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CLAS 252L.01: Greek Drama - Politics on Stage

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CLAS 252: Greek Drama: Politics Onstage

Instructor information:

Instructor: Matthew Semanoff

Office: LA 425

Email: matthew.semanoff@umontana.edu

Phone: 243-5637

Office hours:

Course information:

Time: 11:00-12:20

Place: LA 305

Course description:

Since its origins in ancient Athens, theater has played an important role in mediating a community's engagement with contemporary political, ethical, and social issues. In this class, we will study a selection of the tragedies and comedies within the political and social context of the radical democracy of 5th century Athens. These dramas were presented in a public, state-sponsored, agonistic context that reflects the political structure of the society that produced them. We will consider the Theater of Dionysus as the dramatic counterpart to the Athenian *Ekklesia* (Assembly) and *Boulê* (Council), and the dramas the poetic counterpart to the deliberative oratory crucial to the functioning of the democracy. Through these powerful ancient works we will explore timeless issues such as tyranny and democracy, gender and power, and the familial, religious political obligations, and heroism in light of civic duty. We will investigate these moving dramas, from the heart-wrenching to the hilarious, through close reading, text analysis, and writing.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the semester, a successful student will:

- Students will become familiar with the plots of a variety of classical dramas.
- Students will become familiar with the different styles of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.
- Students will use Greek tragedies as a means of uncovering their political and social context.
- Students will learn how literary texts serve as documents of social history.
- Students will learn to read classical dramas with attention to their performative contexts.

CLAS 252 is an Approved Writing Course. The successful student will:

- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

Required textbooks:

- Lefkowitz, Mary and James Romm, editors. 2016. *The Greek Plays: Sixteen Plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides*. New York. ISBN-13: 9780812983098 [Abbreviation in syllabus = GP]
- Halliwell, Stephen, editor. 2016. *Aristophanes: Frogs and Other Plays. A new verse translation, with introduction and notes*. Oxford. [Abbreviation in syllabus = Aristophanes]
- Additional resources and assignments provided online via Moodle.

Course Requirements:

Attendance (10%)

Attendance in class is mandatory. It is imperative to be present, engaged, and respectful for every class. Each class you will be assigned an attendance grade out of 10. Being physically present earns you 10 points. If you must miss class for a legitimate reason (e.g. illness, family emergency, approved athletic travel, or COVID-19 related protocols for testing/isolation), please contact me within 24 hours. Please also note that the homework schedule is subject to change. Make sure to check with a classmate or me to ensure you complete the proper homework assignment.

Engaged Participation (15%)

15% of your grade can be earned through active participation in class. Each class you will be assigned a participation grade out of 10. Engaged (active) participation includes sharing ideas, asking thoughtful/specific questions, actively and respectfully listening to your peers, and **bringing a copy of the text to class**. Engaged participation also means using technology and devices appropriately. That means **refraining from using phones/social media during class, keeping cameras on (if participating remotely)**. Use of phones and other devices for anything unrelated to class will result in a zero for the day. Cell phone use and laptop multitasking in class hurt not only you, but also your peers ([Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers](#)).

Quizzes, Worksheets, and Informal Writing Assignments (25%)

Throughout the semester there will be weekly quizzes, worksheets, and/or informal writing assignments to encourage better class discussions, comprehension of the material, improved

text analysis, and improved writing. Please complete all of these in Moodle **before class**, and also be prepared to discuss your answers in class. If discussion lags and it seems that readings have not been completed, **there may be unannounced reading quizzes** in class.

Short Papers (25%)

There will be three short formal papers (3-5 pages) that will focus on close textual analysis. Your papers should have one-inch margins, double-spaced. Papers must be submitted electronically in Moodle **before class**. Please upload papers as word documents (.docx) or as PDF (Pages is not compatible with Moodle). Additional instructions and a grading rubric will be distributed in advance of each paper.

Final Paper (25%)

For your final paper you will revise one of your three short papers into a longer, final paper that incorporates previous feedback (5-7 pages). Your paper should have one-inch margins, double-spaced. Paper must be submitted electronically in Moodle **before class**. Please upload papers as word documents (.docx) or as PDF (Pages is not compatible with Moodle). Additional instructions and a grading rubric will be distributed in advance of each paper.

Late Quizzes, Assignments, and Absences

If you expect to miss a class, quiz, or assignment, arrangements must be made ahead of time to make it up. If there is an unexpected emergency that results in your absence or inability to complete an assignment, you must email me within 24 hours to avoid penalties. Otherwise, a letter grade per day will be deducted from your score. If you are absent from class it is your responsibility to make sure you understand that day's material (i.e. by consulting a classmate or attending office hours). For all papers you may have an **automatic 48-hour extension** (i.e. I do not want to know the reason for the extension), provided that you **email me in advance of the due date**. Otherwise a letter grade will be deducted from the paper for each overdue day.

Campus Resources:

Writing and Public Speaking Center:

The University of Montana Writing and Public Speaking Center offers students in all disciplines one-on-one consultations as they write or prepare presentations for any course. Welcoming all students, the Writing Center provides a learning environment where students can engage in supportive conversations about their work and receive feedback at any point during their process. To make an appointment and learn more about The Writing and Public Speaking Center, visit www.umt.edu/writingcenter.

Accessibility:

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equity (ODE). If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please contact the ODE at: (406) 243-2243, ode@umontana.edu, or visit www.umt.edu/disability for more information. Retroactive

accommodation requests will not be honored, so please, do not delay. As your instructor, I will work with you and the ODE to implement an effective accommodation, and you are welcome to contact me privately if you wish.

Academic Honesty:

All written work submitted for this course must be your own in both content and expression. Plagiarism and the misuse of sources is subject to academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students are expected to be familiar with the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

COVID-19 Policies and Information:

- Mask use is required within the classroom or laboratory.
- If you feel sick and/or are exhibiting COVID symptoms, please don't come to class and contact the [Curry Health Center](#) at (406) 243-4330.
- If you are required to isolate or quarantine, you will receive support in the class to ensure continued academic progress. Please contact me immediately regarding how to continue to participate in class.
- UM recommends students get the COVID vaccine and booster. Please direct your questions or concerns about vaccines to the [Curry Health Center](#).
- Drinking liquids and eating food is discouraged within the classroom.
- Please note this class is being recorded.

Tentative Course Schedule

The following schedule is subject to change as necessary. Please note: All readings and assignments are due on the day they are listed.