This course will introduce students to Greek drama as produced in its original setting and adapted in modern times. Our Greek material will include tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides along with selections from Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* among other texts. We will consider issues such as: What kind of artistic medium is theater when it first comes to life? What would the experience of performing and watching Greek tragedy have been like? What are the emotions of tragedy for the fictional characters and for the audience and why have we been talking about catharsis for centuries? What is the relationship between emotion and decision-making, between feeling and judging - for individuals and for groups? How does theater reflect the personal, social, religious, and political life of the Athenians? Are stage and (democratic) state in dialogue? For the last part of the course, we will turn to adaptations of Greek tragedy in the 17th-21st centuries to examine how similar questions/issues are replayed and revised in response to changing social and political circumstances such as the Second World War, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and immigration and homelessness in contemporary NYC among others.

REQUIRED TEXTS


S. Kane (2002), *Phaedra’s Love* (Modern Plays Series), Bloomsbury Methuen Drama


CLASSROOM REQUIREMENTS

*Academic Integrity*
The Honor Code applies to all activities for this class. Please visit:
http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/honorboard/honorcode.html
All violations of the Code will be referred to the Honor Board.
If you have any questions regarding what the Honor Code involves, please come to
discuss it with me.

*Laptops*
This class is meant to steep you in the language of different plays from different periods
and of influential theories on the role of tragedy and theater more generally. This is easier
to do when you are not being distracted by many sources of information. To help in this
process, no laptop use is allowed during class time.

*Cell Phones*
Please silence cell phones, blackberries, or other electronic devices and do not use them
for texting, note-taking, or any other reason during class time.

*Students with Disabilities*
It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students
with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with
Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If
you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me during
the 1st week of classes, so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures
for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at:
http://www.wesleyan.edu/deans/disability-students.html

*Assignments and Grading*
Participation (5%) and Response Papers (15%): 20%
Midterm Exam: 35%
Final Exam (or Production): 45%
The exams will be a combination of identification of terms, short answer identification questions (on primary texts or article excerpts), and longer essay questions. For the final you will be expected to review Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* and Sophocles’ *Antigone* from the first part of the semester. The option of Production: If you earn a grade between A+ and B+ on the midterm, you will have the option to produce a play instead of taking a final exam. In addition to the production itself, a three-page double-spaced paper will be required to present your point of view on the production and its connection to issues we discussed in class.

The response papers are 3 three-page double-spaced responses to 1) Peter Meineck’s talk, recorded production of Euripides’ *Heracles*, or workshop (precise dates TBA; these will be after Spring break); and 2) two responses of your choice: to one or both of the two movies we will watch - one response per movie (dates and times TBA); and/or to one of the readings (either philosophical/theoretical readings or scholarly articles). The purpose of the papers is to tie the talk/production/workshop/movies to questions we have raised in class; and to respond critically to how philosophers/playwrights/scholars view the plays and their function. You will be graded with a check minus, check, or check plus.

Even though this is primarily a lecture course, I will consistently invite your thoughtful contribution to the questions we raise. Three-five (depending on final enrollment) students will be “on call” each class. This means that you will likely be called on to answer questions about topics during that class and also contribute your own point of inquiry. On call students should have a quotation or two that he/she is able to bring up to the class with a question or thoughts.

**Assignment Schedule**
This schedule includes the readings to be prepared in advance for the day they are listed under. A few more readings may be added in the course of the semester. Readings with a star (*) are to be found on Moodle.

**Week 1**
*Thursday January 23: Introduction*

**Week 2:** Dionysus, the god of drama: drinking, ritualism, violence, sexuality and theatricality
*Tuesday January 28*
Euripides’ *Bacchae*

*Thursday January 30*
Euripides’ *Bacchae* and R. Schechner, *Dionysus in ’69*
Week 3: Judgment and Emotion (1); Anger and Revenge  
Tuesday February 4  
Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*

Thursday February 6  
Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon & Libation Bearers*  

Week 4: Judgment and Emotion (2); Anger, Justice, and the Rule of Law  
Tuesday February 11  
Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers & Eumenides*

Thursday February 13  
Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*  
Thucydides, Funeral Oration*  

Week 5  
Tuesday February 18: The body in Pain, Exclusion, Sympathy, and the Politics of War  
Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*  
Thucydides, The Plague*

Thursday February 20: Back to Anger, Revenge, and Justice: War and Law at the Edges of the World; Empathy and Decision-Making  
Euripides’ *Hecuba*

Week 6  
Tuesday February 25  
Euripides’ *Hecuba*  
Thucydides, the Mytilenean Debate*  
Sternberg, R. “The Nature of Pity”, pp. 15-47 in *Pity and Power in Ancient Athens*

Thursday February 27  
Friends vs. Friends: Family-Obligations and Political Dissent  
Sophocles’ *Antigone*

Week 7  
Tuesday March 4  
Sophocles’ *Antigone*  
Foley, H. “Sacrificial Virgins: Antigone as Moral Agent” 172-200 in *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy.*  
Meineck, P. and Woodruff, P. “Hegel on Antigone” 214-216 in *Sophocles: Theban Plays.*
Thursday March 6
Midterm

SPRING BREAK

Week 8: Peter Meineck Visit
Recording (to watch and discuss in class): Euripides’ Heracles at BAM
Making the Mask Move: A Mind/Body Dissociation Workshop
Talk: The Face of Athenian Drama: Emotion, Empathy, and the Masks of Greek Theater.

Week 9: Different Wars: Erotic Passion, Gender Conflict, and Shame; Divine and Human (Free) Will
Tuesday April 1
Euripides’ Hippolytus

Thursday April 3
Euripides’ Medea

Week 10: Transition to Philosophical Approaches to Tragedy
Tuesday April 8
Euripides’ Medea

The Ideal State and the Ideal Soul; the Centrality of Poetry
Plato, Republic, Bk. 4: http://www.literatureproject.com/republic/republic_14.htm *

Thursday April 10:
Mimesis, Tragedy, and their Detrimental Effect to the Human Soul
Plato, Republic, Bk.10 - pp. 40-56 in P. Murray and T.S. Dorsch, Classical Literary Criticism

A New (Aristotelian) Soul and a New Theory of Poetry
Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Bk. 2:
Aristotle, Poetics in P. Murray and T.S. Dorsch, Classical Literary Criticism – Selections (1)

***Movie Week

Week 11: From Ancient to Modern Theory: From Catharsis to Teaching through Alienation
Tuesday April 15:
Bertolt Brecht, *A Short Organum for the Theater* – Selections (1)*  
**Thursday April 17:** Antigone and the Second World War  
Bertolt Brecht, *A Short Organum for the Theater* – Selections (2)*  
Bertolt Brecht’s *Antigone*

**Week 12**  
**Tuesday April 22:** Hippolytus and Phaedra (2): Desire, Lack of Shame, and Social Decay recast in contemporary England (and America)  
Sarah Kane’s *Phaedra’s Love*

**Thursday April 24:** The *Oresteia* in the context of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Anger, Revenge, and Justice Recast  
Video from Yale archive: [http://trc.law.yale.edu/video_episodes.htm](http://trc.law.yale.edu/video_episodes.htm)  
(91 episodes, please choose one or two to view before class)  
Yael Farber, *Molora* – Lecture by Professor Sonali Chakravarti

**Week 13**  
**Tuesday April 29:** Back to Second World War with the *Oresteia*  
Freedom, Responsibility, and Justice from an Existentialist Point of View  
Jean-Paul Sartre’s *The Flies*

**Thursday May 1:**  
Jean-Paul Sartre’s *The Flies*  
Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Existentialism is a Humanism*

**Week 14**  
**Tuesday May 6:** Closing Discussion

**FINAL EXAM:** Thursday, May 15: 9:00am-12:00