attention to the point of view through which it is told in each; to compare Konchalovsky’s *Odyssey* with Kubrick’s modern retelling of the quest narrative.

2) Friday (1/20/06): Troy (Petersen; 2004)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Iliad* 1-3

3) Monday (1/23/06): Troy (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Iliad* 4-6

4) Wednesday (1/25/06): Troy (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Iliad* 7-9

5) Friday (1/27/06): Troy (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Iliad* 10-12

6) Monday (1/30/06): Helen of Troy (Harrison; 2003)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Iliad* 13-15

7) Wednesday (2/1/06): Helen of Troy (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Iliad* 16-18

8) Friday (2/3/06): Helen of Troy (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Iliad* 19-21

9) Monday (2/6/06): Helen of Troy (cont’d))

Required readings (for class discussion): 22-24

10) Wednesday (2/8/06): **EXAM #1**

11) Friday (2/10/06): The Odyssey (Konchalovsky 1997)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Odyssey* 1-3
12) Monday (2/13/06): The Odyssey (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Odyssey* 4-6

13) Wednesday (2/15/06): The Odyssey (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Odyssey* 7-9

14) Friday (2/17/06): The Odyssey (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Odyssey* 10-12

15) Monday (2/20/06): 2001: A Space Odyssey (Kubrick; 1968)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Odyssey* 13-15

16) Wednesday (2/22/06): 2001: A Space Odyssey (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Odyssey* 16-18

17) Friday (2/24/06): 2001: A Space Odyssey (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Odyssey* 19-21

18) Monday (2/27/06): 2001: A Space Odyssey (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Homer: *Odyssey* 22-24

PAPER #1 DUE BEFORE CLASS

UNIT TWO: SOPHOCLES’ *OEDIPUS THE KING*

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: To determine how Russell and Nolan draw from the Oedipus Myth in profoundly different ways

19) Wednesday (3/1/06): Oedipus Rex (Guthrie; 1957)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* (lines 1-200)

20) Friday (3/3/06): Oedipus Rex (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* (lines 201-400)

21) Monday (3/6/06): Spanking the Monkey (Russell; 1994)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* (lines 401-600)

22) Wednesday (3/8/06): Spanking the Monkey (cont’d)
Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* (lines 601-800)

23) Friday (3/10/06): Nervous Man in a Four Dollar Room (Serling 1960)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* (lines 801-1000)

SPRING BREAK

24) Monday (3/20/06): Memento (Nolan 2001)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* (lines 1001-1200)

25) Wednesday (3/22/06): Memento (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* (lines 1201-1400)

26) Friday (3/24/06): Memento (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* (lines 1401-end of play)

27) Monday (3/27/06): EXAM #2

UNIT THREE: SOPHOCLES’ *ANTIGONE*

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: To examine how Anouilh (the dramatist upon whose play Freeman’s film is based) modulates Sophocles’ narrative into the context of the Nazi occupation of France during World War II, and how other filmmakers make use of the “individual against society” theme epitomized by the *Antigone*.

28) Wednesday (3/29/06): Antigone (Tzavellas 1961)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Antigone* (lines 1-400)

Friday (3/31/06): CESAR CHAVEZ DAY – no class

29) Monday (4/3/06): Antigone (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Antigone* (lines 401-800)

30) Wednesday (4/5/06): High Noon (Zinnemann 1952)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Antigone* (lines 801-1200)

31) Friday (4/7/06): High Noon (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Sophocles: *Antigone* (lines 1201-end of play)

32) Monday (4/10/06): Antigone (Freedman; 1974)
Required readings (for class discussion): Anouilh: *Antigone* (pages 1-15)

33) Wednesday (4/12/06): Antigone (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Anouilh: *Antigone* (pages 16-30)

34) Friday (4/14/06): 12 Angry Men (Lumet 1957)

Required readings (for class discussion): Anouilh: *Antigone* (pages 31-45)

35) Monday (4/17/06): 12 Angry Men (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Anouilh: *Antigone* (pages 46-end of play)

**PAPER #2 DUE BEFORE CLASS**

**UNIT FOUR: HUBRIS**

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: A cinematic exploration of this ubiquitous tragic concept

36) Wednesday (4/19/06): Falling Down (Schumacher 1992)

Required readings (for class discussion): Aeschylus: *Prometheus Bound* (lines 1-100)

37) Friday (4/21/06): Falling Down (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Aeschylus: *Prometheus Bound* (lines 101-200)

38) Monday (4/24/06): Falling Down (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Aeschylus: *Prometheus Bound* (lines 201-300)

39) Wednesday (4/26/06): One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Forman 1975)

Required readings (for class discussion): Aeschylus: *Prometheus Bound* (lines 301-400)

40) Friday (4/28/06): One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Aeschylus: *Prometheus Bound* (lines 401-500)

41) Monday (5/1/06): One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Aeschylus: *Prometheus Bound* (lines 501-600)

42) Wednesday (5/3/06): Scarface (De Palma 1983)

Required readings (for class discussion): Aeschylus: *Prometheus Bound* (lines 601-700)
43) Friday (5/5/06): Scarface (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound (lines 701-800)

44) Monday (5/8/06): Scarface (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound (lines 801-900)

45) Wednesday (5/10/06): Scarface (cont’d)

Required readings (for class discussion): Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound (lines 901-end of play)