

Professor Eirene Visvardi  
evisvardi@wesleyan.edu  
Downey 213  
Office Hours: Thursday 1:00-3:00 and by appointment

**CCIV 277: TRAINING CITIZENS? AESTHETICS AND IDEOLOGY IN GREEK DRAMA**  
**FALL 2011**  
**WED. 7:00-9:50PM – DOWNEY 100**

This course examines how the first plays in the history of theater as well as philosophical responses to them connect with the development of the first democracy and ideas about political virtue. In the context of state-sponsored religious festivals, the Athenian dramatists confront social and political issues such as warfare and enslavement, the relationship between state and individual, gender relations, assessment of guilt, and attribution of justice. As these plays are in dialogue with other genres of public debate (e.g. forensic and deliberative oratory), we look at how they contribute to 5<sup>th</sup> century ideological negotiations. Questions we will be asking include: What are the elements of dramatic composition and performance that distinguish Greek drama from other media? Is there a connection between the aesthetics of Greek drama and the ideological questions it raises? How do the plays engage their audiences intellectually and emotionally? How do ancient poets and philosophers evaluate audience response to drama, and what is the role they reserve for drama in their (ideal) states? What do philosophical approaches to acculturation through watching plays and acting show about the relationship between performance and citizenship?

**EVALUATION**

Participation: 35%

Consistent preparation and participation in the discussion are very significant components of this course and constitute high percentage of your grade. You are expected to come prepared to discuss primary and secondary assignments and to volunteer your ideas and comments on them.

In addition to active contribution to the discussion, participation includes:

*Discussion leading* for 30min (c. 10%): one or two students will be assigned to lead the discussion on certain of the readings during part of each meeting. To do that, these students will send to me questions on these readings by 9pm on Monday. The questions have to be focused on particular claims and passages in the readings and will be posted on Moodle for all students to prepare.

Everyone (other than the discussion-leaders) will be asked to choose his/her *quote for the day*, a passage from the primary sources or a claim from the secondary material, bring it up during the discussion, and explain why it triggered your interest.

On reading: during your preparation, it is important always to begin with the primary sources and first think about them without being influenced by the analysis offered in the assigned articles. Only then will you be able to decide whether the arguments the articles

offer are substantiated by the original sources, what they contribute to our understanding of both these sources and Athenian culture, and whether they tell us more about their author's culture than the material they analyze. The ideal would then be to go back and reread the original sources a second time and reassess both types of readings.

### *Attendance*

Regular attendance is required: more than one unexcused absence will detract from your grade. More than two unexcused absences will lead to failure in the course. For excused absences in cases of medical and family emergencies, please try to notify me in advance.

### 3 Papers

Paper 1 (6-7 pages): 15% - Due Friday Oct. 7 – 6pm by email

Paper 2 (8-10): 25% - Due Friday Nov. 11 – 6pm by email

Final Paper (8-12): 25% - Due Dec. 15 – 6pm by email

### **HONOR CODE**

The Honor Code applies to all our academic activities. All violations will be referred to the Honor Board. Violations of the honor code usually lead to failure in the relevant assignment or failure in the course. If you are uncertain about the Wesleyan Honor System please ask me or visit:

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/studentconduct.html>

### **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, and making requests known to me in a timely manner. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at:

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/deans/disability-students.html>. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me during the first two weeks of classes. This appointment is required in addition to registering with Disabilities Services.

### **COMPUTERS AND OTHER DEVICES**

No electronic copies of reading materials and no laptops, ipads, etc. are allowed in this class. Most of the readings that are not to be found at the bookstore will be distributed in hard copies and will also be available on moodle. When readings are available only on moodle, you are expected to print them out and bring your hard copies to class. In case you are not able to do so, please let me know so that I provide the relevant hard copy in advance. It is a requirement for this class that everyone has a hard copy of the day's readings to refer to during class discussion. Discussing our material in depth (by looking closely at the language that is specific to the Greek sources and the relevant theories and interpretations) is easier for all when there are no distractions from other sources. If you use your laptops in class, we all know that there definitely will be other sources of

distraction. And none of us wishes that especially during a three-hour seminar that begins at 7pm.

Also: please do not use cell or smart phones during class for any reason - texting, talking, or taking notes.

**SCHEDULE** (subject to change)

**September 7: Introduction**

Definitions: Aesthetics and Mimesis; Citizenship  
Athenian Democracy and Greek Drama

**September 14: Individual vs. State, Public vs. Private? The Politics of Sophocles' *Antigone* and its Legacy.**

- Sophocles, *Antigone*
- Foley, H. "Sacrificial Virgins: Antigone as Moral Agent" 172-200 in *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*.
- Irigaray, L. "Between Myth and History: The Tragedy of Antigone" 197-211 in Wilmer, S.E. and Zukauskaitė, A. *Interrogating Antigone in Postmodern Philosophy and Criticism*
- Meineck, P. and Woodruff, P. "Hegel on *Antigone*" 214-216 in *Sophocles: Theban Plays*.

**September 21: Aesthetics, Psychology, and Politics: Poetry in the Ideal State**

- Plato, *Republic* 2, 3, 10: pp. 15-56 in Murray, P. and Dorsch, *Classical Literary Criticism*
- Moss, J. "What is Imitative Poetry and Why Is it Bad?" 415-445 in Ferrari, C.R. F. *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*

**September 28: On the Mimetic Art of Tragic Poetry: Aesthetics without Politics? (1)**

- Aristotle: *Poetics* (Selections); *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.
- Halliwell, S. "Action and Character" 138-168 in *Aristotle's Poetics*

**October 5: On the Mimetic Art of Tragic Poetry: Aesthetics without Politics? (2)**

- Aristotle *Poetics* (cont.); *Politics* 8
- Halliwell, S. "Pleasure, Understanding, and Emotion in Aristotle's *Poetics*" 241-260 in Rorty, A. *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*
- Hall, E. "Is there a *Polis* in Aristotle's *Poetics*?" 295-309 in Silk, M.S. *Tragedy and the Tragic*.

**October 12: From Mythic Revenge to Legal Punishment (1)**

Aeschylus, *Oresteia* - Read: *Agamemnon*, *Libation Bearers*  
Foley, H. "Tragic Wives: Clytemnestras" 201-234; 21-36 and 55 from "The Politics of Tragic Lamentation" in *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*.

**October 19: From Mythic Revenge to Legal Punishment (2)**

- Aeschylus, *Oresteia* – Read: *Eumenides*
- Allen, D. “Revenge” versus “Punishment”: Rereading the *Oresteia*” 18-25 in *The World of Prometheus: The Politics of Punishing in Democratic Athens*
- Zeitlin, F. “The Dynamics of Misogyny: Myth and Mythmaking in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*” 87-119 in *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature*

**October 26: Politics and the Tragic Emotions: Compassion and Power Dynamics in the Democracy**

- Euripides, *Suppliant Women*
- Thucydides, The Mytilenean Debate
- Konstan, D. “Pity and Politics” 48-66 [focus on 48-60 and 64-65]
- Lateiner, D. “The Pitiers and the Pitied in Herodotus and Thucydides” 67-97 [focus on 67-74 and 80-92]. Both chapters in: Sternberg, R. *Pity and Power in Ancient Athens*

**November 2: Politics and the Tragic Emotions: Pity as a Co-operative Value**

- Sophocles, *Philoctetes*
- Hawkins, A. H. (1999) “Ethical Tragedy and Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*”, *CW* 92.4: 337-357

\* **November 3 – 4:15pm:** Talk by Professor M. Folch on Poetic Performance and Citizenship in Plato’s *Laws*. Our Seminar will attend this event.

**November 9: Blending Generic and Ideological Boundaries**

- Euripides, *Alcestis*
- Marshall, C.W. (2000) ‘*Alcestis* and the Problem of Prosatyrlic Drama’, *The Classical Journal* 95.3: 229-238.
- O’ Higgins, D. (1993) ‘Above Rubies: Admetus’ Perfect Wife’, *Arethusa* 26: 77-98.

**November 16: Comedy, Politics, and the Tragic**

- Aristophanes, *Women at the Thesmophoria*
- Zeitlin, F. “Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes’ *Thesmophoriazusae*” 375-416 in *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature*

**November 23: No Class – Thanksgiving Break****November 30: Comedy: Politics, Literary Criticism, and a Competition of Genres; Tragedy: What are Choruses for?**

- Aristophanes, *Frogs*
- Taplin, O. “Comedy and the Tragic” 188-202
- Gould, “Tragedy and Collective Experience” 217-243 Both Chapters in: Silk, M.S. *Tragedy and the Tragic*.

**Dec. 7: Ideology and Drama Beyond Athens: An Example; Final Thoughts**

- Brecht, *Antigone; A Short Organum for the Theater* (selections)
- Wrap Up